

Starwalt primarily follows Longacre. He places each sentence into a hierarchy, showing how Peter's theses are supported by evidence, circumstance, and other functional categories. The brevity of 2 Peter allows Christopher Fresch to go into some depth describing how the epistle's argument is structured to highlight the importance of truth. Ernst Wendland covers the three Johannine Epistles in the following chapter, in which he uses a form-functional methodology. He differs from many authors in this volume by taking a bottom-up approach to discourse analysis (652). David Clark returns to give his analysis of Jude, in which his focus is the alternation between first-, second-, and third-person main verbs. Stephen Pattemore's chapter on Revelation first gives a helpful discussion on the meaning of "context" before describing the text itself. Conclusions regarding the discourse of Revelation are rather broad, likely due to space limitations. A brief bibliography concludes the volume.

The extent to which *Discourse Analysis* succeeds in its goals of illustrating methodologies and analyzing the NT text varies from chapter to chapter. Some, like Hudgins and Lawson, give a thorough and clear explanation of their methodology, but not all will be so simple to follow. As far as exegesis is concerned, *Discourse Analysis* is a bit like owning a volume from a different commentary series for each book of the NT. The varying techniques assist the reader in finding which method (or at times, which author) is most preferred, but the reader will inevitably find some chapters bereft of useful insights. This volume is required reading for anyone looking to put discourse analysis into practice for NT interpretation. For those conducting specialized research on a given book of the NT, this work should at least be referenced. A minister looking for pastoral or homiletic insights will likely be disappointed by the overly technical approaches. For the specialist, however, it provides a wealth of examples illustrating the use of this important new tool for the exegete's toolbox.

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Waters, Guy Prentiss, J. Nicholas Reid, and John R. Muerther, eds. *Covenant Theology: Biblical, Theological, and Historical Perspectives*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020. 672 pp. Hardcover. USD 60.00.

Covenant theology refers to the theology of the Reformed churches, which understand the relationship between God and humankind as governed by two covenants, the covenant of works and the covenant of grace. The covenant of works and the covenant of grace span the whole of Scripture. They are like bookends that hold together the biblical storyline, all the individual relationships between God and his people throughout the ages. These covenants are, perhaps, anticipated by the covenant of redemption, a covenant between the

persons of the Trinity before creation to save humanity should they sin.

The main points of covenant theology are summarized in chapter seven of the Westminster Confession of Faith. This confession, which has had a strong influence in Calvinist denominations, was completed by the Westminster Assembly in 1646, ratified by the General Assembly at Edinburgh in 1647, and approved by the English parliament in 1648. It explained in thirty-three chapters the Assembly's understanding of all the most significant aspects of the Christian faith and established itself as "the definitive statement of Presbyterian doctrine in the English-speaking world" (F. L. Cross and Elizabeth A. Livingstone, eds., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, rev. ed. [Oxford University Press, 2005], 1745). The Confession's understanding of the covenant, however, functions as an organizing principle for its theology—it provides coherence to the roles of Adam and Christ in the history of redemption, the nature of Jesus's incarnation and atonement, and the relationship between the HB and the NT and between the law and the gospel. Thus, covenant theology has been considered the "architectonic principle" of the Westminster Confession of Faith (24).

*Covenant Theology* is written from a confessional Reformed perspective, and its purpose is to defend covenant theology against the challenges that have been made against it. It consists of the contributions of twenty-six scholars, all current or past faculty members at Reformed Theological Seminary. It was written from a variety of perspectives and fields of knowledge but is in fundamental agreement with the historical understanding of covenant theology as it was expressed in the Westminster Confession of Faith. The work is not monolithic, however. Contributors sometimes disagree on aspects of covenant theology—for example, the nature of the Noahic covenant, the covenant of redemption, and the issue of republication in the Mosaic covenant, among others—which does not detract from the quality or effectiveness of the work but allows for a nuanced understanding of covenant theology.

*Covenant Theology* is intended for seminary students, pastors, and educated laypeople. It provides readers with an integrated approach to the study of the covenants and is divided into three sections. The first two sections address covenant theology issues from the perspective of biblical studies and historical theology respectively. The last section includes studies from a variety of disciplines. The book closes with a very helpful annotated bibliography of Reformed works on covenant theology and detailed general and Scripture indices. The openly adopted confessional perspective shapes the argument and makes the work transparent and clear but sometimes limits its usefulness to the audience. For example, the annotated bibliography at the end of the work is limited to major works in the Reformed tradition. The inclusion of Scott W. Hahn's *Kinship by Covenant* (Yale University Press, 2019), however, who writes from a Roman Catholic perspective, suggests that

a wider perspective is often helpful in a defense of covenant theology.

The first section, “Biblical Covenants,” explores the covenants from a biblical perspective. The first chapter provides biblical evidence for the covenant of redemption, which predates all the covenants. This covenant is one of the most controversial aspects of covenant theology but is not essential to it. The main purpose of this section, however, is to present the biblical basis for the covenant of works and the covenant of grace, both of which are central to covenant theology but do not appear in Scripture under these names. Their existence and implications for God’s nature are also debated. *Covenant Theology* concedes that these covenants are theological derivations but argues that they are an integral part of God’s intended revelation and underlie all the particular covenants between God and his people.

“Biblical Covenants” is the longest section of the work, with almost twice as many chapters as the second and third sections respectively. Its size shows the importance it has for the work. This section also provides an analysis of the particular covenants between God and his people (Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic, and New) and their reception in the NT. One aspect of covenant theology that the work does not discuss, though central to Reformed theology, is why the covenant of grace is only available to the elect, those who were chosen for salvation through God’s decree. If Adam as federal head represents all humanity, why would the actions of Jesus, the new federal head, be only accessible to the elect? The relationship between covenant theology and predestination is not explored enough in the work.

The second section, “Historical Theology,” traces the roots and development of covenant theology from the early church to recent history. Ligor Duncan demonstrates that the early church understood that there was “a fundamental, underlying unity to God’s saving plan” throughout the history of redemption and both continuity and discontinuity in the relationship between the HB and the NT (309). Both beliefs are fundamental tenets of covenant theology. Douglas F. Kelly also documented that though covenant is not mentioned in medieval theology, it provides the necessary substructure that provides unity to its theology. The unity of the covenants is seen in the understanding of the unity of Scripture and the understanding of the nature and role of God.

Howard Griffith explains the uneven understanding and construction of covenant thinking among the Reformers. Bullinger was the first to write a treatise on the covenant in Scripture, but it was Calvin who developed the understanding of the covenant that would become foundational to the understanding of salvation and Christian life. D. Blair Smith traces the covenant theme after the Reformation. He focuses on how covenant theology became “the warp and woof” of the theology of the Westminster Confession of Faith (361).

Especially relevant for Reformed theology today is Mark I. McDow-

ell's analysis of the contributions by Barth and the Torrance brothers to the covenant debate. Together, they have made "the most serious challenge" to covenant since the Reformation (401). Barth rejected the doctrine of double predestination and suggested the idea, later developed by J. B. Torrance, that a covenant of works describes God as a God of justice and not as a God of love and that this relationship obviated or made unnecessary the role of Christ as the mediator of creation from eternity. McDowell suggests that Barth does not fully stand within the Reformed tradition and that the critiques of the Torrance brothers rest "on a series of theological missteps in their analysis of confessional orthodoxy" (425).

The historical section ends with Michael Allen's analysis of the retreat of covenant thought in contemporary theology. He attributes this decline to a shift in theological discourse away from the questions and concerns that drove classical theology. He also notes that the theme of participation (*methexis*) in recent theology overlaps with the doctrine of the covenant and often crowds it out. Allen concludes the chapter with a very helpful identification of seven principles for the ongoing theological appropriation of covenant theology. He calls for a fresh appreciation of the relationship of covenant theology to the most fundamental theological tenets of Christian theology: the nature of God, the nature of human beings, and the relationship between God and humanity. The relationship between covenant theology and these fundamental theological tenets impacts all other aspects of theological discourse.

The third and last section contains studies on the relationship between covenant theology and a variety of collateral disciplines and theological movements. The chapters on ancient Near Eastern and Second Temple Judaism backgrounds for covenant studies are insightful and useful, mainly for more advanced students. Similarly, Benjamin L. Gladd's study on covenant thinking in contemporary NT scholarship addresses concerns for those who have waded a little more deeply into NT waters, especially regarding the new perspective on Paul and apocalypticism.

The last four chapters of the section are of special interest to every reader since they focus on practical implications and concerns that affect most believers. O. Palmer Robertson addresses the relationship between Israel and the church. He helpfully notes that God's covenants have always had in mind the benefit of the nations, not only of the chosen people. While the observation is correct, Robertson is not clear whether God is making the covenant with his chosen people (Abraham, Israel, David) to save or benefit the nations or whether God is including the nations in the covenant with his people. The difference is subtle but significant since it has implications for the nature and mission of the church. Michael J. Glodo explains the challenge that dispensationalism, a highly developed and coherent system, presents to the church. Scott R. Swain explores the relationship between the law and the gospel in contemporary new covenant theologies and provides an excellent

and insightful analysis of the continuity of God's moral requirements for his people in the HB and the NT. Finally, Derek Thomas explores the implications of covenant theology for the understanding of the sacraments and the baptism of infants.

*Covenant Theology* provides an excellent introduction to the biblical basis, historical trajectory, and theological and practical implications of the historical understanding of covenant theology in the Reformed Calvinist tradition. The book is well informed, fair in its treatment of the topic, written with clarity, and provides an integrated approach to the topic. It is, in my opinion, the best introduction to covenant theology for seminary students at the moment.

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Wilkerson, Isabel. *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents*. New York, NY: Random House, 2020. xi + 476 pp. Hardcover. USD 32.00.

Isabel Wilkerson is an acclaimed *New York Times* bestseller and Pulitzer Prize winner. In her new book, *Caste*, she critically examines how the United States of America has been historically shaped by a rigid hierarchical system. Such a system has lingering social effects and is a hidden metric still in use to determine human worth. She compares this system of ranking humans based on inherited physical features such as skin color, hair texture, or eye shape to India's caste system. While India's caste system is based on religion, in the United States, race constitutes the visible agent of the unseen force of caste. A caste system, she writes, is

an artificial construction, a fixed and embedded ranking of human value that sets the presumed supremacy of one group against the presumed inferiority of other groups based on ancestry and often immutable traits, traits that would be neutral in the abstract but are ascribed life-and-death meaning in a hierarchy favoring the dominant caste whose forebears designed it (17).

Although Wilkerson admits that caste is not the only explanation for everything in American social structure, she insists that the economic, political, and social landscapes of American life cannot be fully understood without taking into consideration the entrenched hierarchy its caste system has created. In addressing this polemical issue, Wilkerson's goal is not to solve all the problems that an old caste system has created in America but to shine new light onto its history, its consequences, and its continuing intrusion in everyday life, with the hope that it will one day be overcome. Thus, she strongly rejects the portrayal of slavery by many as nothing more than a "sad, dark chapter" in US history. She is of the view that because many Americans of today have inherited distorted slavery-era rules of social engagement in