

For a thorough understanding of the NT, it is, therefore, absolutely essential to know the already–not yet concept that is well described and applied by Beale. As a final remark, it is worth mentioning that the book is written in a style that can satisfy theologians, but which is still accessible to a well-trained lay person.

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Callen, Barry L. *Beneath the Surface: Reclaiming the Old Testament for Today's Christian*. Lexington: Emeth Press, 2012. 211pp. Paperback, \$32.00.

Barry L. Callen attempts to solve a formidable issue that has plagued Christians for centuries—namely, as the book's subtitle suggests, "Reclaiming the Old Testament for Today's Christian." The neglect of the "Foundational Testament," Callen proposes, helped to breed anti-Semitism, leading to the massacre of at least half of all Jews born since the crucifixion of Christ (7). Callen's goal is to find ways to unite two of Abraham's children, Christians and Jews, by retracing their ancient roots in the context of Yeshua (Jesus), the ultimate messianic hope (42).

Callen, editor of both the *Wesleyan Theological Journal* and Anderson University Press, is a staunch scholar with a "high view of scripture." His works include *Authentic Spirituality: Moving beyond Mere Religion* (Lexington: Emeth Press, 2006); *Caught between Truths: The Central Paradoxes of Christian Faith* (Lexington: Emeth Press, 2007); and a book he coauthored with Clark Pinnock, *The Scripture Principle: Reclaiming the Full Authority of the Bible* (Lexington: Emeth Press, 2006). Callen's thought appears to have been baked in the oven of Biblical Theological scholarship, as is evidenced by his engagement with key scholars such as Gerhard von Rad (142, 149), Karl Barth (184), and Walter Brueggemann (52, 59, 140).

The book begins with an introduction, followed by thirteen chapters, which are divided into four sections. Callen begins by introducing two key points: First, the OT reader must go beneath the surface meaning of the text because this is where the deepest meaning lies; and, second, the OT reader must not forget that the person who does not embrace the Final or New Testament cannot fully understand the Foundational or Old Testament.

In order to further reduce the gap between Jewish and Christian symbols, Callen sometimes refers to YHWH as the "Water Source" (63), while Jesus is called Yeshua; the OT is referred to as the "Foundational Testament," and the NT is called the "Final Testament." Such renaming of persons and concepts, Callen hopes, will help to remove any hints of denigration, while simultaneously reclaiming the ancient Hebraic flavor of the OT.

Callen demonstrates how this gap might be bridged through the analogy of water, which he graphically illustrates on the book's cover. According to

this analogy, the cross that arises out of the water is anchored below the surface to the temple candlestick, implying that for the full meaning of the cross and the Final Testament to be understood, one must plunge below the surface into the rich background of the Foundational Testament.

Having demonstrated the importance of understanding the NT through the symbols of the OT, Callen discusses in Section 1 (chaps. 1–4) approaching the text as the Word of God, rather than as humanly authored literature (19). Most importantly, in this section he provides a well-written summary of writers from Marcion to Bultmann that demonstrates how the Foundational Testament came to be disregarded by Christians.

Section 2 (chaps. 5–10) forms the backbone of the book. YHWH is introduced as the Father of Rabbi Yeshua (75). According to Callen, YHWH is an open and relational being, who can “change” as he interacts with his children. This ability to change does not, however, compromise the Father’s divinity (91). Rather, Callen argues, this characteristic of God is necessary because people’s relationship with God is conditional upon their choice to belong to him. Once the Jews, and later the gentiles, chose individually to belong to Yeshua, they remained his chosen people.

In Section 3 (chap. 11), the author turns to the difficult issue of using the OT to support “holy wars” such as the crusades and jihad or to justify the Shoah. Instead, he favors the use of nonviolent strategies to resolve all conflicts, whether religious or political (163). But alongside this, Callen also challenges his readers not to avoid the horror texts of the Bible, but instead to move beneath the surface of the OT to find deeper meanings behind those passages that seem to promote genocide or violence. In order to accomplish this, the reader must take care not to transpose twenty-first-century cultural understanding on the ancient text. Most importantly, readers are asked to view the sinless Yeshua who absorbed all human violence for the sake of their salvation.

In Section 4 (chaps. 12–13), Callen proposes that the canon is both closed and open, meaning the available canon is to remain as it is, but God, who inspired the writers and editors of the Scriptures, is the same person who illuminates twenty-first-century readers.

Every book has its own drawbacks, and this one is no exception. While the annual festivals, which encouraged the participant to walk in holiness, are given a good treatment, the weekly Sabbath, which also encourages this same walk in holiness, is less emphasized (127). An examination of the command to observe the Sabbath leads this reviewer to conclude that weekly Sabbath observance may be understood as the “holies of holies” in the Jewish concept of time. As such, it is not merely a day to be observed whenever one chooses, which seems to lessen its value, but a day of divine appointment with God. Nevertheless, *Beneath the Surface: Reclaiming the Old Testament for Today’s Christian*

is an excellent read that can inspire both Jews and Christians, whether scholars of biblical theology or general readers.

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Downing, Crystal, L. *Changing Signs of Truth: A Christian Introduction to the Semiotics of Communication*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2012. 342 pp. Paper, \$24.00.

Readers expecting to find new information on the traditional biblical prophetic signs of the times will be disappointed when they read Crystal L. Downing's *Changing Signs of Truth*, but those expecting to understand the changing nature of the meanings of linguistic signs will find an interesting and informative volume. This book is written, says the author, "for anyone who wants to understand why signs of Christ have changed over the ages. It will demonstrate how the cultures Christians seek to change have powerfully influenced the signs they use" (15).

Downing, a professor of English and film studies at Messiah College, invites the reader into an area that she herself finds challenging. The first part of the book is a *tour de force* of leading scholars in the field of semiotics. In this section, she introduces Ferdinand de Saussure, Charles Peirce and Mikhail Bakhtin, Levi-Strauss and Karl Marx, among numerous others. In the latter part of the book, she applies the science of semiotics to the Scriptures and Christian (church) practice.

As is expected, the application of semiotics to Scripture and church practice is a complex topic. Downing does not lessen this complexity with her writing style, in spite of her frequent (personal) examples. She might have made the reading easier had she refrained from frequently introducing new metaphors (signs). On the other hand, these do enrich the challenge that she intends.

Chapter 4 is a short but detailed survey of semiotics and structuralism, blended with history, personal anecdotes, and a conclusion that will forever prevent her readers from enjoying Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Story*—it is helpful, albeit laborious. Chapter 5 continues the same discussion, while Chapter 6 describes the relationship between structuralism and deconstruction.

While the book is not a "page turner," it is a helpful introduction to a subject that demands serious attention and will be found most useful by linguists, cultural anthropologists, and serious communicators.

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