

The fact that people develop an understanding of God based on what is familiar does not disprove God's existence. It is not strange to think that God would have designed humanity to see him in terms that are familiar to humans. Banks points out how in the Bible the idols of the nations around Israel were fashioned after familiar images. For example, Isaiah 44 describes the creation of an image out of wood, which other people might just as soon burn as fuel as use it for the purpose of worship. While the author makes a reasonable assertion that God can be made in the image of humankind, every person must guard against doing this.

Near the end of the book, the author discusses ways one can avoid making God in the image of humanity. First, it must be remembered that God's justice is different from humans'; therefore, what God desires should not be simply a continuation of how humanity already functions, but a pointing forward toward a different future. In addition, one can draw from the teachings of Jesus to find ideals that show God's will (143).

It would be helpful if the author would consider how other religions might keep from making God in their image. One might ponder, for example, how the Quran presents a supreme and lofty view of Allah to a Muslim, and how Islamic terrorists might mold Allah into their image to fulfill their agendas.

Overall this book presents many fascinating ideas that could benefit both the scholar and the lay individual with a bent toward deep, inquisitive thinking. The book provides a warning to people of faith about the dangers of making hasty assumptions about God.

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Donato, Christopher John, ed. *Perspectives on the Sabbath: Four Views*. Nashville: Broadman and Holman Academic, 2011. 420 pp. Paper, \$24.99.

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God" (Exod 20:8-10a, NKJV). As no single set of fundamental assumptions with respect to the Sabbath question is shared by the Christian church today, *Perspectives on the Sabbath: Four Views* aims to determine which is most faithful to Scripture by bringing, in point-counterpoint form, the four most common views of the Sabbath commandment that have arisen throughout church history and which represent the major positions held among Christians today.

Skip MacCarty (Andrews University) opens the dialogue with the biblical seventh-day Sabbath view, which argues the seventh-day Sabbath is a universal and permanent gift (established at Creation) and that the fourth commandment is a moral law of God requiring us to keep the seventh day, Saturday, holy. At bottom, the biblical Sabbath is relational, linking us to our Creator and Redeemer, inviting worship and faith. The Sabbath is a sign

command, which represents the Creator's new covenant Lordship over the world, as well as his commitment to redemptive re-creation both in human hearts and in a new heavens and earth—Eden restored.

Resonating closely with MacCarty in a number of significant ways, Joseph A. Pipa (Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary) follows with the Christian Sabbath view, which brings an important shift in understanding: (1) while the Sabbath is a "creation ordinance" in which God himself established the "principle and practice" of Sabbath observance, no particular day is intended; (2) while in the fourth commandment God reinforces man's moral responsibility for keeping the Sabbath, it is not the day of the week that is God's intent, but only one day in seven that is required; (3) since the resurrection of Christ, the one-day-in-seven to be kept is Sunday, the first day of the week.

Charles P. Arand (Concordia Seminary) shifts the discussion altogether by outlining Luther's radical view of the Sabbath commandment, which is based philosophically and speculatively on Luther's "natural law" theology, and which asserts that the Sabbath commandment was given to Jews alone and does not concern Christians. Rest and worship are still required, but are not tied to a particular day. Beyond Luther's perspective, there is a remarkable absence in Arand's essay of any significant discussion of the biblical material related to the Sabbath—something that Arand acknowledges almost as an afterthought. His exposition of Luther's Sabbath theology essentially resonates with Pipa's "principle and practice" of Sabbath observance with no particular day intended, although he still favors Sunday observance.

Craig L. Blomberg (Denver Seminary) brings the discussion sharply back to the biblical material, pressing the question of hermeneutics over the exegetical or theological import of given Sabbath passages and positing the "Fulfillment" view in which all OT laws are filtered through Jesus and the love commandment, i.e., "the grid of fulfillment in Christ." Since Christ has brought the true Sabbath rest into the present (as per Blomberg's interpretation of Hebrews 4), the Sabbath commands of the OT are no longer binding on believers. The NT teaching is decisive and the new covenant revelation determinative. Because the inaugurated new age potentially changes everything, an essential discontinuity between the OT and NT is assumed. There are new contents to the new covenant, which the interpreter must allow to remain new and not try to read back into the old. Blomberg's position that the Sabbath is fulfilled in Christ essentially reflects and contemporizes D. A. Carson's 1982 edited volume *From Sabbath to the Lord's Day*. Thus this earlier major biblical, theological, and historical critique of the seventh-day Sabbath in favor of Sunday observance by evangelical scholarship in the twentieth century finds aggressive new life and footing in the twenty-first via Blomberg.

The essays and critiques unfold a congeniality in the midst of a confident display of deeply held beliefs and practices that are often juxtaposed with

the very opposite of those beliefs and practices. The authors refer to what they have learned about the other that they did not know or affirm various positions expressed by the others, while arguing their own position. They come away more tolerant and with more understanding of both the simplicity and complexity of the Sabbath/Sunday question.

One wonders if Donato strategically placed Blomberg's final essay over against MacCarty's opening—in tacit recognition that in the end these two options reflect the essential hermeneutical issues and choice. While Pipa and Arand both contribute important insights in the dialogue, neither of their positions in the end really weighs significantly. Beginning with MacCarty is obvious, as every other position not only departs from the seventh-day Sabbath in favor of Sunday observance, but also is in essential agreement with the others in that end product. Ending with Blomberg, while perhaps not so obvious to the casual reader, brings the strongest doubt regarding the viability of the seventh-day Sabbath for our contemporary Christian world. His doubts are essentially the book's last word—unless the reader senses Blomberg's underlying weakness in view of MacCarty's hauntingly more consistent and plain biblical argumentation.

For a generation schooled in “beyond a reasonable doubt,” *Perspectives on the Sabbath: Four Views* not only keeps doubt about the seventh-day Sabbath alive, but it also raises doubt through new argumentation. The extended point-counterpoint form creates potentially reasonable doubt leading the reader to not take the Sabbath issue seriously because understanding the seventh-day Sabbath is a matter of hermeneutics (your approach versus mine and mine is as good as yours) and, in the end, the matter of a particular day does not really make a difference. These four writers are sincere Christian scholars who cannot fully agree. What matters most then is Christ, not a day.

Donato desires for the ensuing dialogue to engender for the reader a firming of what he or she believes, or a grasp of the issues for dialogue if one comes to the subject undecided. The purpose of the book is to undo long-held beliefs that are untenable in light of the biblical and theological evidence or to reinforce one's underlying suppositions regarding the Sabbath.

He correctly asserts that the Sabbath question serves as a microcosm of much larger questions. Hermeneutical presuppositions and the covenantal (dis)continuity of God's redemptive plan, among other biblical theological, ethical, and practical matters, are at once exposed when discussing this question. There is need for larger interpretive and theological themes that provide the framework for establishing a common ground for understanding and dialogue. Some of this becomes clear and unfolds in the dialogue, but in the end no such common framework is found. The reader is left to weigh and choose.

The crucial need for theological frameworks become evident in six principal points of the dialogue: (1) creation and the Sabbath; (2) Jesus and

the Sabbath; (3) the relationship between old and new covenants in God's redemptive plan; (4) the priority/integrity of the Ten Commandments as enduring moral law; (5) the interpretation of Hebrews 4; and (6) the historical-theological developments of Sunday observance in favor of the seventh-day Sabbath in light of prophetic apocalyptic material (Daniel and Revelation). The discussion revolving around the hermeneutical, exegetical, and theological issues in approaching and interpreting Hebrews 4 provides one example of the complexity of issues at play and confronts the reader with material worth the read toward understanding the passage at hand.

If Donato's *Perspectives on the Sabbath: Four Views* point-counterpoint discussion aims to determine which of perspective of the Sabbath is most faithful to Scripture, what should one conclude? Which position is most faithful to Scripture? While Donato leaves each reader to answer for himself or herself, this reviewer suggests that the seventh-day Sabbath, Saturday position presented by MacCarty is the most consistent, plain, and compelling. As stated above, the interpretive divide falls most starkly between MacCarty and Blomberg's positions. Does one take the Sabbath texts as they read across both Testaments, or does one adjust the texts in favor of a hermeneutic of fulfillment in Christ? While MacCarty is criticized (unfairly) for seemingly stringing together Bible passages in ways that make it difficult to identify how the texts are being related, he argues that in the end the issues go beyond hermeneutics in that the only defense of the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath is that it is God's bidding. It is a matter of faith in response to the text—both Gen 2:1-3 and Exod 20:8-11. No amount of discussion regarding “fulfillment in Christ” can move the reader from those two scriptural anchor points. No explicit NT text states that Sunday observance replaces the seventh-day Sabbath as expressed in these two biblical texts.

This text brings the latest discussion of the Sabbath/Sunday issue under one cover. Its point-counterpoint format unfolds the strongest of both old and new argumentation in favor of and against the four perspectives presented. It is a must-read for any scholar, pastor, or layperson desiring an understanding of the issues toward either making informed decisions for themselves or helping others relate to the seventh-day Sabbath.

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Johnson, Matthew V., James A. Noel, and Demetrius K. Williams, eds. *Onesimus Our Brother: Reading Religion, Race, and Culture in Philemon*. Paul in Critical Contexts. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012. viii+175 pp. Hardcover, \$39.00.

The authors of this book attempt to place Paul's epistle to Philemon within the context of the African American experience. It is a compilation of seven articles, all designed to expose the prejudices of Western ethnocentrism and