EXEGETICALTOOLS

Table of Contents

Learn Greek

Book Reviews

Interviews

New Books

Current Issues

Learn Greek

Announcing Our Colossians Greek Reading Videos

Today is the day that Exegetical Tools comes into its own and begins to realize a vision that began three years ago. I wanted this site to be a hub for biblical languages and exegesis, and three years ago I began making Greek Reading Videos.

After beginning my PhD program at Westminster Theological Seminary, I simply ran out of time in the week and put the project on halt. When I began teaching Greek at Westminster, I found a good opportunity to begin creating Basic Greek Videos by recording my lectures after teaching a class. Hopefully, the Basic Greek Videos will be done by the end of this month.

More important than the Basic Greek Videos, however, are Greek Reading Videos. If there is one thing that is most important to retaining and improving your Greek, it's reading Greek! We know it's difficult to keep up with morphology, syntax, and vocabulary on your own, so our Greek Reading Videos serve you by walking you through the translation of an entire New Testament book while focusing especially on those three elements from Basic Greek that tend to slip so quickly from our memories: morphology, syntax, and vocabulary.

Without further ado, you can find our Colossians Greek Reading Videos here, along with a video introducing them and the first three videos available for preview. (Please know the first three videos have slightly lesser audio and video quality, which I was able to fix with a new microphone and better screencast software for the rest of the series.)

TS

Keep Your Greek: Choose the Right Bible

My Greek students just completed Greek 3 and many were wanting advice on how to keep up with the language now that I'm not making them study anymore (so sad!). All of us struggle to maintain the level of proficiency we really desire, so in this series of posts I'm going to provide several tips to help you keep your Greek. Today we start with choosing the right Bible.

There are several **different types of Greek Bibles** and all have strengths and weaknesses.
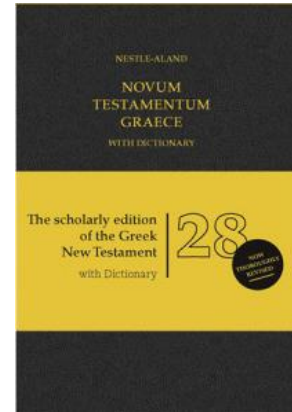
Reader's Bibles

First, there are Reader's Bibles, such as Zondervan's and UBS's, which footnote all words occurring 30x or less and have a dictionary in the back for words occurring more than 30x. Zondervan's edition has the advantage of being quite thin and light, while the UBS text has the advantage of providing parsings for verbs. These Bibles are good for sitting down with just the Greek text and trying to work through without needing a dictionary. The downside to these is that you can get stuck on difficult grammar or syntax and you will have to open an English Bible or Bible software to figure it out.

Greek-English Parallels

Second, there are Greek-English parallels, such as the Nestle-Aland's (27th ed.) older RSV parallel, which comes in a nice flexicover and good binding. This edition includes the Greek and English text on adjacent pages, with a critical apparatus for Greek *and* for English, meaning the English apparatus translates the Greek variants for you, which can be quite helpful for forms you are unfamiliar with. There is also the newer 28th ed. which comes with both the NRSV and NEB as parallel English texts, but this makes the Bible run 1,700 pages and there is no English apparatus.

Crossway has put out a Greek-ESV parallel Bible with the NA-28 text and a Greek apparatus, but the font size is unnecessarily large, causing the book to be very undesirable to carry around and large in size (all three dimensions). The cloth cover is nice but it also stains very easily, even if a small bit of water touches it (which happened to both my Greek and German parallel Bibles the first week I owned them). I have seen some online parallels, including one by Crossway, but it includes the NA-27 text and lays out the Greek and English on top of each

other, one verse at a time, rather than on parallel pages, which would make it impossible not to glance at the English.

The advantages of these texts is that you will get immediate help with grammar or syntax you can't figure out and you may be encouraged to read more Greek, knowing that if you get exhausted you can simply switch to the English. The downside is that you will always be tempted to look at the English translation too quickly before wrestling with the Greek yourself, and you will miss out on many insights about the Greek language because you were too impatient. Another downside is that the only help with vocab you get is to glance at the English translation's gloss, which will not necessarily give you a semantic range with which you can figure out the meaning of the word in context for yourself as you could with the reader's editions.

Plain Greek Bible

Lastly, there is your plain ol' Greek Bible. There is the NA-28 leather-bound text with dictionary, which runs 1,100 pages (not bad for a Bible), and there are of course variations on that text, including different covers (hardback is cheaper). The major alternative is the UBS5 hardback text, which differs mainly by having a smaller apparatus and some different conventions for signalling quotations, for example.

If you are a very disciplined person, this is probably the route for you. With a dictionary in the back, you can look up any words you do not know, which will help you learn vocabulary better (the more effort something takes you, the more successfully you will remember it, generally). Since there is no English parallel, you will have to wrestle with the grammar and syntax yourself, perhaps having a copy of Wallace's *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* on hand (or whatever other syntax textbook you use). Also, there are no parsings in the footnotes (as in the UBS Reader's edition), so you will have to figure those out for yourself as well by referring back to basic paradigms in your grammar or by referring to principal parts sheets, such as in Metzger's *Lexical Aids for Students of New Testament Greek*.

Which is Best?

In my opinion, **you will learn Greek faster and better if you choose the last option** and constantly refer back to your resources, which will help you solidify them all in your mind. The reader's editions and the parallels eradicate the need to reference certain works, which can cause you to forget the most basic elements of Greek. But, the plain Greek Bible is not for everyone; it is only for the most disciplined.

If you know you are not the type to set aside time every day or every other day to read some Greek with your resources on the desk, then go with one of the other options. Are you really good with vocabulary? Then maybe go for the parallel Bible, since you will need more help with grammar and syntax by looking at the English translations when you're stuck. If you're terrible at vocabulary, get the reader's edition and have an English translation nearby (a phone app will do).

You may want to borrow a copy from a friend first and try it out for a week or so before you commit. Whatever you do, I would suggest getting one and sticking with it. Use it daily as much as possible. Write notes in the margins. Make it a priority to use the resources you invest in, otherwise they're no better than rusty tools out in the shed.

<div align="right">TS</div>

Keep Your Greek: Taking Greek Electives

When I was doing my MDiv, I had a good amount of elective hours: 18 if I remember correctly. Those are a precious 18 hours. For better or for worse, I had different goals in my first two years of my MDiv. I came to seminary probably wanting to pastor, and pretty quickly gained a passion for church planting. I was excited to study hard, prepare for church planting, and pastor a church that was faithful to the biblical picture for the church (whatever that is!). Now here I am, completing my dissertation in a PhD program in hermeneutics and teaching Greek and New Testament courses. That's quite a distance from planting a church.

Because of my different goals, I chose different elective courses than I would have if, from the beginning, I wanted to go the academic route. So rather than exegesis or language courses, I took courses in leadership mentoring, church planting, and preaching. None of these were bad classes, and they were all helpful to some extent, but I was also taking them with the motive that they would be easy classes to help me along with my degree and my plans after graduation.

I want to suggest that, if you want to keep your Greek, you should take some Greek elective courses.

First let me hedge myself with what I do *not* mean. I do not mean that biblical language and exegesis courses are more important than practical theology courses. I do not mean that you should *only* take Greek electives. And I do not mean that if you do not take them, you will automatically lose your Greek.

What I am suggesting is that, no matter what your ministry goals (pastoring, youth ministry, working for a non-profit, or teaching), Greek exegesis courses can never hurt you. If it's an exegesis class on a book of the NT in Greek, then you will be studying Scripture closely in the original language. This will help both your Greek and your knowledge of Scripture, which will be eternally beneficial no matter what your career field. If it's an advanced Greek course (some seminaries have these, but not all), you will focus on the language, which will help you to keep your Greek at a more advanced level *and* help you to read your English Bible better. The more you can feel the original language of the Bible, the better you can read it in translation as well.

Another warning, however, is that when you take these courses, don't skip over morphology!

It's easy to get caught up in syntactical analysis of various phrases and in discourse analysis. But if you use Bible software to parse everything for you, and if you don't continue to learn principal parts of irregular verbs, then you will be glued to software for reading your Greek New Testament, which will ultimately mean you will read it less often. There's nothing like being able to sit down in your reading chair with *just* the Greek New Testament and read Scripture. (You will want to make sure you have the right Bible to do so). And that is why in our Greek Reading Videos, we spend a good amount of time reminding you of verb contractions, which declension the nouns are, how the difficult words are parsed, etc.

One more reason a Greek elective will help you is that you will get more practice interacting with critical commentaries.

Pastors generally use critical commentaries when preparing for sermons, but they often don't know how to evaluate statements such as "this is a pendant nominative" or "this is an adverbial participial of manner, which means…" Moreover, pastors may not have been trained in textual criticism (I never had a class on it and had to teach myself). But when taking Greek electives, you will have a professor to guide you through evaluating the arguments and conclusions in critical commentaries and you will become proficient in figuring out how to use them, both for improving your Greek and for exegesis.

In the last year of my MDiv and during my ThM, I took a class on the book of Hebrews and on the book of Deuteronomy. Both classes were essential for improving both my Greek and Hebrew, and I now know those two books better than any other in their respective testaments. I spent a good deal of time translating through them on a reading level and doing close exegesis of various passages. The result was that I gained a good amount of exposure to both

languages *and* a better knowledge of advanced grammatical and syntactical issues from the advanced grammars.

So don't waste your electives. They are precious. You don't need to use them all for Greek exegesis (there's Hebrew and Aramaic too!), but we probably wouldn't scorn you if you did.

Check out our other [Keep Your Greek](#) posts.

TS

Keep Your Greek: Don't Lose Your Vocabulary

For some students, learning vocabulary is a breeze. For others, it's like pulling teeth. Brains are simply wired differently and memorizing vocabulary will be easier for some than for others. The same is true for *keeping* your vocabulary. Just because you memorized words once for that final exam does not at all mean you will remember them. In fact, vocabulary probably slips away faster than other parts of the language, such as grammar and syntax. You will probably always remember that a subject is generally in the nominative case, and that an adverbial participle modifies a verb, but you may quickly forget what θηρίον means.

There are a few different strategies for keeping your vocabulary.

Read Your Greek New Testament

The first and most effective way (although not the most systematic way) is to simply read, read, read, and read some more Greek. As you read through the text you will encounter the vocabulary in their natural environment, i.e., natural use. This is without a doubt the best way to retain your vocabulary. In order to equip yourself for reading the Greek NT consistently, you will want to make sure you [choose the right Bible.](#) You can also use our [Greek Reading Videos](#) to help you keep reading through the Greek New Testament.

Get a Flashcard System

Without a doubt, you will not keep up with all your vocabulary by reading the Greek NT because you will not systematically encounter all the words you have learned, at least not consistently enough.

There are two types of flashcard systems, both of which use "interval spacing," but in different ways. Interval spacing is the process by which you increase or decrease the amount of time between seeing a particular word, depending on whether you know or do not know the word. For example, if you have a daily stack and decide you know a card pretty well, you may move it to a weekly stack or file. The goal is to get every card to the "I really know this word" stack or file.

The two different types of flashcard systems, which use interval spacing differently, are 1) physical flashcards and 2) programs or apps. With physical flashcards, you may have 3 or 5 stacks, from least well-known words (the first stack) to the stack with words like καί that you know you will never forget. If you use physical flashcards, try to be as organized and systematic as possible. Put a time limit on each stack for how often you will view the cards in that stack. If you ever miss a card, move it back to your daily stack, then as you get the word right, move it up the line of stacks so you see it less frequently.

Programs and apps are the other type of flashcard system. Some programs, such as Mounce's FlashWorks, do not use interval spacing at all, but you can load vocabulary from any of Mounce's chapters in his grammar. This is helpful as you work through the textbook, but for the long term it is not the most effective solution.

The best app available that I am aware of is called **Flashcard Deluxe** (available for iOS and Android). It has a host of features and is incredibly customizable, allowing you to have multiple "sides" to each flashcard, including recording your own sound-bite, adding pictures, adding multiple sides with text (perhaps you want a third side with a mnemonic device), and *of course* it has a very sophisticated **interval spacing** feature. It even allows you to change the factor by which the interval increases or decreases, which helps you to adjust the feature for your level of learning. Even better, you can connect to certain flashcard creation websites and download sets of flashcards that others have created and use them to study. People have already created flashcards for grammars such as Mounce, Croy, and Machen.
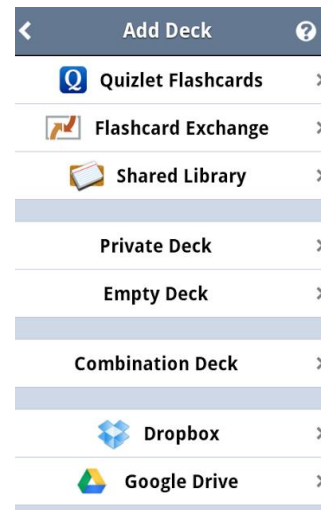
There are even cards to Metzger's *Lexical Aids for Students of New Testament Greek*, which gives words down to 10 occurrences.

If you are just learning Greek, or you never learned enough vocabulary, you could use the app to learn every Greek word that occurs 10x or more in the NT by studying the flashcards about 15-20 minutes a day for about half a year. I think by that point you will have learned all the words you need to read the NT pretty fluently.

If you already have a large bank of vocabulary memorized, then Flashcard Deluxe will help you keep them all memorized, as long as you spend a few minutes a day in the app (and if you do it daily, it's really only a few minutes after you have established a good interval spacing for each card). Using this app in a disciplined manner is the most effective way I can suggest to quickly and easily learn and retain all the vocab you need for NT Greek.

Press On!

Maintaining your NT Greek requires at least two practices: reading your Greek NT, and maintaining a disciplined flashcard system. However you do either of them, make sure you do them, and retaining your vocabulary should be a breeze.

Sign *up here to receive our weekly email, [Basic Greek for the Week](#), and check out our other [“Keep Your Greek” posts here.](#)*

TS

Greek Matters: Colossians 1:3-5 and Christian Hope

This series grew out of our [Colossians Greek Reading Videos](#). Each post expounds practical or devotional points from the text that become evident especially when translating directly from the Greek. We hope these posts help convince you that Greek matters!

Εὐχαριστοῦμεν τῷ θεῷ πατρὶ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ πάντοτε περὶ ὑμῶν προσευχόμενοι, ἀκούσαντες τὴν πίστιν ὑμῶν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ καὶ τὴν ἀγάπην ἣν ἔχετε εἰς πάντας τοὺς ἁγίους 5 διὰ τὴν ἐλπίδα τὴν ἀποκειμένην ὑμῖν ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς, ἣν προηκούσατε ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τῆς ἀληθείας τοῦ εὐαγγελίου
(Colossians 1:3-5)

In Colossians 1:3-5 we see Paul's triad of faith, hope, and love. By sorting out what a particular prepositional phrase modifies, we discover something unique about Christian hope.

The main idea of this section is the first verb, "We give thanks." Paul then explains the reason why he and his co-workers give thanks: ἀκούσαντες (because we have heard) of your **faith** in Christ Jesus and the **love** which you have for all the saints. So the faith and love of the Colossians, which he has heard about (not even seen!), has given him reason to give thanks to God for them whenever he prayers for them.

The following prepositional phrase, διὰ τὴν ἐλπίδα τὴν ἀποκειμένην ὑμῖν ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς (because of the hope laid up for you in the heavens), is also a causal clause (διὰ + accusative means "because of, on account of"). The διὰ phrase could modify three different things.

1. **Εὐχαριστοῦμεν**. *We give thanks … because of the hope laid up for you in the heavens.* In this case, the διὰ phrase gives an additional reason for his giving thanks.

2. **ἔχετε**. *Your love which you have for all the saints, because of the hope laid up for you in the heavens.*

3. **πίστιν … καὶ … ἀγάπην**. *Your love … and your faith … the cause of which is your hope laid up in the heavens.*

All three of these constructions are possible. However, not all are equally likely. The first option is unlikely because ἀκούσαντες already gave the reason for his thanksgiving: their faith and love. Plus, we would expect him to use καὶ again before διά if that was Paul's intention. Between the second and third option, the third is less favorable because prepositional phrases more naturally modify verbs or participles than nouns. But logic also tells us that their hope laid up in the heavens could not be a cause of their faith in Christ. They do not have the hope until they have faith in Christ. Therefore the third option is not likely.

That leaves us with the second option. The hope laid up for the Colossians in the heavens is the cause of their having love for all the saints. It is important to note that it is their hope *laid up in the heavens*. That means this is not their subjective hope in the future, but their objective hope of their inheritance. It is the future prospect of obtaining what Colossians calls elsewhere their "life," which is "hidden with Christ in God" (3:3), that is the cause of their love for all the saints.

There is a practical lesson for us. Do we love as much as we want to? Do we exhibit the following qualities:

Love is patient and kind;

love does not envy or boast;

it is not arrogant or rude.

It does not insist on its own way;

it is not irritable or resentful;

it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth.

Love bears all things,

believes all things,

hopes all things,

endures all things.

Love never ends.

(1 Cor 13:4-8)

If not, then Colossians 1:3-5 teaches us the way to love better is to meditate on our future inheritance that awaits us. We should "seek the things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God" (Col 3:1). Indeed, "set your mind on the things above, not earthly things" (Col 3:2). By meditating on our future life that is to be revealed gloriously with Christ (3:4), we can be sure that we will begin to grow in love for all the saints, which will elicit thanksgiving and praise to God.

Watch our video translating through Colossians [1:1-4](#) and [1:5-8](#), or check out all of our [Colossians Greek Reading Videos](#).

TS

Greek Matters: Colossians 1:9-12 and Pleasing God

This series grew out of our [Colossians Greek Reading Videos](#). Each post expounds practical or devotional points from the text that become evident especially when translating directly from the Greek. We hope these posts help convince you that Greek matters!

Διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ἡμεῖς ... οὐ παυόμεθα ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν *προσευχόμενοι καὶ αἰτούμενοι,*

| Content of Prayer → | *ἵνα πληρωθῆτε* τὴν ἐπίγνωσιν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ |

ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ καὶ συνέσει πνευματικῇ,

| Purpose of Being Filled → | **περιπατῆσαι ἀξίως** τοῦ κυρίου |

| Goal of Walking Worthily → | *εἰς* πᾶσαν ἀρεσκείαν, |

ἐν παντὶ ἔργῳ ἀγαθῷ

καρποφοροῦντες καὶ
αὐξανόμενοι τῇ ἐπιγνώσει τοῦ θεοῦ,

| Means of Walking Worthily → | ἐν πάσῃ δυνάμει *δυναμούμενοι* κατὰ τὸ κράτος τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ |

εἰς πᾶσαν ὑπομονὴν καὶ μακροθυμίαν.
Μετὰ χαρᾶς *εὐχαριστοῦντες* τῷ πατρὶ
τῷ ἱκανώσαντι ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν μερίδα τοῦ κλήρου τῶν ἁγίων ἐν τῷ φωτί·
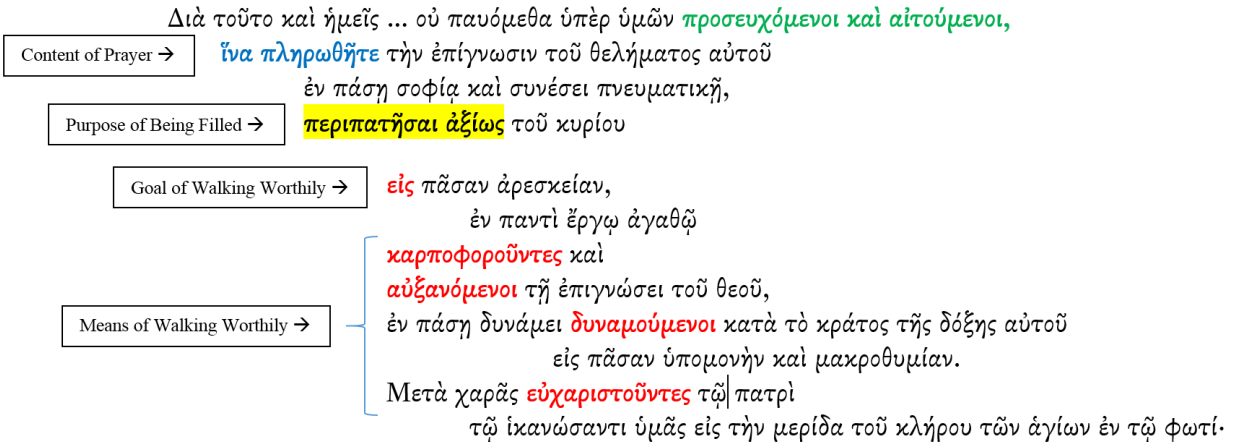
How can we please God? Colossians 1:9-12 is a complex passage with lots of participles and prepositional phrases. One could translate each clause and read it well enough, but analyzing the paragraph as a whole enables us to see what the major idea of the passage is and how Paul develops that idea.

After Paul tells his readers that he always thanks God for their faith, hope, and love, he continues on that basis (Διὰ τοῦτο, "because of this") to say that he never ceases praying and asking "that you might be filled" (ἵνα πληρωθῆτε) with the knowledge of God's will. The following ἐν clause could give the manner of being filled (wisely and intelligently), or more likely the means by which the filling occurs: by means of wisdom and spiritual insight. The fact that πληρωθῆτε is passive shows us that the Colossians cannot conjure up wisdom and spiritual knowledge themselves, but God must grant it to them, thereby filling them with the knowledge of his will.

Next comes the main idea of the passage: περιπατῆσαι is an infinitive of purpose and explains the purpose of the Colossians being filled with the knowledge of God's will: "in order to walk worthily of the Lord." **So the ultimate purpose for which Paul prays is that God would enable them to walk worthily of him.** As we will see, all that follows expresses the outcome or the means of accomplishing this worthy lifestyle, so we can say that we have arrived at the ultimate purpose for which Paul is concerned: that they walk worthily of the Lord.
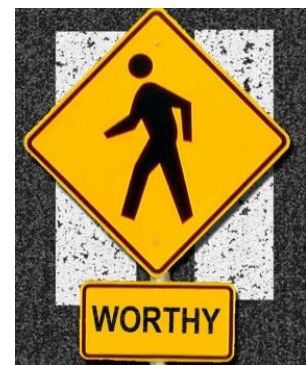
Five clauses modify περιπατῆσαι. The first expresses the goal of the worthy walk: εἰς πᾶσαν ἀρεσκείαν, "unto all desire to please [God]." The following four participial phrases could be adverbial participles of means or result. Whether they are resultant or not, it is clear that (1) ἐν

παντὶ ἔργῳ ἀγαθῷ καρποφοροῦντες ("bearing fruit in every good work"), (2) αὐξανόμενοι τῇ ἐπιγνώσει τοῦ θεοῦ ("increasing in the knowledge of God"), (3) ἐν πάσῃ δυνάμει δυναμούμενοι κατὰ τὸ κράτος τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ ("being strengthened with all strength according to his glorious might") and (4) μετὰ χαρᾶς εὐχαριστοῦντες τῷ πατρι ("with joy giving thanks to the Father") are all ways by which we can walk worthily of the Lord. For that reason, it's likely that they all four express means.

Now what have we learned about pleasing God?

First, walking worthily of the Lord to please him is the ultimate purpose of Paul's prayer. The means by which that is accomplished is that God fills them with the knowledge of his will by giving them wisdom and spiritual insight. If that is the ultimate goal of Paul's prayer, then perhaps there's something to learn about the priorities of our prayers. Perhaps we too should be asking more frequently that God would give others wisdom and spiritual insight so that they could walk worthily and faithfully. And don't miss that Paul says he never ceases to pray this for them; he asks for God to fill them with the knowledge of his will in every prayer he makes for them.

Second, Paul lists four specific ways we can walk worthily of the Lord. Three of these are active in sense (αὐξανόμενοι is passive, but active in meaning) and thus express our responsibility. We are to bear fruit in every good work, which echoes Jesus' teaching that we will know true disciples by their fruit. We are to actively pursue a deeper knowledge of God. And we are to continually give thanks with joy to the Father who has qualified us for a share of the inheritance of the saints. The fourth means by which we walk worthily of the Lord is passive: "being strengthened with all strength according to his glorious might." And don't forget that it is initially God's granting us wisdom and spiritual insight that *enables* us to live worthily. So God's part in the process is foundational and indispensable: he must grant us wisdom, spiritual insight, and empowerment that measures up to his glorious might.

So if we want to please God, we first need his gracious enabling gifts, and then we must actively seek to live in ways these various ways that honor the Lord. That is what Paul was most concerned about in his prayers for the Colossians, and that is certainly one of the things we should be most concerned about in our own.

Watch our Greek Reading Videos on [Colossians 1:9-11a](#) and [1:11b-14](#).

Read the rest of our ["Greek Matters" posts](#).

TS

Greek Matters: Colossians 2:20 and Liberation from Fleshly Living

This series grew out of our [Colossians Greek Reading Videos](#). Each post expounds practical or devotional points from the text that become evident especially when translating directly from the Greek. We hope these posts help convince you that Greek matters!

Εἰ ἀπεθάνετε σὺν Χριστῷ ἀπὸ τῶν στοιχείων τοῦ κόσμου,

τί ὡς ζῶντες ἐν κόσμῳ δογματίζεσθε;

Colossians 2:20

There are two difficult elements of Greek grammar here, but, once sorted out, we see a powerful question posed to the Colossians.

The first four words are simple enough, "If you died with Christ…" But the following preposition ἀπό seems strange following the verb ἀποθνήσκω, "to die"; what does it mean to "die from" something? As you can imagine, it means more to "die *to*" or *with reference to* something, but even more than that. According to BDAG, ἀποθνήσκω with ἀπό means "through death become free from." So the protasis of this clause (the "if" portion) states that the Colossians have, by virtue of their union with Christ in his death, become free from the στοιχεῖα.

This is no small point. Just earlier Paul said the false philosophy and empty deceit that is being propagated in Colossae is in accord with the στοιχεῖα (Col 2:8). And these are only one class of spiritual powers that Paul is concerned to claim that Christ is Lord over. There are also the "rulers and authorities" whom Christ created and defeated at the cross (1:16; 2:10; 2:15).

These various kinds of spiritual powers invoke the spiritual power of Eph 2:2, the "authoritative ruler of the air" (or alternatively, "the ruler of the aerial authority").

So in both Colossians and Ephesians there is great concern about the spiritual powers, especially that Christians are submitting themselves to precepts and teachings that are in accord with the spiritual powers, and not in accord with Christ as they were taught (2:8, 6). In Col 2:20, Paul now makes the heavy statement that they have been set free from the στοιχεῖα through the death of their "old man" (their existence in Adam).

The apodosis (the "then" portion) asks a question. He assumes the protasis is true: they have in fact been set free from the στοιχεῖα. Now, if that is true (and it is), why are they submitting themselves (δογματίζεσθε) to the false teaching that is in accord with the στοιχεῖα? Paul characterizes the submission in a certain way with a participial phrase, ὡς ζῶντες ἐν κόσμῳ.

This phrase is difficult and is the second of the two grammatical issues in this verse. Most translations render it "as if/though you were living in the world." The idea is that ὡς with a participle in this case has a concessive force. But this doesn't make much sense. A truly concessive rendering would be "why, although you are living in the world, are you submitting [to the false teaching]?" A concessive idea is *contrary* to the main verb; that is, the main verb happens *in spite of* the concessive idea. But that is not what's going on with this phrase. The participial phrase ὡς ζῶντες ἐν κόσμῳ is consistent with submitting themselves to the false teaching, so it can't be concessive.

A better translation is to take ὡς as expressing *manner* (a similar use of ὡς is found in Eph 3:5). The participial phrase modifies the verb δογματίζεσθε expressing the manner in which they submit themselves: in the manner of living in the world. Of course "living in the world" is used pejoratively here, not neutrally to mean simply existing on the earth. It's equivalent to Paul's typical phrase κατὰ σάρκα, "according to the flesh." So Paul asks them, if you have been liberated from the στοιχεῖα, why are you still submitting yourselves to them as those who live fleshly?

This is a simple question with a complex answer. Christ created the spiritual powers, and he is therefore Lord over them (1:16). God disarmed them on the cross through Christ and led them in public, triumphal procession as his captives. The picture is one of bloodied and chained captives, being led in a train behind the victorious general. Strangely (to stick with the imagery), the general's soldiers are bowing down to the chained captives, seeking their wisdom and precepts. What a ridiculous image.

But that's exactly what Paul was going for. The Colossians are submitting to precepts, teachings, and philosophies that are in accord with the defeated στοιχεῖα, and that are in accord with the traditions of men, all of which serve in the end for the gratification of the flesh (2:23).

Peering into Paul's mail to the Colossians confronts us with the same issue. Are we living ὡς ζῶντες ἐν κόσμῳ?

Are we submitting ourselves to worldly teachings that serve to gratify the flesh? Do we seek worldly goods, services, memberships, friends, entertainment, or relationships that only serve to gratify the flesh? If so, we're no different than the Colossians, ridiculously submitting to the bloodied and chained captives while ignoring the triumphant Lord leading them in procession. Paul would exhort us:

Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming (Col 3:5-6).

Rather, we should put on the new self, seek the things that are above where Christ is, and live according to the Spirit, not according to the flesh.

Watch our Greek Reading Video on Colossians 2:20-23.

See our other posts in the Greek Matters series.

TS

Book Reviews

Advances in the Study of Greek, by Constantine Campbell

Advances in the Study of Greek: New Insights for Reading the New Testament, by Constantine R. Campbell (Zondervan, 2015).

I bought this book because I was interested in learning more about tense and aspect theory. It ended up being much more than just that. *Advances in the Study of Greek: New Insights for Reading the New Testament* by Constantine R. Campbell is a monumental book written to help pastors and other Greek New Testament exegetes apply advances in Koine (biblical) Greek scholarship to proper exegesis for the benefit of the church (albeit not exclusively so). This book has been quite effective and persuasive because of its excellent organization and clear, accessible writing style. Campbell is winsome and a masterful pedagogue who truly believes that proper respect for Koine Greek will lead to better interpretation and application of Scripture.
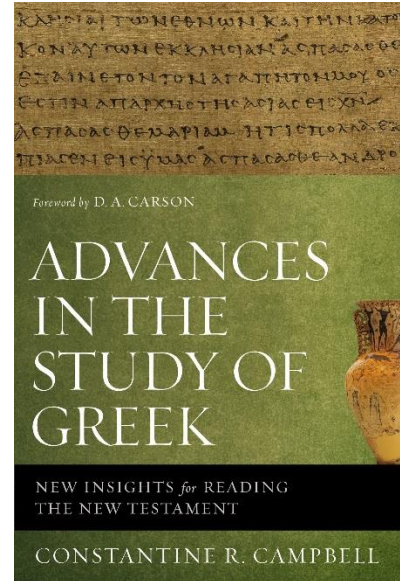
His warmth and pedagogical concern is evident from his final chapter (chapter ten), a lovely chapter on how to continue bridging the gap between Greek scholars and users of the Greek New Testament. His pedagogical expertise can also be detected in the introductory portion of his book, in which he lays out in 27 pages a defense for why this book was written and what it hopes to accomplish. And he does accomplish his goals quite successfully in this reviewer's opinion.

Campbell begins his first chapter by giving a helpful history of Greek scholarship beginning in the nineteenth century. His chapter on history is a good sign of things to come, for one of the most helpful things about this book are his many introductory surveys on the history/state of scholarship on particular grammatical/linguistic topics. It is as if one has multiple helpful annotated bibliographies on the history of scholarship on important exegetical topics. Key scholars and their contributions are noted, and representative scholars of various schools of thought are winsomely summarized.

These helpful background surveys help newcomers situate the current state of scholarly discussion in their historical context. These surveys alone are worth the price of admission. One can find these brief histories in chapters four (on deponency), five (on verbal aspect and *Aktionsart*), and seven and eight (approaches to New Testament discourse analysis).

Chapters two and three help exegetes not as familiar with linguistics understand the importance of an informed awareness and working knowledge of linguistics and on lexicography and semantics. This, too, is worth the price of the book.

Campbell's call to overthrow deponency in chapter four is strong, clear, and persuasive, and his heart for pedagogy and dissemination and use is clear and practical by his closing remarks for how to phase out the concept of deponency in Greek classrooms (provided you agree with his evaluation).

Chapter five on verbal aspect and *Aktionsart* was one of the most anticipated chapters for me, and Campbell did not disappoint. He presents different opinions fairly and argues clearly for his own position, namely that aspect is semantically coded into Greek's verbal tense-forms and help us to determine the *Aktionsart* of how to understand Greek verbs in narrative and discourse for proper exegesis. His discussion on aspect and methodology in exegesis was quite helpful and measured.

Chapter six on idiolect (or "style") was the least helpful for me, though this is more so because of my lack of interest in this area (and because the rest of the book was phenomenal).

Anyone interested in discourse analysis would be greatly helped by his clear summaries of various schools and approaches to discourse analysis in chapters seven and eight. D. A. Carson writes in the Foreword that Campbell's "summary of Runge's treatment of Greek particles is worth the price of the book" (17). (Carson also writes, "I cannot say that Con Campbell always convinces me—though he usually does" [17]. Usually convincing D. A. Carson is certainly good enough for this reviewer.)

Chapter nine on pronunciation has convinced me to try and pick up pronouncing koine Greek similarly to modern Greek (against the Erasmian pronunciation this reviewer initially learned). This is not only because of his clear advocacy of proper koine pronunciation (Erasmus' system

applies well to classical Greek, but *not* to koine); he also includes a helpful and clearly-written pronunciation guide.

Also appreciated is his balanced approach in addressing the concerns of Daniel Wallace, who argues that using the Erasmian pronunciation is more pedagogically effective. This is the strongest (and only) argument for retaining the incorrect Erasmian pronunciation, since Campbell argues that proper pronunciation of koine Greek is more respectful to the language, and his students "often comment that they feel more connected to a real language; it *sounds* like a real language" (206).

Overall, I have found this book to possess the rare quality of packing enough information as to have been a good steward of book length (read: reader time investment) without being dense or arcane. This is a robust and broad survey of key areas of scholarship that is usually ignored by users and exegetes of the Greek New Testament.

This book is also an excellent entré for readers who wish to wade more deeply into Greek with his helpful "annotated bibliographies" and surveys of key scholars and schools of thought. Campbell has proven to be an accessible guide into technical Greek debates, appraising various schools of thought fairly, *and* a good teacher, feeling free to teach and commend particular positions he believes have good support (which he offers to his readers), all the while avoiding narrow dogmatism by exhibiting charity and winsomeness to his fellow scholars.

This book is a great primer for NT exegetes and also a valuable guide for those seeking to apply advances in Greek scholarship toward responsible Greek exegesis for the Church. I wholeheartedly commend this book to all who love the Word of God and the people of God.

Find it on Amazon here.

Reviewed by: Dean Chia

Biblical Greek Language and Linguistics: Open Questions in Current Research, eds. Stanley Porter and D. A. Carson

Biblical Greek Language and Linguistics: Open Questions in Current Research, eds. Porter, Stanley E. and D. A. Carson. Biblical Studies: Bloomsbury Academic Collections (Bloomsbury, 2015), 217 pages.

This volume is important for the development of aspect theory in New Testament Greek and the application of modern linguistics to the New Testament corpus. These lectures were presented at the 1990 and 1991 annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature in the Consultation on Biblical Greek Language and Linguistics. It was originally published in 1993 in the JSNT Supplement Series, but it has now been republished by Bloomsbury in the Biblical Studies segment of their Academic Collections series.
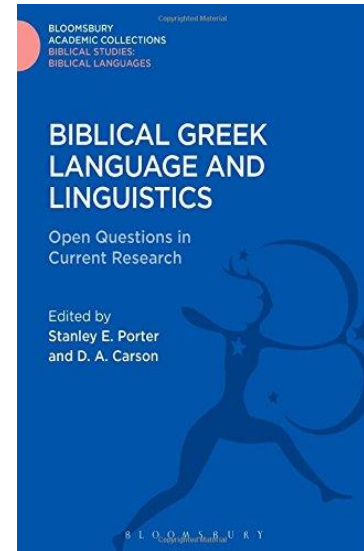
Verbal Aspect

The first section is devoted to aspect theory, specifically Porter and Fanning's 1989 and 1990 landmark publications on the topic. D. A. Carson introduces the debate between Porter and Fanning, briefly explaining where they agree and disagree. Following this essay are one each by Porter and Fanning examining in more detail their similarities and differences, but also critiquing one another's works and suggesting ways forward.

Daryl Schmidt's essay evaluates Fanning's and Porter's books as exhibiting two different approaches to aspect. Fanning's major flaw is his rather traditional acceptance of *Aktionsart* categories and his lack of translations for his Greek examples in each category. Porter's use of stative aspect has some precedence, but is uncertain, he has no morphological significance for the augment (71), and his volume is incredibly dense and his glosses are helpful but sometimes comment on irrelevant details. The major significance of these two volumes is the distinction between aspect and *Aktionsart*, which Schmidt hopes will now be accepted as clearly established (72).

Moisés Silva's essay gives a substantive critique of both Fanning and Porter. He appreciates the intensive work of both authors, claiming "our knowledge and understanding of the Greek verbal system has taken a quantum leap forward" (75). Nevertheless, he finds many faults.

Neither properly distinguish between different types of approaches to the question, such as pure linguistics, pedagogical, translational, and interpretive (76). He lists six other critiques as follows. (1) Exegesis can still be sound without a complete understanding of aspect, just as in English we can understand one another without a full understanding of aspect in English. (2) The desire for a clear cut definition of aspect is probably misguided, since language is fluid. (3) Sometimes, aspectual choices are dictated by grammar, so the choice is not really a choice. (4) Idiolect needs to be given more attention. (5) Some verbs tend to occur in certain tense-forms more than others, which Fanning was more sensitive to than Porter, but neither dealt with this fact enough. (6) Neither author distinguished between the information conveyed by aspect itself and the information given by the context as a whole. Fanning and Porter's opposite conclusions on a related matter lead Silva to conclude that "exegetes and pastors as well advised to say as little as possible about aspect" (82).

Applying Modern Linguistics to New Testament Greek

The second section applies modern linguistic methodologies to New Testament Greek to see if the methodologies will provide useful results. The first essay is by far the best and most practical as an application of discourse analysis. In this essay, Jeffrey Reed performs a discourse analysis on 1 Timothy to argue that "Timothy" (whoever that may be) is the intended recipient of the letter. This runs contrary to the view of many scholars who view Timothy as a device to authenticate Paul's authenticity by a pseudepigrapher, with the letter actually being addressed to the church at Ephesus with all its ecclesiastical instruction. Reed argues well that Timothy is the unifying thread to the various aspects of the macrostructure. This macrostructure is exemplified in the stated purpose for the letter in 1 Tim 3:14-15, which is addressed to Timothy. The conclusion is that Timothy is the thread that holds together the macrostructure of the entire letter, and he is the focus of the purpose for sending the letter, in order that he might know how to behave in the church of God. If this is correct, scholars have been incorrect that Timothy is a literary ploy for the pseudepigrapher, but that he (whoever Timothy is) is the true recipient of the letter. Reed's essay is an exemplary use of discourse analysis to solve issues lying in stalemate.

The rest of the essays are similarly important, but probably not as practical in their payoff. Paul Danove uses Construction Grammar to examine the difference between genitive and accusative objects of ἀκούω as well as the textual variant at 1 John 2:20. Next, Micheal Palmer discusses an important question: how to properly learn and teach a dead language. In the last essay, Mark Krause examines the finite verb and cognate participle and argues it is imitating the Semitic

construction of finite verb + cognate infinitive accusative. Each of these essays show the value of applying modern linguistics to study issues that can use more clarity.

Importance

But the main value of this volume is the first section on aspect theory. No landmark studies have been published since Fanning and Porter published theirs, and these initial essays are necessary reading for understanding the state of the discussion today.

The Studies in Biblical Greek (Peter Lang) series is churning out many important studies on verbal aspect, such as *Verbal Aspect, the Indicative Mood, and Narrative: Soundings in the Greek of the New Testament* and *Verbal Aspect and Non-Indicative Verbs: Further Soundings in the Greek of the New Testament,* both by Constantine Campbell. In order to properly enter into these works, one should have a firm grasp on the "Porter-Fanning" debate, on the critiques between the two of them, and on the comments made by Carson, Schmidt, and Silva. This is a wise starting place for research in this area.

Find it here on Amazon.

Reviewed by TS

Endangered Languages: An Introduction, by Sarah G. Thomason

Endangered Languages: An Introduction (Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics), by Sarah G. Thomason (Cambridge University Press, 2015), 229 pages.

"According to most experts' estimates, at least half of the world's seven thousand languages will vanish before the end of this century" (2). What an amazing statistic! Those of us interested in biblical languages have felt the sting of this statistic recently, as we heard news about the last of native Aramaic speakers dying out. What is it that leads to language "death," and how can languages be revitalized? Or should they be?
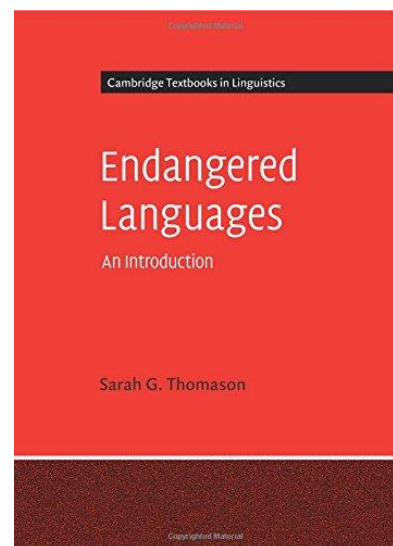
The purpose of this book is "to introduce the general topic of language endangerment…and to describe some methods designed to prevent endangerment from leading to the disappearance of a threatened language" (2). Thomason is an experienced fieldworker who has worked with two different language communities to document and revitalize their language. Her knowledge on the subject and secondary literature is obviously vast and her personal experience, which she discusses in the book, is both stimulating and illustrative of what it takes to slow or reverse language death.

Summary

Chapter one discusses what it means to be endangered. UNESCO's *Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger* has six different categories and is the major reference for Thomason throughout the book. There is also SIL's Ethnologue, but the figures of often outdated. Languages that are endangered generally have low numbers of speakers (but not necessarily) and the native speakers are typically older grandparents, while the children do not learn it as a first language.

How do languages become endangered? Chapter two highlights social, economic, and political factors. These factors include military conquest, economic pressures on minorities (e.g., to speak the majority language if they want a job), melting pot societies in which one language is seen as the natural language to learn, political neglect or suppression of a language (or lack of recognition of a language), community attitudes toward their language, loss of linguistic diversity through standardization (19-35). A language will remain safe (for now) if it is spoken by all ages, allows the community economic power, and in the case of languages with small numbers of speakers, remains isolated from language contact (36).

Chapter three illustrates how languages slide into dormancy or death. Thomason gives a history of the decline of five languages: Eyak, Cornish, Egyptian, Yaaku, and Mednyj-Aleut, the latter being the most interesting, as a mixed language using Aleut words with Russian verbal morphology (45-52). She also discusses "tip," which is the point at which a minority language that appeared stable suddenly begins rapidly declining because of sociopolitical forces (53). Attrition occurs when languages are dying, that is, the "loss of words and structural features, with no replacement features taking their place" (57). This can include the loss of specialized and ordinary lexical domains, structural patterns, phonemes, and verbal aspect. Alternatively, a language can die because of massive borrowing of grammatical and lexical units from another language.

Chapters four and five discuss why it matters if languages die, focusing on the loss of culture and scientific knowledge. Many heart-stirring poems or letters are cited to show how the loss of a heritage language can cause sadness in its community. She argues that the world would not be better off with only a few major languages, as some think, and that the more linguistic data we can collect and preserve, the more insight we have into human cognition. Chapter five also highlights the role languages have played in our understanding of world history. One important example is "click" languages. If these had died before we had discovered them, we would have no idea that human language could incorporate clicks, which would have been an unfortunate linguistic and scientific loss.

Chapters six and seven are less necessary to summarize, since you would need to read them yourself to gain any benefit. She discusses the nature of documenting an endangered language in the field, and what counts as "the field." She explains basic issues involved in fieldwork and then, in chapter seven, tells stories about her time in two different field positions in former Yugoslavia and Montana. The seventh chapter alone is worth the price of the book, since you get to experience along with Thomason, as she reminisces, what it is like to help a community revitalize their language.

Evaluation

Thomason has a firm grasp on the theoretical issues involved in studying endangered languages and has the requisite experience to write this textbook. The only negative aspect to her experience is that she seems to have been mostly successful in her time in the field. Aspiring fieldworkers would benefit from supplementing Thomason with accounts from those who were less-than-successful so they could be kept grounded in reality and prepared for trouble.

This work also does well to include discussion of ancient "dead" languages such as Latin, Babylonian, Egyptian, and ancient Hebrew, although she explains the factors that arose to the revitalization of Hebrew with the return of Israel in the '40s. One major gap in this work is any mention of modern attempts to revitalize ancient languages or stages of languages to facilitate certain fields of study.

There are many organizations now involved in trying to revive Koine Greek as a spoken language to help biblical studies students learn the language more intuitively, and some are doing so for biblical Hebrew as well. There are schools that speak only Latin to provide an immersion environment, so is Latin really "dead?" Thomason says that some languages have

survived because of their use in religious texts and rituals, but further consideration of what "dead" really means would have been useful, given these revitalization efforts among academics.

I would recommend this book to anyone interested in languages, linguistics, speaking second languages, and especially to anyone who teaches languages. Even the discussion of attrition is helpful for understanding how ancient languages changed over time and became simplified or borrowed from other languages as contact between cultures occurred. Moreover, anyone interested in the revitalization of ancient languages such as Latin, Koine Greek, and biblical Hebrew and Aramaic should read this work, since much can be learned about how to revitalize a language.

Reviewed by: TS

Galatians (Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament), by Peter Oakes

Galatians (Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament), by Peter Oakes (Baker Academic, 2015).

This Galatians commentary is concise, well-informed, accessible, and obviously filled with an immense amount of research and thought – not only thought about Galatians' theology, but also about methodology. Peter Oakes uses knowledge from various disciplines, such as archaeology, sociology, linguistics, and historical background to enlighten our reading of Galatians.
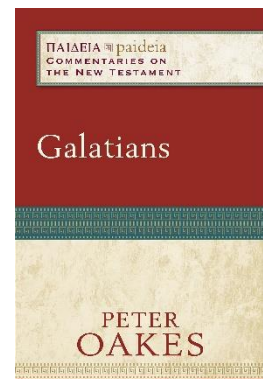
For example, he discusses archaeological evidence related to Galatians, especially as it pertains to house churches, to help us understand what a typical Pauline church would have looked like (11-14). Also in the introduction he provides some linguistic information you won't typically find in a commentary. While discussing the form and style of the letter, he provides a chart of the most frequently used lexical groups in Galatians and draws some conclusions about how we should read the letter (5-7). Such an analysis is an insightful use of discourse analysis that more commentators should make use of. Although, as I'm sure Dr. Oakes is aware, one cannot confuse lexical information for theological or conceptual information, which

may also dominate the letter even if specific lexemes are not used frequently. Oakes also interacts responsibly with Betz's rhetorical outline of Galatians, appropriating much of his insight but not swallowing Betz's assumption of Paul using Greco-Roman rhetoric wholesale.

The commentary proper is geared more toward pastors and students than scholars, in accord with the Paideia series. There is not a great deal of secondary references and there are frequent isolated boxes on various pages that give background information on topics under discussion. Some of these are quite helpful, for example when they provide primary source quotations from Jewish or Greco-Roman sources. Rather than noting something like "Seneca says how the entire world was under Nero's rule," he provides a six-line quotation from Seneca to let the reader see for himself or herself what Seneca actually says. The result of all this is a text that reads smoothly and focuses on the text itself, with helpful aids for those who want to see some of the relevant primary evidence for themselves.

If Oakes interacts more often with some scholars than others, it is definitely Martyn and de Boer and their apocalyptic reading of Paul. But his interaction is not as expansive as some may wish. He is generally content to explain various views, especially of Martyn or de Boer, and then leave his ultimate decision a bit ambivalent or tentative. I was hoping for a bit more explicit agreement or critique of the apocalyptic reading of Paul, but perhaps Oakes was trying to navigate the topic based on his audience and did not think extensive interaction with these views would be fruitful for his readers.

At the end of each section in the commentary, Oakes provides discussion of theological issues. These are issues of theological importance that arise from the exegesis of each section, and he does a fairly good job of extending the text to apply to our own day in some way. These theological comments could be used profitably for pastors preparing sermons and need help with application, or with those preparing Bible studies and need some talking points.

I'm a bit torn on who to recommend this commentary to. On the one hand, Oakes clearly has a firm grasp on the academic issues involved in Galatians, so the scholar could benefit in some way, but the exposition is not deep enough, nor the critique of opposing positions sharp enough, to be of great benefit. For the pastor, the exposition is concise, clear, and helpful, but sometimes Oakes leaves decisions too open-ended without coming down on a firm stance for how to translate (or interpret) certain clauses. Without firm, strong, convicted arguments, pastors may find the exposition a bit too unhelpful as they try to make their decisions. Yet the theological comments at the end are quite helpful for preparing sermons. This commentary may

be best for students who need accessible introductions to various takes on Paul's theology while using a resource that is similar to being taught in the classroom.

If I were to recommend this commentary to anyone, I'd recommend it to current masters or PhD students who want to get a better grasp on Paul's theology in a concise commentary while gleaning some applicational insights from his "theological issues" section.

If you're interested in other Galatians resources, we recently posted a review of the Baylor Handbook on the Greek Text of Galatians by David A. deSilva as well as a review of *Galatians and Christian Theology*, ed. Elliot, Hafemann, and Wright.

Find Oakes' *Galatians* here on Amazon.

Reviewed by TS

God & Morality: Four Views, ed. by R. Keith Loftin

God & Morality: Four Views, ed. by R. Keith Loftin (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2012), 180 pp.

Almost all Christians familiar with the world of apologetics are familiar with the "moral argument," which claims that in order for the moral law to be absolute and thereby create moral obligations, the moral law must be metaphysically grounded in an absolute source–namely, God.

It is rare that we hear serious dialogue among philosophers and ethicists who ascribe to competing views on this issue. Keith Loftin has ably served as a fair referee as four of these positions are stated, critiqued, and defended. Two of the contributors (Fales and Ruse) approach the issue from the perspective of atheism/agnosticism and two (Yandell and Linville) from the perspective of Christian theism.

Too often the views of those with differing perspectives are quickly dismissed and rarely granted the serious consideration that they deserve. This work presents an articulate statement of each of these four positions in dialogue, which is helpful for refining the reader's understanding of the
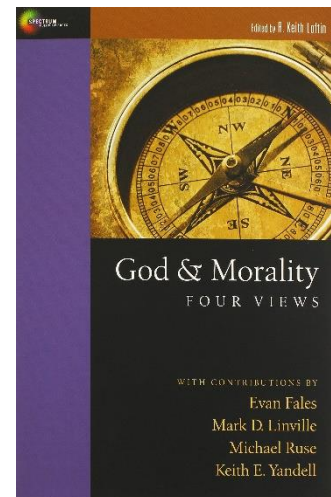
distinctions between the views, especially those which share a common view about the existence of God.

The **first view** that this book addresses is naturalist moral realism, the view that moral facts exist, but are simply a feature of the natural world and are not grounded in a supernatural, spiritual, or divine source. Evan Fales describes and defends this position.

The **second position**, described and defended by Michael Ruse, is naturalist moral nonrealism. Ruse argues that moral facts are only apparent because of the way that human beings have evolved–essentially, what we perceive as moral facts are beliefs that provide an evolutionary advantage to the bearer.

The **third section** of the book is focused on moral essentialism. This view, represented by Keith Yandell, holds that for a moral fact to be true, it must be true independent of any mind, sociological arrangement, or linguistic convention–it is necessarily true. This makes Yandell, like Fales, a moral realist, but unlike Fales, Yandell argues that moral facts are metaphysically grounded in either the nature or command of God.

The **last section** of the book is concerned with moral particularism, which is represented and defended by Mark Linville. This view rejects the idea that there are overarching moral principles applicable in every case. Instead, the moral man is one of good faith and acts for the benefit of others based upon the particular circumstances in which he finds himself.

The primary strength of this work is the quality of the contributions. Each of the contributors is a serious philosopher with credentials and respect within the field. Further, most of the contributions are approachable by the informed non-specialist. The only exception to this is Keith Yandell's article on moral essentialism. It may be that it would have been impossible to explain this position adequately without what Michael Ruse calls, "technical philosophical analysis," but this chapter is much more dense than the others. The fact that the other chapters are so approachable and generally free of the type of philosophical writing that scares away would-be non-specialist readers makes Yendell's chapter even more difficult. Having said that, however, a non-philosopher would have no problem reading this book, following the arguments, and coming away with a sufficient understanding of the distinctions between the positions.

There is no doubt that there are other works that treat the "moral question" with more depth, but there is no work that I know of that treats the question with as much seriousness as Loftin's work, but remains approachable to any informed reader. Most accessible works are shallow and

often unfair in the way that they characterize the positions and problems of those who fall outside of a certain camp. Loftin has succeeded in editing a helpful, accessible, and balanced work that can be read quickly with only minimal prior exposure to philosophy.

Come back again for an interview with the editor, Keith Loftin.

Check it out or buy it here on Amazon.

Reviewed by Trey Dimsdale

The Historical Jesus: An Essential Guide, by James Charlesworth

The Historical Jesus: An Essential Guide, by James Charlesworth (Abingdon, 2008), 131 pages.

Who was Jesus of Nazareth, and what can we know about him? Do the Gospels preserve any genuine traditions about Jesus? Was he a historical figure at all? Many people ask these questions, and many scholars try to answer them. The historical figure of Jesus is an elusive one for most scholars, who find him to be quite different from the "Christ of faith," a distinction prominent since Martin Kähler's *The So-Called Historical Jesus and the Historic, Biblical Christ* (1892).

James Charlesworth is a prominent, senior scholar who is an authority on second temple literature, especially the Pseudepigrapha and Dead Sea Scrolls, and the New Testament. In this guide to the historical Jesus, Charlesworth writes for the student who wants to learn about the major issues in academic research on the historic figure of Jesus. It is a compendium of information about modern research methods, historical issues related to Jesus' life, Jesus' message, and other related issues.

Chapter one surveys the quests for the historical Jesus, which leads into the present "Third Quest," which he calls Historical Jesus research. He highlights the progress scholars have made by moving away from the extremes of positivism and subjectivism. The result of this long history of research culminated in many research methods, explained in chapter two. He mentions five major tools for discerning genuine tradition, such as the criterion of
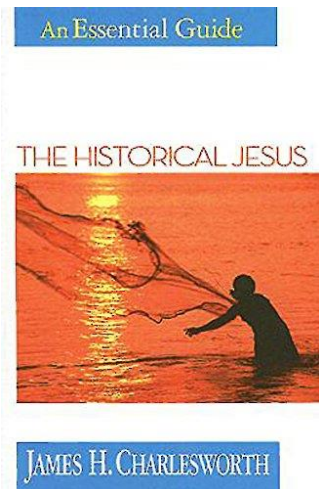
embarrassment, as well as ten other less important tools, such as noting transliterated Aramaic throughout the Gospels.

Chapter three surveys the three important extrabiblical sources for Jesus, which are Tacitus, Josephus, and the Gospel of Thomas. He also explores whether the Gospels are objective biography, which he concludes they are not (this may not be the best question to answer, since no biography is objective, as Charlesworth notes). Chapter four introduces us to the Judaisms of Jesus' time and tries to situate him historically. Most interesting is his "Ten Modern Misconceptions about Judaism during Jesus' time" section. Many of these are not contentious, although his second misconception is that Jews in Jesus' day were legalistic, following Sanders. While Sanders has fixed the misconception that they were *completely* legalistic, the problem with saying they were not legalistic is that one can find many texts that either explicitly or implicitly espouse or presuppose legalism, and there were so many varieties of Judaism, some of which was preserved in writings, and many of which were simply held by common Jews.

The rest of the chapters cover issues related to Jesus' birth and childhood (ch. 5), his early public life, archaeological evidence for Jesus' life (ch. 7), Jesus' proclamation of God's rule in his parables (ch. 8), and Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection (ch. 9). Charlesworth provides helpful summaries of available evidence in some places, such as his list of archaeological finds from Jesus' time and culture (87). He also comes to some unique conclusions, for example, that John the Baptist was likely Jesus' teacher (although other historians have suggested this before, it is not explicit in the biblical texts at all [77]).

Evaluation

The major strength of this book is its inclusion of a mass amount of data and the available evidence that bear on different questions related to the historical Jesus. In that sense, it fulfills its purpose as a guide to students wishing to get a grasp on the various issues up for debate.

The major weakness of this work is its one-sided analysis and exclusion of other positions, even those held by critical scholars. For example, he assumes Markan priority throughout without seriously considering any other redactional theories. Moreover, in the introduction, Charlesworth takes the saying from Mark 9:1 ("there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see that the Kingdom of God has come with power") and says without any nuance or reservation that the other Evangelists changed the wording because "what Mark reported was embarrassing, and that they had to change what Mark had attributed to Jesus" (xx).

But as great a scholar as Charlesworth knows there are at least five other interpretations of Mark 9:1:

1. A reference to the transfiguration (cf. Mark 8:4-7), which follows contextually in all three of the synoptics.
2. The resurrection and the outpouring of the Spirit immediately following it (cf. Mark 9:9-10 and the Matthean parallel). Cf. 28:18.
3. The judgment of Jerusalem and the destruction of it and of the Temple (cf. Lk. 22:69; Mk. 13; and par. Jn. 2:19-22).
4. The powerful advance of the gospel in the pagan world.
5. That both a near and far off reference is intended.

If one makes a methodological mistake in the very beginning and builds his entire case from that mistake, then the entire case will be quite flawed. That is not to say that Charlesworth's interpretation is incorrect, but it is to say that it seems slanted and biased to omit five other interpretations of the passage that have been advanced and then build his case for historical inaccuracy of parts of the Gospels from that point.

One other gaping lacuna is his omission of any discussion of philosophy of history. We are now at a time when I do not think any sort of historiographical discussion can be had without first discussing the relevant issues from philosophy of history. Charlesworth is attempting to avoid what he believes to be errant extremes, that of positivism and relativism. Such an attempt surely has become popular today, especially since N. T. Wright popularized "critical realism," building off Ben Meyer. But while positivism surely should be laid to rest, there are many other philosophical paradigms that would allow us to have genuine knowledge of the past through the biblical documents themselves. Redaction surely took place, but Charlesworth's simplistic acceptance of one critical interpretation over many other possible interpretations at these points of redaction allows for a bleak and overly critical view of the ability to see the historical Jesus through the texts. I think the historical Jesus is much more evident and clearly visible in the biblical text than Charlesworth does.

Nevertheless, this guide will stay available on my shelf for its massive collation of data and clear exploration of the issues. I commend Charlesworth for presenting such a clear guide to the historical Jesus and would recommend this book to anyone interested, with the precautions mentioned.

Find it here on Amazon.

Reviewed by TS

Jesus, Paul and the People of God: A Theological Dialogue with N. T. Wright, eds. Nicholas Perrin and Richard B. Hays

Jesus, Paul and the People of God: A Theological Dialogue with N. T. Wright, edited by Nicholas Perrin and Richard B. Hays (IVP Academic, 2011), 294 pages.

Jesus, Paul, and the People of God: A Theological Dialogue with N. T. Wright brings together the proceedings from the 2010 Wheaton Theology Conference, in which a group of scholars who also happen to be Wright's friends were invited to deliver papers responding to some of the most important features of his work on Jesus and Paul. In distinction from other works responding to a biblical scholar, this book holds the unique features of 1) offering a *theological* response and 2) bringing the conversation to bear on the church, that is, the "people of God."

The book is divided into two parts, the first on historical Jesus research and the second on Pauline studies. Each essay concludes with a brief response from Wright, and each of the two parts closes with a lengthier essay from Wright addressing broader issues on Jesus studies and Pauline studies, respectively, with particular attention paid to implications for the church.

In Part 1, Marianne Meye Thompson kicks things off with an essay that brings Wright's *Jesus and the Victory of God* into conversation with the Gospel of John. She draws out some interesting points about how *JVG* actually makes some judgments about the identity and mission of Jesus that are very similar to the Gospel of John even though it largely ignores the Fourth Gospel. Thompson also addresses Wright's understanding of Jesus in relation to the temple and the forgiveness of sins.

Next, Richard Hays's essay addresses historical Jesus studies from the perspective of story and history. He outlines Wright's methodology, notes theological gains and losses resulting from
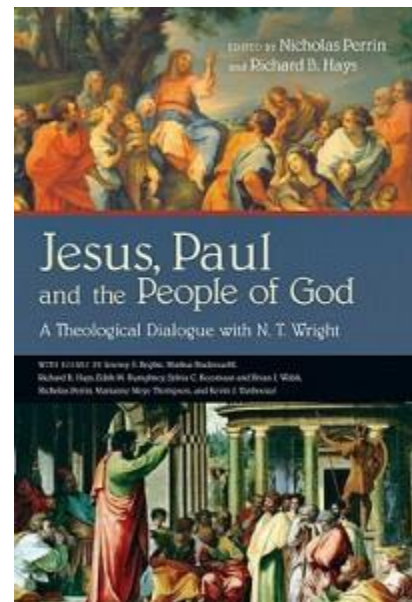
Wright's critical-realist historicism, and concludes with two programmatic proposals for where we go from here.

In the third essay, Silvia C. Keesmaat and Brian J, Walsh address the "so what" of Wright's work and focus specifically on the issue of economic justice. The authors mainly critique Wright for not discussing texts that address justice and righteousness, and for downplaying themes of economic justice. They also address the very practical question of what Christians should do with their money and how to invest without participating in systems that perpetuate economic injustice.

Finally, Nicholas Perrin offers an essay exploring eschatology and kingdom ethics and contends that Wright's identification of the destruction of the temple with the end of exile, and making the imminent disaster a fundamental basis for Jesus's kingdom ethics, provides a plausible explanation for Jesus's social ethic but not his personal ethic (107-108). At almost twice the length of the other essays, Wright's detailed concluding essay does respond to some of the critiques from the first four essays, but also offers a broad picture of where historical Jesus studies came from and where some of the big problems lie.

In the opening essay of Part 2, Edith Humphrey addresses Wright's treatment of the gospel and the righteousness of God, apocalyptic language (especially as it relates to the ascension), and Wright as scholar and leader. Humphrey mainly takes issue with Wright's reading of 2 Corinthians 5:21, which he addresses in his response, maintaining his position. She also expresses desire for him to draw more from the church fathers and the Eastern Church. Next, Jeremy Begbie explores Wright's ecclesiology in relation to the "emerging church." He addresses the features of Wright's ecclesiology that they find appealing, the features they neglect, and ultimately how they can benefit from giving attention to those elements they neglect.

In the third essay of this section, Markus Bockmuehl addresses Wright's theology of the afterlife, focusing on "his conviction that an affirmation of the bodily resurrection necessitates a denial of the traditional Christian belief that the faithful 'go to heaven' when they die" (213). Wright responds that Bockmuehl's has misread him on this matter, and that he does not deny the traditional Christian understanding of heaven but is merely offering a corrective to the tradition of heaven being the final destination.

Finally, Kevin Vanhoozer offers what is in some ways the most important essay in this book. Given that the most heated topic of controversy in relation to Wright pertains to justification and

that the camp he gets critiqued by the most on this topic is the Reformed, an essay on this topic is a must in a book interacting with Wright theologically. Vanhoozer sees incorporated righteousness as the key to reconciling the "old" and "new" camps and proposes a greater focus on union with Christ from both camps will start to close the divide, enabling us to "Wright the wrongs of the Reformation" and to combine the best of both Wrightian and Reformed theology on justification.

Jesus, Paul and the People of God is an excellent book engaging with one of the most important and controversial NT scholars of our day on various topics in historical Jesus and Pauline studies. Given that it arose from a theology conference and that it's published by an academic imprint, this book is surprisingly accessible. The serious lay bible/theology student with interest in the topics at hand would benefit much from this book and would not find it to be an inaccessibly challenging read.

On the other hand, the formal theology student as well as scholars would gain much from this book as well, again, because of the unique way that it provides a *theological* and *practical* engagement with Wright's work that touches on real-life implications for the church. This is a great book whether you've read Wright or haven't, and whether you mainly agree or disagree with him. I do think that Vanhoozer's essay is especially important and should be read by all who care about the justification debate, especially those who identify as Reformed. Wright's essay concluding the Jesus section ("Whence and Wither Historical Jesus Studies in the Life of the Church?") would make an excellent introduction to historical Jesus research for the beginning student.

Preview or buy *Jesus, Paul and the People of God* here on Amazon.

Reviewed by Jennifer Guo

Linguistics and the New Testament: Critical Junctures, eds. Stanley Porter and D. A. Carson

Linguistics and the New Testament: Critical Junctures (Library of New Testament Studies), eds. Stanley Porter and D. A. Carson (T&T Clark, 2015), 297 pages.

T&T Clark is reissuing several studies from the JSNTSS series in their Library of New Testament Studies series. Many of these are valuable sets of essay, including the present volume, which contains papers that apply modern linguistic methods to the analysis of the New Testament. As in most sets of essays, some are more useful than others, but the volume gives a good sampling of what modern linguistics has to offer biblical scholars.

Carson introduces the volume with an essay on the ever-increasing fragmentation of biblical studies. He provides four different ways to respond to such fragmentation, from blissful ignorance to sweeping acceptance of the most postmodern of methods.
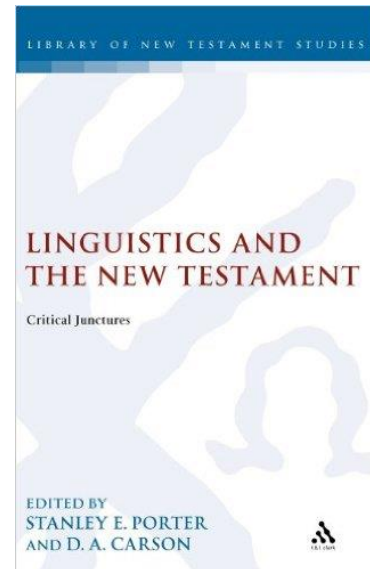
Part 1 contains essays on literary analysis, discourse analysis, and rhetorical analysis. George Guthrie discusses some overlap between literary analysis and some forms of linguistic analysis, highlighting especially discourse analysis and the need for more attention to macro-analysis and sensitivity (but not sweeping acceptance) of new methodologies. Jeffrey Reed suggests discourse analysis, which he describes in some detail, has much to offer historical criticism, especially in literary analysis of letters in terms of their coherence and unity, but notes discourse analysis's inability to answer historical questions. Stanley Porter then examines overviews several attempts to integrate linguistics and rhetoric, including linguistics grammars, tagmemics, communication theory, sociolinguistics, and discourse analysis. He gives a negative appraisal of the merits of rhetorical analysis for the future of biblical studies (92).

Part 2 includes four essays on words. Casey Davis provides some characteristic oral features of texts in illiterate societies and analyzes many parts of Philippians he believes to exhibit these features. Andreas Köstenberger argues that the two verbs for sending in John's Gospel (πέμπω, ἀποστέλλω) are synonymous (contra Rengstorf in *TDNT*), but the reason for their variation is not simply stylistic. Some choices to use one verb over the other are due to

obsolesence in forms, but mostly he attributes the choices to stereotyped phrases and echoing of other phrases (142-43). Paul Danove provides an analysis of four groups of verbs (24 total) and their semantic, syntactic, and lexical functions. He provides a stimulating analysis of these components as a provisional beginning of a lexicon that includes the "notation of the argument structures assigned or required by particular words and of the semantic roles related to these argument structures" (144).

The last and most important essay comes from Matthew O'Donnell on whether arguments from style can ground claims to authorship. He demonstrates the linguistic naiveté of past studies on style, showing that many arguments such as lexical choice, sentence length, and word order are, from the perspective of modern linguistics, unable to prove authorship of documents. The argument is too detailed to summarize here, but if you are interested at all in pseudepigraphy and the discussions about biblical authorship, this long article is well worth trodding through.

The value of this volume is that it accomplishes its purpose to show the value of integrating the insights of modern linguistics into biblical studies. But each essay contributes more or less to this purpose. Köstenberger's essay doesn't exactly use much modern linguistics except for building upon Barr's criticism of *TDNT*. Guthrie's initial essay is a helpful foray into the question, but asks more questions than provides answers (as he says he intended to do).

I found the last two essays the most important, although in the case of the verbal lexicon essay by Danove I'm a bit biased since I annotated semantic roles of verbs as my job as a computational linguist. I wondered how I could integrate my semantic parsing into the analysis of the biblical texts, and I'm delighted to see Danove doing exactly that. Such a lexicon would tell us a great deal about the semantic, lexical, and syntactic structures that accompany each verb. This could go a long way toward assisting discourse analysts and exegetes. I already noted the importance of the last essay and I highly commend it for consideration for anyone working in the area of pseudepigraphy.

Lastly, I recommend to all biblical studies students and professors the study of modern linguistics. Since we work with discourses in everything we do, we must know how language works and how to analyze it. This volume makes a solid contribution toward helping us do that.

Find it here on Amazon.

Reviewed by Todd Scacewater

Paul's Divine Christology, by Chris Tilling

Paul's Divine Christology, by Chris Tilling (Eerdmans, 2015), 346 pp.

Paul's Divine Christology is a slightly revised version of Chris Tilling's Ph.D. dissertation completed in 2009 under Max Turner at the London School of Theology, with Steve Walton and Larry Hurtado as external examiners. It was originally published in 2012 by Mohr Siebeck in the prestigious NT monograph series WUNT II. Tilling's thesis joins the ranks of Gordon Fee's *Pauline Christology*, Larry Hurtado's *Lord Jesus Christ*, and Richard Bauckham's *Jesus and the God of Israel* as one of the most significant volumes in modern scholarship arguing for (Pauline) divine Christology. That is one reason why this monograph deserves a wide readership and why it is such a good thing that Eerdmans recently released a much more affordable reprint.
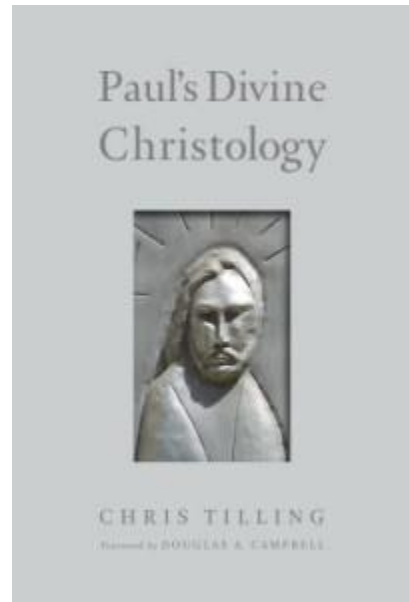
The other reason why I'm so happy about this reprint is that *Paul's Divine Christology* is one of those monographs that should be widely read by non-academics. The subject matter treated here is not something so esoteric that it is meaningless outside the ivory towers of academia. As Tilling notes in the preface to this new edition, "to attend to the dynamics of Paul's own Christological rhetoric is ultimately to find ourselves wrestling with the challenge of living in communal relationship with the risen Christ *today* (xx, italics original).

In *Paul's Divine Christology*, Tilling builds upon the work of Fee, Hurtado, and Bauckham while avoiding their weaknesses and advances a thesis for Pauline divine Christology that not only strengthens their arguments but also advances the divinity debate with a fresh perspective.

In a nutshell, it will be argued that the whole Pauline divine-Christology debate has yet to grasp sufficiently the most obvious, namely, Paul's own language and the most appropriate patter of Pauline themes relevant to this debate. By analysing the data in Paul which concerns the relation between the risen Lord and believers, it will be maintained that relational data concerning Christ in Paul's letters corresponds, as a pattern, only to the language concerning

YHWH in second Temple Judaism. It is concluded that the Christ-relation is Paul's divine-Christology expressed as relationship (3).

Tilling begins with a history of research on Pauline divine Christology that in and of itself provides great value since a detailed history-of-research on this specific topic had not previously been written. Next, Tilling devotes a chapter to showing the need for his study by pointing out the main weaknesses in the works of Fee, Hurtado, and Bauckham on this topic. His critiques here are quite detailed and address a variety of areas, but the key arguments noted from opponents of Pauline divine Christology relate to Hurtado's emphasis on discontinuity (we have evidence of veneration of intermediary figures in Second Temple literature, which means that veneration of Jesus would not automatically mean He was fully divine alongside the God of Israel) and Bauckham's case resting on Jews reserving certain predications for God alone (whereas, again, occasional instances can be found where some of these predications are used of intermediary figures). Hence, both Bauckham and Hurtado's main cases for a fully divine Christology suffer from the presence of (albeit, rare) counterevidence.

Tilling's approach avoids this fundamental weakness by beginning with Paul rather than Second Temple literature. The bulk of his thesis is advanced through four exegetical chapters that cover the entire undisputed Pauline corpus. Whereas previous studies on Pauline Christology proceed by examining a few texts deemed to be "key," Tilling avoids the typical narrowness in relation to Paul and shows that according to his scheme, Paul's divine Christology is *everywhere*. What's Tilling's scheme? It's a relational one, in which Christ and his people are described in ways that Jews only used to describe the relationship between YHWH and his people.

…this pattern of Christ-relation language in Paul is only that which a Jew used to express the relation between Israel/the individual Jew and YHWH. No other figure of any kind, apart from YHWH, was related to in the same way, with the same pattern of language, not even the various exalted human and angelic intermediary figures in the literature of Second Temple Judaism that occasionally receive worship and are described in very exalted terms (73).

Whereas studies on this topic typically begin with Second Temple literature and end with less attention on Paul, Tilling did just the opposite by first firmly establishing the key contours of Paul's thought on Jesus through five chapters of robust exegetical work before spending a chapter on Jewish devotion to exalted intermediary figures of the Second Temple period. Whereas these are the counterexamples typically leveraged against Hurtado and Bauckham and perhaps seen as the Achilles' Heel of the case for a Pauline divine Christology, Tilling demonstrates that there is no parallel with intermediary figures of the God-relation pattern seen

in Pauline Christ-relation. In the final main chapter (10) of the book Tilling draws together four points that lead to the conclusion that Paul's Christ-relation means the affirmation of a divine Christology. Then he briefly revisits nine main arguments used to deny a Pauline divine Christology.

I conclude by reiterating a statement I made at the beginning of this post: Tilling's thesis joins the ranks of Fee's *Pauline Christology*, Hurtado's *Lord Jesus Christ,* and Bauckham's *Jesus and the God of Israel* as one of the most significant volumes in modern scholarship arguing for (Pauline) divine Christology. Tilling builds on these significant works and leverages the best of their methods and conclusions while avoiding their weaknesses and offering a fresh approach that finally moves the divine Christology debate past its stalemate. This book is a **must-read** for those interested in the topic of (Pauline) divine Christology, but is also essential reading for those interested in Pauline studies and Christology in general.

Preview it or buy it here on Amazon.

TS

Philosophy Before Socrates: An Introduction with Texts and Commentaries, 2nd ed., by Richard D. McKirahan

Philosophy Before Socrates: An Introduction with Texts and Commentary. 2nd ed. (Hackett, 2010), 494 pages.

This work contains the primary texts containing information about the presocratic philosophers, with introductory notes and commentary on the texts. He organizes the material by topic to attempt to present each thinker in an organized fashion. The beauty of this book, as opposed to other "readers," is that McKirahan presents "most, and in many cases all, of the fragments of the philosophers discussed, as well as other important evidence on their thought" (ix). There are cases where he cannot do this, for example, Hesiod's *Theogony*, which is too long for full inclusion. But to have nearly all the allusions to and testimonia of the presocratics
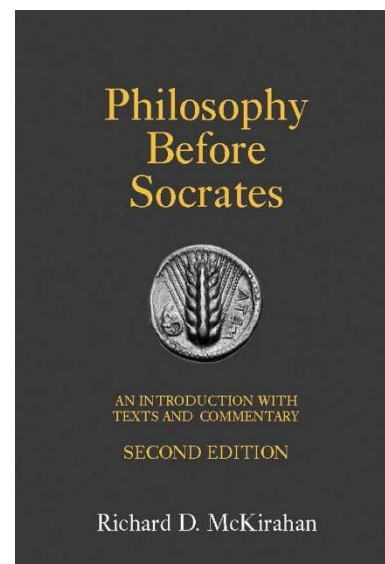
collated in one book, along with a presocratic scholar to walk you through it, makes this the perfect book for your library.

This second edition is an update from the 1994 edition. The impetus was important newly discovered material from Empedocles, but he has made edits in almost every chapter, even changing some of his conclusions (xii).

Contents

The first chapter explains the most important sources for the presocratics, from Plato (427-347 BC) to Simplicius (6th century AD). He explains each author's biases and how to carefully read and interpret the references to the presocratics. There are indeed problems with reading these allusions and testimonia naïvely, but he believes it is "reasonable to suppose that in some cases at least we can attain an approximation to what the philosopher actually thought" (6).

Each chapter covers either a specific philosopher or socio-political conditions in the time and location of those philosophers. His chapters contain helpful illustrations. So, for example, chapters cover Hesiod, Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes, Xenophanes, etc. Other chapters interspersed at relevant junctures cover, for example, Miletus in the Sixth Century, which provides information relevant for understanding Thales and his successors, and early Greek moral thought and the fifth-century Sophists, which is required for understanding much of Plato's writings.

The final chapter covers the *Nomos-Phusis* debate, covering the major players such as Antiphon, Callicles, Thrasymachus, and others. A chapter like this is perhaps the most helpful, since it brings in all the testimony of various pre-socratics on the topic, which would be hard to gather for oneself.

Evaluation

McKirahan has provided for philosophy students and those in other fields an indispensable work. This volume is comprehensive, includes primary texts in order to read the philosophers for oneself, and McKirahan's commentary is excellent. For example, his commentary on Hesiod's *Theogany* is helpful in many ways. He explains the main point of each section of *Theogany* (at least the sections he is able to include from this long poem), and he does well to contrast the worldview of the poem from other similar religious or cultural expressions, such as *Enuma Elish* (8).

His exegesis is concise, but meaty enough to give the reader a framework within which to understand the poem and its ideas. On page 12, he provides an image that represents the realm of heaven, Tartaros, ocean, earth, and the gates that supposedly allow for transport between the realms. Such a simple visual allows the reader a hook on which to hang the ideas of *Theogany,* an image apart from which the ideas might quickly fall into obscurity. The book is filled with such helpful diagrams and illustrations.

The most helpful aspect of this book is the inclusion of all fragments available for most writers. I had never studied Philolaus before reading chapter 18 of this book, but it becomes simple to do so when all the fragments of his writings are collated in two pages for you (352-353). McKirahan then provides a couple paragraphs on his life and writing, followed by thematic expositions of his fragments (nature of reality, cosmogony and cosmology, etc.).

Relevance for Biblical Studies

Most of you are probably students and scholars of biblical studies or pastors. Why would you want this book? As you probably know, one major question in NT studies is how much of the surrounding culture influenced the writings of the NT authors. Paul is frequently compared with the Stoics. Hebrews is frequently charged with borrowing from Platonism. Aristotelian vocabulary and concepts are sometimes found in various places (e.g., μορφή in Phil 2:6). The Greek culture in which Christianity evolved was always exerting its ideas and worldview on its citizens. If we want to understand the NT in its cultural milieu, we need to understand the pre-Socratics, from whom all of Western philosophy took shape.

More than the cultural history, however, biblical students, pastors, and theologians must be conversant with philosophy. Much of Heidegger, for example, is a reshaping of Plato's metaphysics, and we know how much Heidegger's philosophy has influenced NT studies through the likes of Bultmann. Western ethical theory began in ancient Greece, as did speculation on being and knowing. Since we are so concerned with God's being and how we can know the world around us, metaphysics and epistemology are fields in which we must at least be conversant.

If you're starting philosophy from scratch, you may want to start with a book that will introduce you to the various realms of philosophy. For that, from a Christian perspective there may be no better book than *Doing Philosophy As a Christian* by Garrett DeWeese (which I've reviewed here). But while knowing the divisions of philosophy and various positions are important, one also needs a historical understanding of Western philosophy as it developed. For a

comprehensive sweep of Western philosophy, I would recommend W. T. Jones' *History of Western Philosophy*, but one could begin with a shorter history such as *An Illustrated Brief History of Western Philosophy* by Anthony Kenny. But if you want to simply dive right in to the pre-socratics, you can pick up on the categories of debate within the divisions of philosophy intuitively, and there's no better book for that than *Philosophy Before Socrates*.

Find it on Amazon here.

Reviewed by TS

Portrait of an Apostle: A Case for Paul's Authorship of Colossians and Ephesians, by Gregory S. MaGee

Portrait of an Apostle: A Case for Paul's Authorship of Colossians and Ephesians, by Gregory S. MaGee (Wipf & Stock, 2013), 204 pages.

If Colossians, Ephesians, or both are pseupigraphal writings, how would we know? There is one objective, historical test to which we might subject the documents. There are documents that are unanimously agreed to be Pauline pseudepigraphs, namely, *Epistle to the Loadiceans* (*Ep. Lao.*) and *Third Corinthians* (*3 Cor.*). An objective, historical test would be to compare the language and ideas of these two known pseudepigraphs to the language and ideas of Colossians and Ephesians. When these documents are compared with the agreed upon Pauline corpus (say, the seven-letter corpus), do they all compare and diverge in the same way?
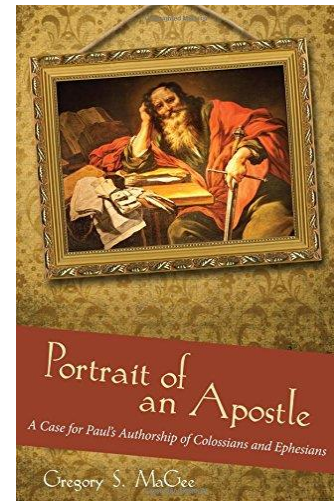
Summary

This was the creative idea for Gregory MaGee's dissertation at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School under the supervision of D. A. Carson. MaGee is responding to what he calls the "Exalted Apostle Theory," which holds that pseudepigraphers stressed Paul's authority in their letters by exalted descriptions of his ministry, apostleship, and suffering. This stress, which diverges from Paul's portrayal of himself in the accepted Paulines, gives away a veneration of Paul that betrays a post-apostolic historical setting.

MaGee lays the groundwork in chapter two by expounding six themes tied up with Paul's self-portrayal (21):

1. Paul's revelation from Christ on the Damascus Road

2. Paul's sense of God's grace in choosing and empowering him

3. The revelation of the mystery of the gospel to Paul

4. The OT foundations of Paul's ministry perspective

5. Paul's standing as an apostle in relation to the other apostles

6. Paul's ministry through suffering and imprisonment.

He then compares *Ep. Lao.* and *3 Cor.* to Paul's self-portrait in the undisputed Paulines. He finds that both letters imitate language from the undisputed Paulines quite slavishly, and references to Paul's persona and apostleship are rather forced, with no relevance to the literary context or the supposed historical context inferred from the letters (63-79).

The last two chapters make the same investigation of Colossians and Ephesians, respectively. The passages that involve Paul's self-portrayal are Col 1:1; 1:23-2:3, 5; 4:4, 10, 18; Eph 1:1; 3:1-13; 4:1; 6:19-20. In Colossians, MaGee demonstrates that three of the six themes of Paul's self-portrayal are present (numbers 2, 3, and 6 above), and the three that are missing are not required by the historical context of the letter as they were in other letters, such as the polemical Galatians and 1-2 Corinthians (122-126). While many similar words and phrases are used in Colossians and the undisputed Paulines, the language of Colossians is freely composed rather than slavishly copied, and the theology is in line with the undisputed Paulines as well. Moreover, the references to Paul's persona in Colossians are well integrated into the letter and do not seem to have been inserted haphazardly to feign authenticity, as in *Ep. Lao.* and *3 Cor.*

Ephesians is much the same way. But of course the main reason for scholars holding Ephesians to be pseudepigraphal is its close linguistic similarity with Colossians. Supposedly, since so much of the wording is nearly exactly the same, it must be a later Pauline pseudepigrapher imitating Paul's letter to the Ephesians. But MaGee demonstrates that the wording of Colossians and Ephesians differ enough that it may be more plausible that Paul wrote Ephesians in a similar historical situation as Colossians, with the ideas still fresh in his mind. He concludes there is more coherence, and thus explanatory power, in the theory that Paul wrote both letters than in the Exalted Apostle Theory (170-173).

Evaluation

What exactly has MaGee proven, if anything? The merit of this study is to bring some objectivity into the debate. Since we can all agree that *Ep. Lao.* and *3 Cor.* are pseudepigraphal, we can judge how those two pseudepigraphers imitated Paul and see if Colossians and Ephesians exhibit similar marks of pseudepigraphy. The volume takes the approach of closely exegeting each passage involved in Paul's self-portrayal. While this does make for slow reading, it evinces a careful approach that desires a sensitive reading of the text without immediately jumping to conclusions. I truly enjoyed this book, and the thesis is clear and helpful in the current debate.

But I have some substantive criticism, *to which MaGee has graciously written a reply.*

First, the authors of *Ep. Lao.* and *3 Cor.* are only two pseudepigraphers. They do give us an actual example of how two (supposedly) different authors imitated Paul. But how do we know that other pseudepigraphers would not imitate Paul more freely, slightly developing his theory and using similar but altered language? In fact, this is what most scholars who argue against Pauline authorship of the canonical letters argue (or really, assume). When an argument is made that a pseudepigrapher would attempt to imitate Paul closely to appear authentic (as even MaGee assumes [11]), scholars respond by arguing a *truly crafty* pseudepigrapher would depart from Paul's language a bit in order not to be caught.

But really, how can anyone know this either way? These are nothing but baseless, imaginative historical assumptions about faceless and nameless persons. We may look at pseudepigraphs and examine how the authors try (or do not try) to imitate the purported author, but we have such a small sample size that we can make no reliable determination about how any one particular pseudepigrapher would attempt to imitate an author. So while MaGee has brought in *some* objectivity, I am not sure it is anywhere near enough to make a difference. (Note: as MaGee will correctly point out, he does not claim to be adding objectivity; that is my observation, and I think he has added *some* objectivity to the debate in this sense alone.)

Second, MaGee relies on the scale of "explanatory power." In historiography, the coherence theory of truth is popular, since it makes much sense on the surface to suggest that whichever picture makes the most coherent story out of the data is the (most) true story. MaGee is not using the coherence *theory of truth*, but he does suggest his explanation of the historical occasion of Colossians and Ephesians has "greater explanatory power" than the Exalted Apostle Theory, and that he has attempted to explore "multiple possible meanings for the discourse in the pursuit of a coherent interpretation that fits the background presented by the letter itself" (170, 173). This approach of "the most coherent story wins the day" has been

argued at length by N. T. Wright in his version of critical realism and is popular both in biblical studies and historiography more generally.

But the problem is that, as Alvin Plantinga has demonstrated at length in his trilogy on warrant,coherence is neither necessary nor sufficient for providing warrant (or rationality) for a belief. So a historical belief could be coherent, but still lack warrant, and even lack truth. And of course, there is no objective criteria for determining which theory does have the most explanatory power, and those favorable to pseudepigraphal explanation will certainly find the "Exalted Apostle Theory" more coherent and explanatory of the data than MaGee's position. So the approach to aim for greater explanatory power should not be relied upon in these types of inquiries, since ideological biases eradicate the ability to judge explanatory power objectively, and because coherence itself guarantees us nothing except coherence.

Third, even if MaGee is right in his analysis, he does not nullify other means of arguing for pseudepigraphy. Now, MaGee says the goal of his study is "to cast doubt on the viability of this paradigm and to offer alternate and ultimately more effective explanations for the ways that Paul expresses his understanding of his calling" (174). It seems to me that MaGee holds up two possibilities throughout the study: either the author is a pseudepigrapher that fits in with the "Exalted Apostle Theory" or the author is Paul.

But even if MaGee is correct that the portrait of Paul does not go beyond the context of the letter or of faithful Pauline representation, there is still the possibility that the author is a pseudepigrapher who simply follows different tactics than the authors of *Ep. Lao.* and *3 Cor.* One could still argue from style, vocabulary, and theology in parts of the letters that MaGee does not examine to determine that the author cannot be Paul. One could then suggest that their evidence outweighs MaGee's interpretation of the passages as being most likely from Paul, and still hold to pseudepigraphy. So I think MaGee has overstepped the bounds of his conclusions by suggesting the author is most likely Paul, since his study only handles the "Exalted Apostle Theory," but I do believe that his interpretation of the passages are more likely than the alternate interpretations, but of course that's a subjective opinion.

Conclusion and the Way Forward

In sum, what has this book achieved? MaGee has brought some objectivity into a debate that abounds in historical speculation. He has shown it is more likely than not that Colossians and Ephesians are *not* pseudepigraphal, since they do not resemble *Ep. Lao.* and *3 Cor.* when compared to the accepted Pauline corpus. In that sense, while he hasn't proven anything, he

has given the edge to Pauline authorship based on objective, historical evidence. When combined with early church testimony that Paul wrote the letter, I think this evidence weighs heavily in favor of considering Colossians and Ephesians "innocent until proven guilty," whereas many want to put the burden of proof on those who would claim Paul wrote them.

But what about style and vocabulary (I leave theology aside for now)? These are generally the leading reasons why scholars consider Colossians and/or Ephesians pseudepigraphal. Some recent essays have shown that arguments from style and vocabulary have been incredibly naïve linguistically. Advances in modern linguistics have made studies in styolometry, for example, far more robust in their methodology for determining the authenticity of a document's claim to authorship.

"Register," which considers an entire complex of factors that generate an author's style in any specific context, has also been mostly ignored, and recent socio-linguists have emphasized the need to study register in writings. When some studies have taken these advances in modern linguistics in mind, they have found that Colossians and Ephesians diverge less than other genuine documents in various corpora. Add to this the fact that some scholars (e.g., Lincoln on Ephesians) still refuse to acknowledge that the use of an amanuensis renders arguments from style *at least* weakened, and we see that arguments from style and vocabulary are hardly worth considering much anymore unless they have a serious and rigorous linguistic methodology.

So I propose the way forward is to highlight the sort of studies that do just that. So far, several studies have demonstrated that, based on the study of other corpora with writings known to be by the same other, the Pauline epistles, with the exception of the Pastorals, do not diverge widely, and where the Pastorals do diverge, they do so together. This divergence of the Pastorals means either that Paul wrote them with quite a different "register," a part of which is the fact that he wrote to individuals rather than churches, or it means that the same pseudepigrapher wrote all three epistles, a theory which I do not believe any scholar holds. It seems to me, then that modern linguistics is one of the most helpful means to salvaging Paul's epistles for the church and restore to the academy half of the Pauline corpus, which the church has been sorely deprived of since Baur.

Find MaGee's book here on Amazon.

Reviewed by TS

Review of BibleWorks 10, Part 1: Interface and Design

This is part 1 of our review of BibleWorks 10. See also Part 2 on New Features.

This post will discuss the interface and design of BibleWorks, which I have always appreciated the most about the program because of its simplicity and down-to-business look. One friend says it looks like it was built for MS-DOS, which was a humorous exaggeration, but it truly is a simple, text-based design for serious exegetes. Moreoever, it's lightweight and loads and operates far quicker than Logos, which is a beast even on my brand new, high quality Lenovo Yoga Pro 2. Searches on BW are nearly instantaneous and can be quite complex, as I'll demonstrate in future posts. For now, let's look at this simple, yet elegant design.

NOTE: My last version was BW 8 (I skipped v. 9), so some of my comments may pertain less to those wondering if they should upgrade from v. 9.

One of the best elements of the design is the ability to add a second Analysis column (fourth column total), which was also possible in v. 9, but there are a few improvements. You can get a second window of text to compare parallels in two other ways (by using the "Browse" tab in the right column or by using the Parallel Versions Window [Tools –> Viewing the Text]), but having a permanent fourth column that also has all 18 tabs of the right column is inestimably helpful. An improvement to v. 9 is that you can close the fourth column if you want, and you can use the Analysis Tab Options to choose which resource tabs you want to show in which of the double columns. I moved the Resource tab to the far right and left the Analysis tab in the other Analysis column since I use those two tabs the most and want to use them simultaneously (screenshot 1).
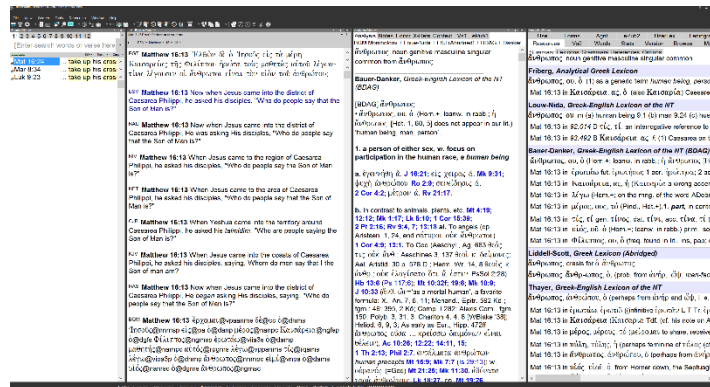
Screenshot 1: BibleWorks 10 with 4 Columns (Click to see Full Size)

Now, after seeing the first screenshot you may notice the major flaw with BibleWorks 10 on some devices. My computer works at an optimal resolution of 3200×1800, which is an HD resolution that is incredibly sharp. The downsize is that some programs, such as Windows Media Player (a Windows program!!) has incredibly tiny menu bar buttons and play/stop buttons. They are almost unusable. This is an unfortunate result of the newer, high resolution devices (tablets and some laptops like mine) that are being made.

BibleWorks suffers from the same issue in the menu bar, as you can see from screenshot 1 if you enlarge it. You can also see that some of the tabs don't show completely but nest into one another (try reading "Summary," "Lexicons," etc. in the far right column, bottom row: you can't see the bottom half of the words).

In an effort to fix the overall problem of scaling, BibleWorks did add a scaling option (View –> Scaling). This enables you to scale up the entire program so everything is bigger. Screenshot 1 is scaled to 120%, and screenshot 2 below is scaled up to 140% so you can see the difference. Interestingly, the search window tabs (1, 2, 3, etc.) are cut off more at 100% scaling than at 140% scaling, but the Summary, Lexicons, etc. tabs in the right column get cut off the same amount.
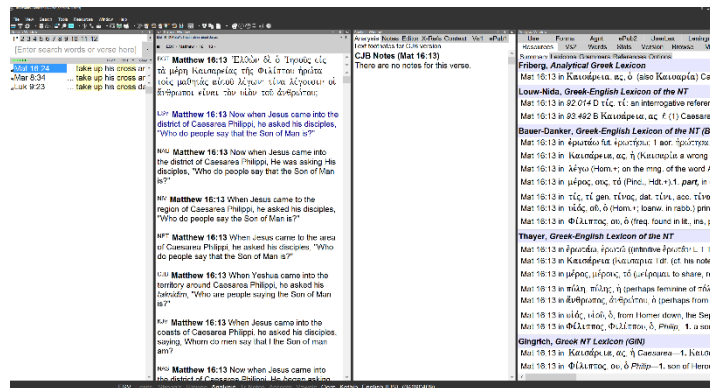
Screenshot 2: Scaling at 140%

I e-mailed the developers to ask them about this and they say it's far more difficult to scale menu buttons (the ones that appear tiny on my screen) than to scale the rest of the program. They say it's a problem with Windows that will helpful be resolved in the future as more high-res devices are made, and I believe them, since I have the same issue with many other Windows programs. So this is not a strike against BW, but is a significant design element to know before purchasing the program. I do think BW should be able to fix the tabs that nest into one another, since they nest the same amount no matter what the scaling.

Now, back to more positive elements. They added a color scheme option to the program. I'm good with black and white myself, and it's one of the reasons I enjoy the simplicity of the program, but for those of you who just need some color in your life, you can click any color scheme or make one yourself (screenshot 3).
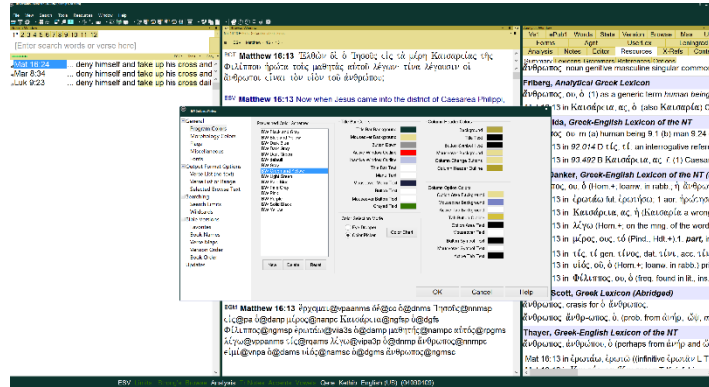
Screenshot 3: Color scheme option window, with "BW Green and Yellow" selected

One other nifty feature is the ability to color code words based on morphology (screenshot 4). If you are a beginner or intermediate biblical language reader, you may find this useful, for instance, to quickly spot the verb and subject of a sentence. This also doesn't give away the parsing before you're able to figure it out yourself, so it doesn't cripple you as much as immediately hovering over the word to see the parsing, or other resources that include the parsing directly below the word.
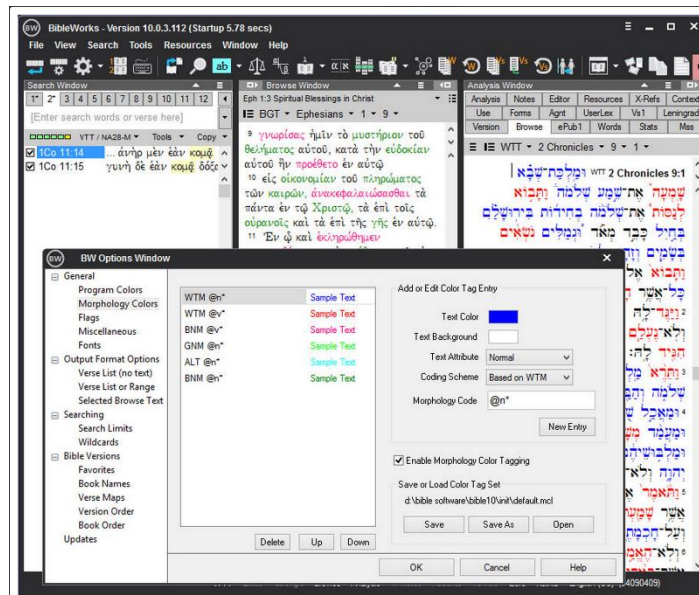
Screenshot 4: Morphology color-coding

In summary, BibleWorks now looks just as good as it ever did, but they have added some customizable options for those who want to make it feel a bit more "you." The customization of the second Analysis window is probably the most helpful feature and will help you do word studies, check cross-references, and check other tabs even quicker than in previous versions.

The next installation of our review series on BW10 will cover new features from versions 8 and 9, some of which I am *really* excited to tell you about. I've used many of these features to prepare our Basic Greek Videos and our Colossians Greek Reading Videos.

Find BibleWorks here on Amazon.

Reviewed by TS

Review of BibleWorks 10, Part 2: New Features

Part 1 of this review series looked at BibleWorks 10's design and interface, highlighting its simplicity but also warning those with high-res devices. This post will focus on BW 10's new features, some of which are simple but extraordinarily helpful.

One feature I'm excited about is the "Forms" tab. When you hover over a Greek, Hebrew, or Aramaic word, the forms tab will show you every form of that word that appears in that textual version. I've used this many times already while teaching Greek to find, e.g., the difference between aorist and perfect forms, stem changes, and other irregularities that are difficult to look up in books. It's such a simple, but powerful feature that will help improve your language in a bit way if you use it rightly.
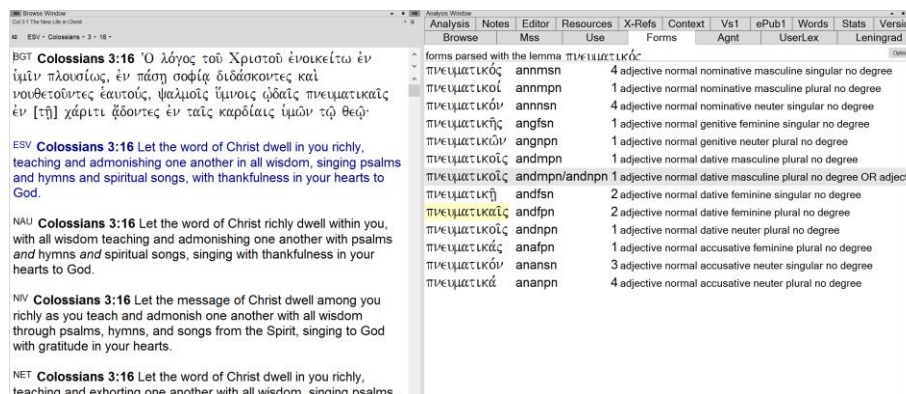
Figure 1: Forms tab

BW 9 was the first version to include high-def photos of manuscripts, and many of them were morphologically tagged and searchable. BW 10 retains this feature, which comes with the three major manuscripts Sinaiticus, Alexandrinus, and Vaticanus, as well as a few others. Since they are morphologically tagged, you can choose any of these manuscripts as your "browse" version and then do morphological searches on them just like you would with the standard Hebrew and Greek versions! The ability to see these manuscripts from my computer is amazing. In my dissertation I have a section on Eph 1:1 and the phrase "in Ephesus," which is lacking in the earliest manuscripts. How much easier can textual criticism get *from my laptop* than to open these three early witnesses and see what's written?

Look at Ephesians 1:1 below in Sinaiticus. The scribe shortened εἰσίν to εἰσι, and when I check the "Forms" tab for εἰμί, I see that the form with the *nu* occurs 427 times in the NT + LXX, while the shortened form here occurs only 8 times. (Kink for BW: When I click the form of the word, it doesn't open up the sentences that contain that form, but the sentences with all the forms, so I would have to hunt down those 8 occurrences among the 427 verses displayed.) There may be no significance to the shortened version here, but τοῖς εἰσίν is the phrase that is questionable because of its awkward grammar ("the saints who are, and the faithful in Christ.."), so perhaps there's something to it.
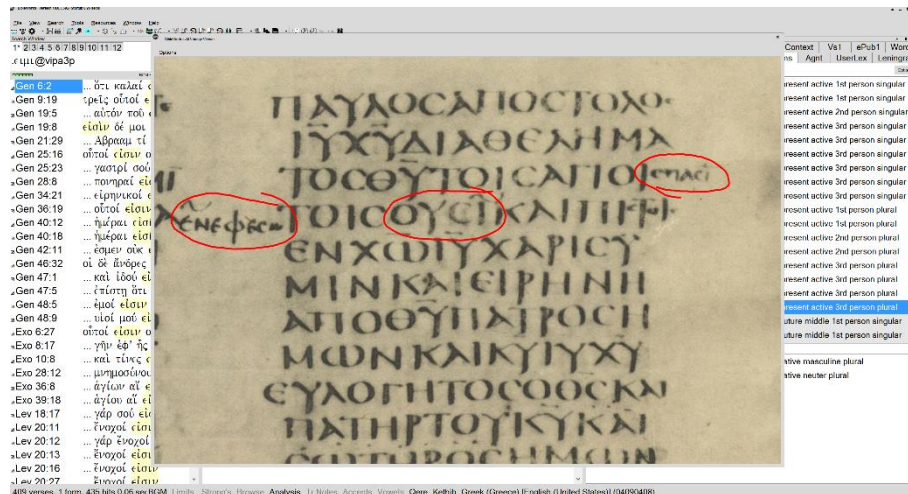
Screenshot 2: Ephesians 1:1 in Sinaiticus

More importantly, note on the fourth left, "ἐν Ἐφέσῳ" is written in the left margin, showing that the phrase is likely also a marginal note in whatever text(s) this scribe copied from, or at least wasn't integrated smoothly as to look original. Being able to conduct this sort of text-critical analysis using high-def images of Greek manuscripts is a dream come true, and former generations of text-critical scholars might be rolling over in their grave!

But the greatness doesn't stop there. BW 10 has added *full images of Leningradensis manuscripts of the Old Testament*. What! Yes, there it is, בראשיתבראאלהים! For those of who you like to try to read from manuscripts, BW 10 is now an incredible program. I purchased the Dead Sea Scrolls Sectarian texts package a while back for some coursework and I enjoyed using the morphologically tagged text, but I did all my translation and text-critical work on 1QM from high-def images here. I got a good feel for the scribe's tendencies, for Qumran orthography, and was able to see the breaks in the manuscripts (on which much has been written). Now that BW 10 is adding so many important manuscripts to the program for us to be able to read directly from them, I expect I'll be doing much more of my Greek and Hebrew reading from these ancient manuscripts.
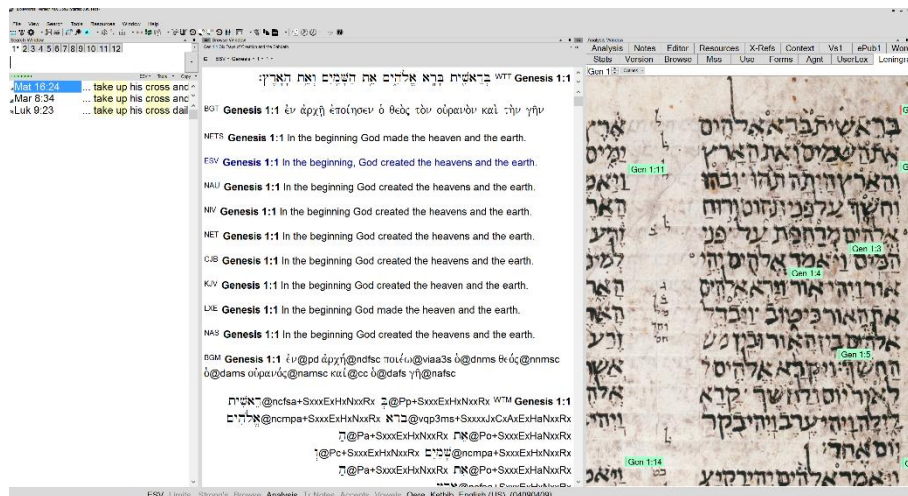
Screenshot 3: Leningradensis Hi-def, tagged images

I'm afraid if I continue on at length about these features, this post will run too far, so let me summarize some of the other great features available only in this version.

- They added a user lexicon, which allows you to keep research on specific words in one file (which opens in the Analysis window "UserLex" tab), rather than keeping notes on that word in your "Notes" tab on a specific verse in which it occurs.

- They added NA28 and updated Leedy's NT Greek diagrams, which I use constantly when doing exegesis or when I teach.

- If you've never been to the Holy Land (like me), you can find many images of Israel in Resources –> Pictures –> BibleViews. I would post a screenshot, but that may violate something.

- You get another Greek lexicon, Danker's frequently used *Concise Greek–English Lexicon of the New Testament*

- There is also the Friberg Analytical Greek New Testament tab in the Analysis window, which provides an interlinear display of the AGNT text, including several new lines such as English reference glosses, phrasal glosses and documentation links (screenshot 4). However, the text is incredibly small for my computer and the lines nest into one another, a problem I highlighted in our first post for those of us with high-res screens. When you hover your mouse over a word, the explanation in the bottom half of the Analysis column, but my computer thought the words were in all the white space, so there is some sort of issue here that needs to be sorted out.
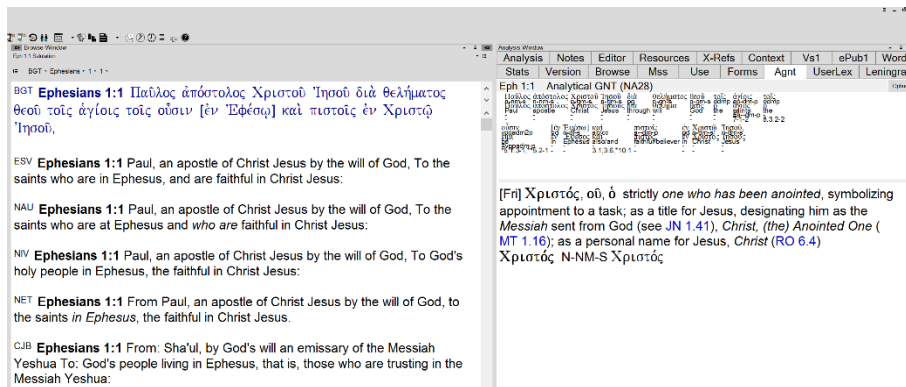
Screenshot 4: Friberg Analytical Greek New Testament Tab

There are many other features and text versions that are new to BW 10, and there are some new Greek and Hebrew packages you can buy as add-ons. You can check them all out here on BibleWorks' website. I've highlighted in this post a few of the features I find to be the most exciting and useful, but with so many features to highlight surely the other features will be just as exciting to other students, pastors, and scholars.

Find BibleWorks 10 here on Amazon.

Reviewed by TS

State Correspondence in the Ancient World, ed. Karen Radner

State Correspondence in the Ancient World: From New Kingdom Egypt to the Roman Empire, edited by Karen Radner. Oxford University Press, 2014. 306pp.

The central starting point (it's not quite a thesis; if it is, it's an implicit one) for this volume is that "long-distance communication plays a key role in the cohesion and stability of early states, and in turn, these states invest in long-term communication strategies and networks" (1). The book is wide-ranging in both geography and chronology, ranging from the Eastern Assyrian Empire to the Western Roman empire, and from the 15th century BC to the 6th century AD. Each chapter covers one state (or a certain period of it): New Kingdom Egyptians, Hittites, Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Seleukids, and Romans. The pleasure of this book is that the authors met twice to share their chapter drafts and offer comparisons and contrasts with correspondence in their allotted empire. The result is rare: an edited book that is unified in purpose and whose chapters are similar in structure, content, and purpose.
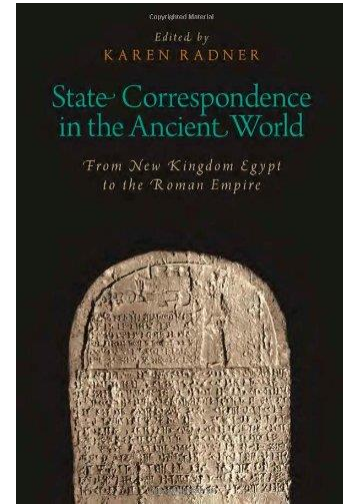
The relay system of the Assyrian Empire was innovative and groundbreaking. The use of post stations to pass on letters to new messengers for the sake of speed was an innovation in that the letter was dissociated from the messenger, who no longer bore sole responsibility to bear the message from the king. The official road was also the first state-sanctioned and state-maintained road with post stations. This ability to "communicate quickly and reliably across vast distances turned out to be a key element in the cohesion of the empire" (71). Amazingly, "the Neo-Assyrian relay system set the standard for communication speed for almost three millennia, until the advent of the telegraph in the Ottoman Empire in 1865" (74). And this relay system from the Neo-Assyrian Empire really seems to be the bottleneck of the book. Most of the chapters refer to this system to either show how empires were developing systems toward this goal (Egypt and Hittite) or how the system was utilized or developed by later nations. For example, for the Persian Empire, "a key role in holding such a diverse and enormous territory together was played by the network of communication" (121). Likewise, "The Seleukid state, in particular, had an impressively efficient system for transmitting royal information" (159).

Since this work was so cohesive and answered very similar questions about each Empire's system for state correspondence, **I decided to create a chart that summarized the entire**

book, rather than writing it out in prose. Feel free to download the PDF of the chart for your own use (*click on the image below, which is only an image of page 1 of the PDF*).

	Egyptians	Hittites	Assyrians	Babylonians	Persians	Seleukids	Romans
Language	Cuneiform on clay tablets. Int'l correspondence found in Babylonian, Assyrian, Hurrian, and Hittite, but mostly Peripheral Akkadian.	Hittite cuneiform on clay or wooden tablets for state letters. (Some on wooden tablets in hieroglyphics.)	Cuneiform Assyrian and Babylonian on clay tablets. Aramaic on parchment discouraged, but maybe used; none extant.	Aramaic, except to temples, for which correspondence was in Babylonian cuneiform	Royal inscriptions in Elamite, Babylonian, Old Persian, & Egypt. hieroglyphs (cf. Esth 3:12). Admin. used Aramaic.	Greek on papyri or stone inscriptions, and some literary sources. Cities could choose to inscribe royal letters on stone.	Originals of high officials do not survive, but c. 9,000 copies survive of papyri or inscriptions. Greek and Latin for state correspondence.
Records Location?	Armarna letters were all (but one) found at Tell el-Amarna and were likely kept in a records office.	Administrative rooms in Tapikka, Hattusa (some in temples), and royal citadel Büyükkale.	"[N]othing much can be said about the original storage and archival organization of the state correspondence" (81). Most letters found at Nineveh, not Assyria's admin center.	Unknown; Aramaic letters on parchment no longer extant. Cuneiform tablets found in temples Ebabbar of Sippar and Eanna of Uruk.	Depository room for Persepolis Treasury Texts. Local archives kept by satraps. Cf. Ezra 5:17-6:2.	Archives of officials at different levels and of cities and of associations. The kind had his own royal archive.	Little known, but the *commentarii*, which had copies of hearings, official correspondence, & imperial acts.
Authors	Scribes trained in cuneiform and worked in royal court; some sent to vassal courts. Scribes shaped the way state letters looked; no uniform style.	Trained scribes; some perhaps write in hieroglyphics on wooden tablets.	Scribes trained by the empire with regulated conventions and dispersed to officials throughout the empire.	Trained scribes. Aramaic scribes (*sēpiru*) were members of royal administration.	"Scribes" (*spr'*) composed, but other hands did the writing in various languages and scripts.	N/A	Emperor could write or dictate; but most matters written by freedman/slaves in early Empire; these grew into larger bureaus.
Privacy	Possibly letter envelopes in some areas, but uncertain.	Uncertain. Possibly wrapped in cloth or put in a bag.	Sealed in envelopes with official sender's seal.	Special royal seal impressed on letter envelopes (conjectured; 101).	Letters rolled, tied with string encased in clay on which seal impressed.	Likely sealed with personal seals and with a clay tag.	Sealed with signet ring and/or sealed with tablet, wax, and string.
Formula for letters?	Yes. Prostration formula to king is most common, but it can vary.	"Strict code of address and greeting formulae which expressed the relative status of those participating in the correspondence (47).	Format and language of state letters is "homogeneous throughout the empire" (68).	"Fairly rigid rules" for form of salutation formulae, body of the missive, and forms of address (104).	Fairly standardized; "relative social position of individuals can be deduced from the various forms of address employed (137).	Letters addressed to Greek cities and communities differed from those to state officials. Relative power determined the register.	Types of letters included edicts, letters, mandatas, private rescripts, *adnotatios*, & oral pronouncements (175–177). Style grew in flourish over time.

Overall this work was executed better than any other edited volume I have read. The fact that the authors met together twice to share their chapters is evident, given the similar topics covered in each chapter, in a similar order, which makes it quite easy to compare and contrast the systems of correspondence in these seven Kingdoms. Throughout the book there are also several pictures of documents or stelae that are still extant.

One limitation to this volume is its lack of presentation of primary evidence. Footnotes spanned well over 150 in some chapters, which show both the authors' mastery of the field, but also their reliance on prior studies for many assertions. This volume would have been strengthened, although necessarily enlarged, by more presentation of primary texts. Often, one or two examples will be given to support a claim, but with so much data, it is difficult to accept the claim at face-value. How do I know there is no other data to contradict the claims being made? By providing only samples of primary texts throughout, and without consistent notes that no contrary evidence exists against the claims being made, this study serves well as introductory essays but does not help the reader gain a direct familiarity with the sources.

With this limitation in mind, I highly recommend this learned volume to anyone interested in the systems of state correspondence in the ancient world.

You will not only learn about everything listed my chart above, but more general information about the bureaucratic system of each Empire, details about peculiarities of various kings, and archaeological summaries of great literary finds. This volume is a significant contribution to the study of the ancient Near East, especially with regard to the bureaucracy of each Empire.

Preview it or buy it here on Amazon.

Reviewed by Todd Scacewater

Interviews

Gregory MaGee's Response to My Review of His Portrait of an Apostle

Earlier, I reviewed Greg Magee's published dissertation, [Portrait of an Apostle: A Case for Paul's Authorship of Colossians and Ephesians](#) (Wipf & Stock, 2013), 204 pages. You can catch up on the[review here.](#) I found this book very creative and well executed, so I decided to ask Greg to write a reply to my review, hoping that he could sharpen my thinking a bit on a topic he spent years studying. He graciously replied, and we hope the discussion between us is fruitful and stimulating………

Thanks for this opportunity to be in dialogue about my book. I have enjoyed reading the review and reflecting on its arguments. Here are a few of my thoughts in response:

To use a football analogy (we are entering football season, after all), I was not trying to win a whole football game with this book. I was not even trying to score a touchdown. I was trying to make a defensive stop, so that the other side would have to punt on this drive. Then I began what I hope is a successful offensive series of my own, but this is still part of a larger game. The authorship of Colossians and Ephesians is a complex topic made up of many series of plays and drives. I looked at one aspect of this topic and tried to respond to what I saw as a weak argument that skeptics of Pauline authorship were relying upon and offer arguments for a better way.

Based on what I hoped to accomplish with my book, I would distance myself from any language like "proof" or "objective test" to describe what I was doing (and just to be sure that I didn't use any of that language in the book, I did a word search of the files!). I agree with you that a project such as this would not be able to prove Paul's authorship of the letters – certainly not in any comprehensive way.

My approach was more narrowly focused, as a *response* to what I saw as a weak line of argument *against* Pauline authorship that has gained momentum in the last century or so. The

first chapter in the book tracks the history of this type of objection to Pauline authorship, and I call it the "Exalted Apostle Theory." The theory alleges that there is evidence in Colossians and Ephesians that later writers were incorporating an idealized image of Paul into their pseudepigraphal writings in order to give their writings more of an authentic flavor. This idealized image drew upon commonly known features of Paul's apostleship and ministry.

In the course of my research I found that this theory began with simple speculations that this might be the case, without an attempt to demonstrate that this was likely. As time went on, apart from any careful substantiation of the theory, later writers promoted the theory as an established and widely accepted position among Pauline scholars. I wanted my work to show that there was very little convincing evidence for this argument against Paul's authorship of Colossians and Ephesians (and yet, the argument continues to be accepted by many commentators and scholars as part of the case against Pauline authorship).

To cast doubt on this theory, I looked at the two pseudepigraphal works you mentioned, *The Epistle to the Laodiceans* and *3rdCorinthians*. Though these are just two known examples of pseudepigraphy that do not exhaust the ways one could imitate Paul, they do show the challenge that is central to the pseudepigrapher's task in epistolary literature. Here is the challenge: how does one construct a fresh account of Paul's calling and ministry that both preserves key elements of Paul's standard self-perception and fits comfortably within the larger letter?

The personal nature of the material, centered on Paul's own experiences and self-understanding, makes it even more challenging to successfully imitate. As a thought experiment, imagine trying to create a letter today that you hoped to pass off as Paul's. The material that described Paul would need to sound like Paul and match his known self-portrait. The material would also need to fit into the letter comfortably (and not just be tacked on to give it a touch of authenticity). It would need to match the occasion, purpose, and argument of the letter as well.

That is where the "explanatory power" criteria comes into play. Skeptics of Pauline authorship create new (and drastically different) occasions, purposes, and arguments that match their belief that the "Paul" in Colossians and Ephesians is a fictitious Paul. The exegetical work I provide in the book is designed to show that this massive reconstruction of history is
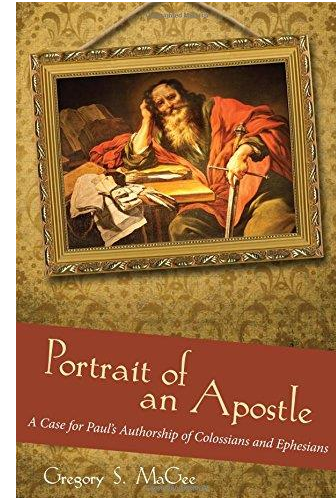
unnecessary. This type of approach is not objective, nor is it intended to be so. A compelling reading of the material that answers questions about authorship and background does not settle the issue for all skeptics but I believe that it does strengthen the credibility of the position I am supporting.

I applaud approaching the authorship debate from other directions as well. Studies that are conversant with the latest advances in stylometry or theories of register, such as the studies you alluded to briefly, could function to cast doubt on some of the other claims made by those who reject Paul's authorship of the letters. I see the value of various approaches – some that are more statistically oriented and others that evaluate the explanatory power of various proposed readings.

Thanks again for sparking some good avenues of discussion with your questions. If you have further comments or questions, I'm happy to respond to those as well. I'll be glad to see and interact with the results of your research in coming years!

Find MaGee's book [here on Amazon.](#)

Interview with Keith Loftin, editor of God and Morality: Four Views

[We recently featured *God and Morality: Four Views*](#) as a solid work for you biblical folk who are interested in philosophy and especially ethics. To follow up, we interviewed the editor of the volume, Keith Loftin, Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Humanities at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

I met Keith randomly at a conference and he had the misfortune of getting stuck at my table at several meals, but he persevered. He's quite friendly and quite southern, which may be why I enjoyed his company so much (I'm a Missourian/Texan displaced to Philadelphia)! We hope this

interview will be useful for those interested in the intersection between biblical studies, philosophy, apologetics, and ethics.

EXEGETICAL TOOLS:

Your book is a very accessible resource for understanding various positions of the "moral question," whether absolute morals exist and how they are grounded. How is the "moral question" relevant for biblical students and pastors? (In other words, why should we biblical guys read your philosophy book?!)

KEITH LOFTIN:

C. S. Lewis, in *Mere Christianity,* writes that "you find out more about God from the Moral Law than from the universe in general just as you find out more about a man by listening to his conversation than by looking at a house he has built." Thinking carefully about the connection between God and morality has apologetic value, as Lewis notes. Indeed, Lewis and a great number of other Christian apologists have thought the connection such that an argument from morality to the existence of God is possible. Beyond that, such an inquiry involves thinking about both the nature of God (e.g., His omnibenevolence and aseity) and the nature of mankind (e.g., our origin and moral knowledge). As we are moral creatures, there is also, I think, within each of us an innate interest in the nature and source of morality. My hope is that this book will be helpful to readers, whatever their background, in thinking clearly about these matters. At the end of the day, I don't think the line between "theology" and "philosophy" is as definite as Enlightenment thinkers would have us believe.

ET:

In your opinion, what position on the "moral question" is most faithful to orthodox Christianity?

LOFTIN:

Good question! If the "moral question" is whether moral values are subjective or objective in nature and, in any case, where they originate, then Christians are responsible to consider their response in relation to orthodoxy. Keeping in mind that these are meta-ethical questions (not ethics proper), it seems to me that several positions are compatible with Christian orthodoxy. Within the book both Yandell and Linville are Christians who defend views which are compatible with the central tenets of Christianity. Neither of the "naturalist" positions, it seems to me, will fit comfortably with traditional Christian
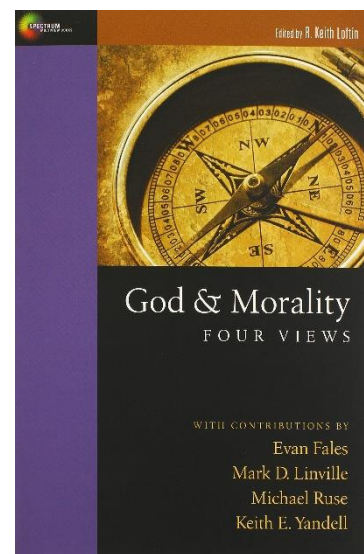
orthodoxy–although Michael Ruse suggests his view is (at least somewhat) compatible with Christianity.

ET:

Are there major positions that you left out of this work for the sake of space? What are they and why did you select these four views for inclusion?

LOFTIN:

Oh yes, a number of positions are omitted from the book due to space limitations. I would've liked to include, for example, the contribution of a pantheist such as John Leslie or a hard-line theological voluntarist. My aim in including the four views I did–Naturalist Moral Realism, Naturalist Moral Nonrealism, Moral Essentialism, and Moral Particularism–was to present to the reader what I take to be the most common and contrasting positions on the basic questions each contributor addresses.

ET:

What are the questions the contributors address?

LOFTIN:

Each contributor offers a positive defense of his position that includes a discussion of (a) the nature of moral values and duties (whether objective or not and why), (b) the Euthyphro dilemma, (c) his moral epistemology, (d) God's role (if any) vis-à-vis morality, and (e) the relevance of his position to the concerns of contemporary society.

ET:

Can you recommend further reading for those with an interest in deeper discussion of these various positions?

LOFTIN:

Each chapter of the book contains footnotes that point readers to further sources, but here are a few suggestions: (i) Scott Rae, *Moral Choices* (ii) Robert Garcia & Nathan King, eds., *Is Goodness Without God Good Enough?* (iii) Russ Shafer-Landau, *Moral Realism: A Defence* (iv) J. P. Moreland and Kai Neilsen, *Does God Exist? The Debate between Theists and Atheists*

Thanks so much to Keith for taking the time to answer our questions.

Find his book here on Amazon.

New Books

ESV Verse-by-Verse Reference Bible from Crossway

Crossway has released a new ESV Bible that lists each verse on its own line (it looks like they had a version published in 2012, but now they have a new format). I'm not one for this type of Bible, but I know many are, especially since it can facilitate Scripture memory by allowing you to single out and focus on one verse at a time. The major downside of a Bible like this is the inability to see the organization of thought via paragraphs, but sometimes paragraphs can lead you astray as well! I thought I might allow Crossway to try to convince you of the benefits:

There is a [historical tradition of the Bible text being laid out in a versified format](), but in recent years the introduction of the paragraph format (in both [double-column]()and [single-column]() layouts) has resulted in the traditional verse-by-verse format declining in popularity. In other words, you really have to go searching for a verse-by-verse Bible.

Proponents of a versified Bible text appreciate how easy it is to quickly find a specific verse, especially when scanning the biblical text while preaching or teaching. In fact, one of the primary reasons that Crossway offers a verse-by-verse edition is to serve anyone who ministers through the preaching and teaching of the Word of God. The importance of being able to quickly find your place in the text cannot be minimized.

Another benefit of a verse-by-verse edition is that it forces the reader to slow down when reading the biblical text. If someone wants to spend an extended amount of time reading through a lengthy passage of Scripture, a verse-by-verse layout may not be the best option. However, when studying the Bible in a systematic and in-depth way, a verse-by-verse edition may be helpful, especially when using supplemental tools like commentaries and interlinears.

Crossway's ESV Verse-by-Verse Reference Bible *will not be the ideal Bible edition for everyone, but it will serve many who choose to use it in a specific context. Think of a verse-by-verse layout as just one tool out of many designed to help you dig into God's Word. There are times when it's extremely helpful, but there are also times when a paragraph format is even better. Used in the correct context, a versified Bible can greatly benefit our understanding and interaction with the Bible.*

So there you have it! I won't be using one anytime soon – my main English Bible is now the wide-margin Heirloom Single-Column Legacy ESV from Crossway (it was kindly gifted to me). But if you're interested in the verse-by-verse format, check it out here on Amazon or on Crossway's website for more details.

Current Issues

Recent Trends in Discourse Analysis in Biblical Studies

In Constantine Campbell's latest book, *Advances in the Study of Greek: New Insights for Reading the New Testament*, he summarizes in two chapters the use of discourse analysis by New Testament scholars over the past few decades. A summary of these chapters and some evaluative comments might be helpful for those interested in discourse analysis.
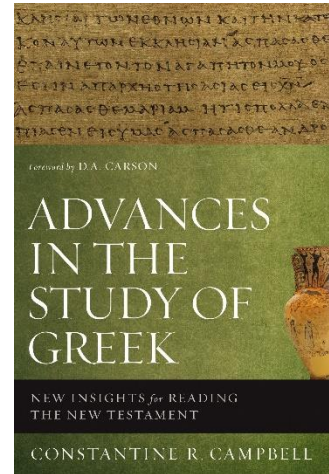
Halliday's School

The first chapter gives a basic outline of different approaches to discourse analysis. He basically summarizes Stanley Porter's 1995 article that lays out four different linguistic schools of thought and their approach to discourse analysis, along with some evaluative comments. I have also included a summary of Porter's article in our Discourse Analysis Annotated Bibliography, so there's no need to rehash that here.
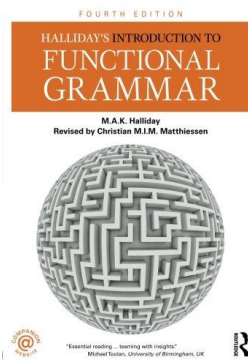
The basic point is that the Hallidayan approach seems to have had the most influence on biblical scholars, as seen in the latest works by Levinsohn and Runge, covered in the next chapter. For this reason, Campbell then provides an overview of Halliday's approach to discourse analysis, which is essentially the study of cohesion in discourse. Various elements signal cohesion, such as conjunction, reference, ellipsis, and lexemes (more could be added). He then gives several components of cohesion analysis, such as cohesive ties.

There are immense benefits to the Hallidayan approach to analyzing discourse, and many resources are already available to assist in that approach. the Louw-Nida lexicon is a great help in finding lexical cohesion, and the MadDonald's Greek Transcriptions in BibleWorks is an easy (color-coded) tool for analyzing reference in the Greek New Testament.
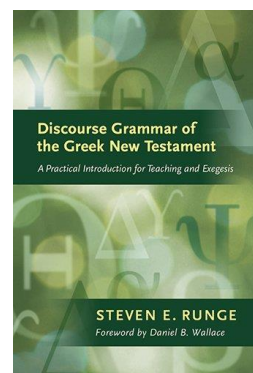
The difficulties with Halliday's theories is that they are dense, require some linguistic knowledge, and in many cases hard to apply to Greek since Halliday's theories apply to English. There are many cross-lingual features to his theory (e.g., ellipsis and logical inferences between

propositions that allow for coherence), but others do not (e.g., the use of "because" in English to mean "*I ask that* because"). Halliday's latest grammar, *Halliday's Introduction to Functional Grammar*, is 800 pages. Any Bible student who would dare to trod through his grammar (and I hope to at some point) will be immensely enriched, not only for discourse analysis, but for exegesis in general. But whether one could make it through the dense forest of (English) functional grammar is another question. Halliday was undoubtedly the biggest influence on the Cambridge Press' volume on *Discourse Analysis* by Brown and Yule from the mid-80s; this work is probably the best starting point for discourse analysis in the Hallidayan tradition.

Levinsohn and Runge
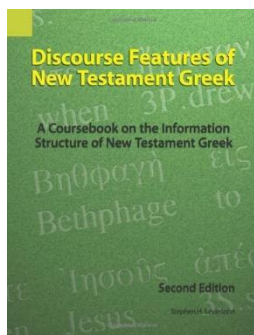
Campbell's second chapter gives a lengthy summary of the two most recent works on discourse grammar (not analysis): Levinsohn's *Discourse Features of New Testament Greek* and Steven Runge's *Discourse Grammar of the Greek New Testament*. Since he summarizes them at length, there is no need for me to do so here. His basic concerns are that both works fail to go much beyond the level of the sentence, and Levinsohn's work is admittedly (by Levinsohn) limited to certain discourse features by certain authors, an is therefore not comprehensive. The biggest problem with Runge's volume is that it is a discourse *grammar*, not a volume on discourse *analysis*. So again there is not much useful for evaluating chunks of discourse, but more for evaluating links between clauses or verses. Runge hopes to produce a larger volume on discourse analysis, so we must await that volume to see what his full system looks like.

One of the main problems with both volumes is their eclecticism. They borrow freely from various linguistic schools. The problem is partially not their own fault, since no linguistic school has systematically applied their theories to the study of Koine Greek. But linguists do tend to play in packs, and attaching oneself to one school of thought might not be a bad idea for producing a theory of Greek discourse analysis. Halliday's approach is helpful and would be as good a choice as any, but the other schools could be explored as well. Ultimately some form of eclecticism is inevitable, but too much may create a theory that is self-contradictory.

The Way Forward?

Porter said long ago that if biblical scholars want to engage in discourse analysis (as he believes they should), they will have to do serious study in linguistics. This can be daunting, since there is so much material to wade through and who knows where to start? That is one of the purposes of Exegetical Tools, though: to lead students, pastors, and scholars to the right resources, especially with our Annotated Bibliographies (which we are continually preparing and publishing – see our current bibliographies under the resource tab up top).

I might venture to suggest that any linguistic knowledge acquired will be helpful for exegesis. So while many scholars are hesitant to branch out into other fields because of today's increased specialization (I was once told to avoid other fields so I could accomplish something in biblical studies), there should be no fear in this case. Linguistics is obviously directly applicable to biblical studies, since we deal with language continuously.

Moreover, someone needs to do the work of taking all the elements that contribute to coherence and cohesion and work them out in Koine Greek — *not* in NT Greek, but in Koine. Discourse analysis should extend beyond the NT Greek, which is only a small subset of Koine. Yet we must also keep in mind the various particularities about the NT that give it coherence in a way that other documents (e.g., papyri) would not have, for example, theological presuppositions and allusions to OT texts. But there is also more to discourse analysis than coherence and cohesion – these other elements would need to be decided upon and worked out systematically.

If you were to venture on this task, you could use our Discourse Analysis Annotated Bibliographyand begin with Brown and Yule's *Discourse Analysis*, and then venture into the world of linguistics, perhaps trying out a couple hundred pages of Halliday's *Introduction to Functional Grammar*. There are plenty of articles and books on discourse analysis as applied to biblical studies in our Annotated Bibliography, and you could read through some of those to get a feel for how it might be used, while you develop some ideas of your own.

Find Campbell's *Advances in the Study of Greek* here on Amazon.

TS

Land Center Young Scholars' Competition

Last Friday July 10, I participated in the Land Center Young Scholars' Competition. This colloquium was a unique opportunity for graduate students to compete for prizes in front of an accomplished scholar in the field and receive generous but significantly helpful feedback. It was put on by the Land Center for Cultural Engagement at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Seven PhD students or recent PhD graduates presented papers on topics that intersected with their PhD emphasis and the area of faith, work, and economics. We turned in an academic paper before the competition, which was scored by two different philosophy professors from Southwestern. The presentation, by contrast, was to be aimed at an informed lay-audience, with an interesting topic and an engaging presentation style. There were prizes for first, second, and third place.

The main adjudicator was Jay Richards, Distinguished Fellow of the Institute for Faith, Work, & Economics and a Senior Fellow of the Discovery Institute where he works with the Center on Wealth, Poverty and Morality. It was enjoyable to meet Jay, who was pretty relaxed and gave kind and beneficial feedback to each of us. It was evident Jay is well-read in many fields beyond even those he has written extensively in. We students also scored each others' papers. The total score for each student came from the paper score, Jay's score, and the students' peer score. Other professors present to add feedback to Jay's were Evan Lenow, Director of the Land Center and Associate Professor of Ethics at Southwestern Seminary, and John Wilsey, Assistant Professor of History and Christian Apologetics at Southwestern Seminary and Associate Director of the Land Center.

The seven presenters and topics were as follows.

Paul Golata (Southwestern Seminary) argued that we must be truth-tellers about God's story of redemption in our work and that we must treat the advancement of technology appropriately as tools to be appropriated for proper work, but not for idolatry or redemption itself.

Stephen DeKuyper (Southern Seminary) argued that "Christian businesses" can exist and discussed what their mission, vision, and values may look like.

Todd Scacewater (myself) (Westminster Theological Seminary) discussed the biblical concept of poverty as including three aspects–lack of monetary wealth, socio-political oppression, and spiritual disposition–and argued that we should apply this biblical concept of poverty to poverty alleviation efforts today to be more effective in the short- and long-term.

Spence Spencer (Southeastern Seminary) argued that work is not intrinsically valuable, having value because of its being, but inherently valuable. He relied on C. I. Lewis' definitions of intrinsic, instrumental, and inherent value, with inherent value being its value when properly ordered in relation to other objects it is intended to be in relation with.

Gregory Lamb (Southeastern Seminary) discussed the "death and dying industry." He presented a New Testament theology of death and dying and argued that pastors should be far more involved in knowing the laws related to issues such as burial, funerals, etc., in order to walk grieving ones through the death process.

Graham Floyd (PhD, Southwestern Seminary) argued that economics is part of God's created order, and economic principles should be grounded in virtues, which can be demonstrated in the Decalogue.

Joshua Peeler (New Orleans Seminary) discussed the life of Thomas Chalmers and his response to social issues of his day. He argued that the church today should take away lessons from Chalmers' approach to social engagement, including his style of preaching and the issues he addressed in his preaching.

Joshua Peeler won the competition and the fat first place prize: congratulations Joshua!

I'd like to thank the Land Center for accepting me into the competition and generously hosting us. My thanks also go out to Trey Dimsdale, Associate Director of the Land Center, for administrating the conference superbly, and Rob Collingsworth, who ran many of the logistics. I would recommend this competition next year to anyone interested in the area of faith, work, and economics. The field is burgeoning and has incredible potential for making churches, seminaries, and families more holistic in their approach to human well-being and society flourishing, and almost all those involved in the field have told me there is a great amount of room for biblical scholars to contribute.