

Black and Merkle achieve their objective of placing Koine into collaboration with the field of linguistics to point the way forward for the future of Greek studies. The strength of this work is its array of experts writing on their particular strengths while innovating in the process of doing so. However, this does limit the audience to those particularly interested in developing or improving their pedagogy for teaching New Testament Greek. For Greek professors, this book is a must read. I highly recommend it for anyone who teaches the subject. However, I would caution Greek students before encouraging them to give it a read: it may be outside of their range of comprehension. Be as that it may, it is an important work, and even more important is the innovation being done in Greek studies via linguistics to which this work attests.

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Your Old Testament Sermon Needs to Get Saved: A Handbook for Preaching Christ from the Old Testament. David M. King. Chicago, IL: Moody, 2021. 148 pp., \$14.37, paperback.

Can the preacher tack Jesus on the end of an Old Testament sermon and declare it Christ-centered? David King sounds an emphatic, “No! You must consider whether the Father means for His Son to be preached as an appendix to the sermon rather than as the heart” (p. 32). Again, can an Old Testament text/sermon devoid of Christ really be “Christian?” While a devout Jew or Muslim may be content with my “Christless” interpretation and presentation of an Old Testament text, would it please Christ (p. 9)? Still, King reveals that the real issue in preaching Christ from the Old Testament is more hermeneutical than homiletical.

David King has been in pastoral ministry for over 20 years, serving as senior pastor at Concord Baptist in Chattanooga, TN since 2001. He holds a D.Min. in preaching from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and is a frequent contributor to 9Marks. This easy-to-read yet robust work consists of three units including Why Should I Preach Christ from the Old Testament? (Part 1: 2 chapters), How Do I Preach Christ from the Old Testament? (Part 2: 4 chapters), and What Happens When I Preach Christ from the Old Testament? (Part 3: 2 chapters). There is also an insightful conclusion, as well as two helpful Appendices.

Some Christ-centered preaching books are more theoretical than practical, offering no interpretive method, highlighting the fruit instead of the root. King’s desire is to offer the busy pastor a “sound and straightforward hermeneutic...A simple and practical guide for preaching Christ from the Old Testament” (p. 11). This approach is a comprehensive practical application of biblical theology.

The first two chapters probe the exegetical and theological necessities for why one should preach from the Old Testament. King is not content to simply present Christ in the Old Testament in a generic way, but instead commends the hermeneutical conviction that part of the Old Testament finds fulfillment in the *incarnate* Christ. This *exegetical necessity* follows the pattern of Christ and the apostles: (1) all the Old Testament—the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings—points to Jesus, (2) Old Testament texts lacking explicit anticipation of Jesus are part of an Old Testament canon that by its very nature witnesses to Jesus, (3) no Old Testament text can be rightly interpreted without understanding how it has been fulfilled in Jesus, (4) learning at the Master’s feet the apostles adopted a broad prophetic understanding of the Old Testament, and (5) the apostles encouraged reading the Old Testament as Christian Scripture.

The basis for *theological necessity* is: (1) *progressive revelation*—if Christ is the final word from God (Heb 1:1–2), then all preceding words point to him; hence, “preaching Christ from the Old Testament is not only possible but sensible and even obligatory” (p. 33); (2) *the new covenant in Christ*—though the old covenant *is* obsolete, the Old Testament *is not*; (3) *canonical context*—context includes all the Scriptures; (4) *Christ, our mediator*—only through Christ can we follow the Old Testament; and (5) the *telos* of Preaching—God’s aim is for believers to be mature in Christ (Eph 4:12–13), and this includes *from* the Old Testament.

Chapters 3–6 cover “The Preaching Text, Fulfillment in Christ, Case Studies in Fulfillment” and “From Christ to Us.” This is the heart of the book, and King’s Christ-centered hermeneutic materializes here—an interpretative process that leads to “preaching the Old Testament in light of Jesus and the gospel and the Kingdom inaugurated in His coming” (pp. 12–13). King states candidly:

Connecting the Old Testament to Jesus Christ demands nothing less. Laying the rail between text and fulfillment requires an interpretive skill and perseverance because the path isn’t always plain. It’s one thing to *believe* everything is fulfilled in Christ, but it’s another thing entirely to clear a path between the passage and Jesus (p. 48).

The clear path King suggests is (1) *text*—select and faithfully exegete an Old Testament text for preaching, (2) *Christ*—understand how Jesus fulfills this text, and (3) *us*—by transformative application show people how the gospel affects them.

The last two chapters (Part 3) discuss “Problems to Avoid and Benefits to Enjoy.” For example, one should avoid landmines such as *focusing too narrowly on Christ*: in our haste to be Christ-centered, we may preach as if the Father and Spirit do not exist. Also be aware of *moving too quickly to Christ*, short-circuiting the text to get to Christ. It is possible to be Christ-centered *and* exegetically sound (p. 119). Finally, avoid *resting too lazily in Christ*: do not forget there are implications to

obey in the text. Benefits are many: (1) nobler mission, (2) healthier church, (3) holier freedom, (4) freer holiness, (5) greater maturity, (6) stouter evangelism, (7) purer message, (8) deeper love, (9) smaller Bible, and (10) bigger Bible.

King notes a trio of positives. First, consider chapter 4 that answers, “How is the main point of the passage fulfilled in Christ?” One of the more salient points made by King for his hermeneutic is, “Instead of asking only, ‘How do I read this text?’ ask yourself also, ‘How would Jesus have read this text?’” (p. 61) King supplies six categories for “how” Jesus fulfills a passage: (1) prophetic promise, (2) ethical instruction, (3) fallen humanity, (4) typological revelation, (5) narrative progression, or (6) theological theme. The reader will find his discussion on typology enlightening, for typology is not about interpretive imagination—it must have biblical warrant (p. 77).

Chapter 6 will benefit even the ablest exegete, for it answers, “How do you make Christ-centered application from Old Testament texts, moving from Christ to us?” King uncomplicates what many obscure by instructing preachers to discern whether the text’s main point has been retained, retooled, or retired in Christ (p. 99). Since preaching is a call to action, application is essential, but not at the cost of Christ or the text. Application for this approach assumes (1) the New Testament is paramount, (2) union with Christ is absolute, (3) the now/yet tension is essential, and (4) the old covenant is obsolete.

Also worth noting is King’s obvious love for both Christ and the Old Testament: “If Jesus is Lord, then He is Lord over the Old Testament—and Lord over our Old Testament sermons, too” (p. 19). If our understanding of the Old Testament marginalizes or neglects Christ, we have misunderstood the Scriptures (p. 24). The question still lingers—why preach any text without Christ? (p. 42). If the preacher does not include Christ, then what exactly is he preaching (p. 59)?

This exceptional book suffers no downside. It will ably serve the pulpit, the pew, and the academy, for it addresses the all-too-real tendency to make Jesus a postscript in a Christian sermon. King sagaciously prods every preacher, “Good intentions don’t automatically yield sound interpretation” (p. 10). If *Your Old Testament Sermon Needs to Get Saved*, then homiletical salvation will only come through hermeneutical salvation (pp. 20–21). If you are looking to further hone your skills on preaching Christ from the Old Testament, look no further than King or turn to the classic, Bryan Chapell, *Christ-Centered Preaching: Redeeming the Expository Sermon* (Baker Academic, 3rd ed., 2018). May we preach Christ in all our sermons, for he is the final Word to whom the rest of the Word points (John 1:1; Col 1:28; Heb 1:1–2).

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