

of the city gate complex. In this way, *Biblical Lachish* admirably represents what “Biblical Archaeology” is truly all about.

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Wolterstorff, Nicholas. *The God We Worship: An Exploration of Liturgical Theology*. The Kantzer Lectures in Revealed Theology. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015. xi + 180 pp. Paperback, \$20.00.

Nicholas Wolterstorff is Noah Porter Professor Emeritus of Philosophical Theology at Yale University and Senior Fellow at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture at the University of Virginia. Before coming to Yale, he was Professor of Philosophy at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan for thirty years. His many other books include *Justice in Love*, *Educating for Shalom*, and *Hearing the Call*.

In his most recent book, *The God We Worship*, Wolterstorff not only examines liturgical theology, but also extensively investigates the introduction of this heretofore little-explored field and its potential approach in reference to J. J. v. Allmen’s and A. Schmenmann’s works. In the afterword, the author classifies liturgical theology in what he refers to as the “three dimensions of the church’s tradition” (166), each of which constitutes a specific theology: (1) the biblical interpretation tradition (biblical theology), (2) conciliar-creedal theology, and (3) liturgy of the church (liturgical theology). While these theologies overlap in their content, he argues that each offers its own emphasis and contribution to the overall picture. The point of liturgical theology is to *explicitly* formulate that which is *implicit* (although, explicit expressions of the understanding of God are, of course, also found in liturgy). The author asserts that in communal worship, Christians everywhere adopt a form of liturgy, an unwritten “script.” Having a background himself in the Reformed tradition, he emphasizes concurrent liturgical aspects of major denominations (e.g. confession, intercession, sermon), yet stresses the fact that even newer denominations with no official liturgy per se also follow a loose liturgy of sorts.

In liturgy, one of the most obvious implicit presuppositions about God across the board is that he is worthy of worship. Wolterstorff defines “worship” as an approach to God shaped by the three attitudes of awe, reverence, and gratitude. And although worship can be part of our daily lives, what the author refers to is corporate worship in the context of church services, and this he regards as the most distinct manifestation of churches. Another implicit application of the church is that the worship of God is an obligation of the believer, a duty. Thus, if failing to worship him would mean being guilty of wrongdoing, this would imply that God is vulnerable to being wronged. Confession, a vital part of liturgy, presupposes that God has already been wronged, while intercession and supplication imply that God allows a form of resistance to the coming of his kingdom. Here, the paradox arises

again: God, who is magnificent and unequalled, makes himself vulnerable to such resistance.

Perhaps a more fundamental understanding of God than the two previously explored concepts is the recognition that God, in many of our liturgical actions, is addressed directly—i.e. in the second person. Through such address, an I-thou relationship is formed and thus a mutuality. We address God with the assumption that he not only hears us acoustically, but that he also listens to what we say and is free to respond as he wishes. Additionally, God is seen as speaker, and thus, liturgy becomes mutual acts of addressing and listening.

The fact that God not only allows but also—according to the Bible—desires such communication demonstrates a humility on his part and concurrently an elevation of man. Throughout the book, the author explores philosophical questions to this understanding, such as whether it is anthropomorphic to speak of God as one who listens and speaks to us, an objection he confronts with the concept of analogical extension that he bases on definitions of Aquinas (Chapter 6). In a detailed discussion, the author additionally explores the question of how God's speaking to us can be understood, and compares the interpretations of J. Calvin to that of K. Barth.

In his examination of the Eucharistic liturgy, or the Lord's Supper, the author loyally concerns himself with his own Reformed background of the Calvinistic tradition. He does, however, allude that this particular theological understanding of Communion significantly shapes which presuppositions about God are implicit. He holds that in Communion, Christ offers his body and blood, and the believer responds to this offering through the partaking of the bread and wine. The Eucharist represents how, through the Holy Spirit, Christ dwells within us and sanctifies us.

As a member of a Protestant, non-conformist denomination that has comparatively few established forms of liturgy, one tends to associate the liturgy of the more major denominations with mere form and rote rituals. Wolterstorff's book offers vital insight into a world that in many cases has become foreign to us. It sheds light on the fact that the traditional liturgies of the major denominations incorporate and impart understandings of God that some modern churches quite possibly have missed. Undoubtedly, every form of liturgy runs the risk of straying into routine and unreflective rituals—a challenge that faces not just those churches who practice liturgical traditions. In light of the fact that Christians do not recreate worship but rather invariably adopt one form or another of collective worship, this book serves to give Christians a new perspective on a subject we too often neglect to reflect upon.

Scrutinizing which core beliefs about God are behind our rituals, expressions, and liturgies is a compelling, eye-opening exercise. We rediscover, on the one hand, overlooked aspects of God. This may be experienced when reading biblical liturgical passages, such as the Psalms, which simultaneously provide a paradigm for our worship and point to conclusions about who it is we worship. On the other hand, the worshiper's position towards God

also becomes apparent. No mere mortal can lay claim to comprehending the nature of God in his entirety, and thus, it is inevitable that we naturally place certain characteristics of God in the foreground more than we do others. This occurs not only on the individual level but also collectively and is embodied in our worship. If we become sensitized to these expressions, we become aware of what emphases we are placing.

Such examination, promoted throughout the book, can indeed lead to a strengthening of our liturgies, to a deeper conviction and a more cognizant reflection. Concurrently, we can recognize what is missing in our liturgy and act accordingly, possibly amending it with the addition of certain elements or the removal of others. So that liturgy remains meaningful, it must as far as possible remain the authentic expression of a church's beliefs.

The question of which understandings of God are implicit in our worship is a pertinent one, in that we can glean from the Bible an understanding of wrong forms of worship which God does not tolerate. We gain a deeper sense of God's vehemence over this matter by recognizing that worship invariably illustrates God's essence or his plan of salvation. God does not want to be misrepresented by false forms of worship (be it that of Cain which acted as a false model of salvation or that of the golden calf). Recognizing and avoiding false worship-forms become possible when we discern and assess the implicit assertions about God or salvation in our worship.

Wolterstorff pays heed to philosophical precision in all definitions and approaches. For the layman, this could prove tedious and complex due to his lengthy digressions into philosophical and theological history. Owing to the relevance of the subject to the worshiper, therefore, it would be profitable, in this reviewer's opinion, to rework the subject in prose more suitable to the general public.

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