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Book Reviews: Rosner - Paul and the Law; Ruderman - Missionaries, Converts, and Rabbis; Averbeck - Old Testament Law for the Life of the Church; Laniak - Shepherds After My Own Heart; Kaiser - The Old Testament Really Matters

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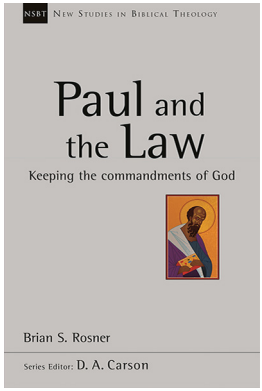
Brian S. Rosner, *Paul and the Law: Keeping the Commandments of God (New Studies in Biblical Theology)*. Nottingham, UK: Apollos, Inter-Varsity Press, 2013



Review by
Brian Crawford

Jewish believer in Jesus and New Testament scholar Brian Rosner contributes the following opening line to his book *Paul and the Law*: "Understanding Paul's relationship to the Law of Moses is fraught with difficulty" (19). Indeed. After this appropriate introduction, Rosner notes that three common solutions have been Lutheranism (law is abolished), Reformed theology (Christians are under the moral law), and the New Perspective on Paul (Jewish identity markers no longer disqualify Gentiles from being the people of God). Rosner sees valid insights in all three paradigms but proposes that they do

not do justice to the full range of Pauline thought.

Rosner's thesis is that Paul makes three "moves" with the law. First, Paul *repudiates* the law as a law-covenant with continued obligations for Christians. Second, Paul *replaces* the obligations of the law with obligations toward Christ and the apostles. Third, Paul *reappropriates* the Law of Moses to serve as a source of prophecy and wisdom.

Rosner begins his analysis in chapter one with the verse that inspired the book's subtitle: "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but what matters is the keeping of the commandments of God" (1 Corinthians 7:19, NASB). The paradox, of course, is that circumcision is one of the commandments in the Torah. In what sense could circumcision be "nothing" if it was commanded? Rosner answers by citing parallel passages (Galatians 5:6, 6:15) and concluding that the "commandments of God" mentioned here are not the Law of Moses, but a new set of commandments that are also from God: the Law of Christ (Galatians 6:2; 1 Corinthians 9:21). Thus, in 1 Corinthians 7:19 Rosner sees Paul repudiating the commandment of circumcision (i.e., the Law of Moses) and establishing a new set of commandments (the Law of Christ) which do not require circumcision.

Chapter two is devoted to explicit Pauline statements that Christians are "not under the law." Rosner notes Pauline affirmations that Jews are "under the law," (Galatians 4:4–5), "in the law" (Romans 2:12), and possessors of the law (Romans 9:4), but that Paul does not consider himself, though Jewish, as under the law (1 Corinthians 9:20). Likewise, when speaking to fellow believers, Paul says that they are not "under the law" either (Romans 6:14–15; Galatians 5:18). On this point, Rosner differs with the New Perspective, citing Paul's use of Leviticus 18:5 as evidence that the entire law is meant by the phrase "under the law," not just Jewish identity markers.

Chapter three addresses implicit Pauline statements which imply a repudiation of the law as obligatory for Christians. Rosner does this largely by noting how Paul describes Jews' relationship with the Torah and contrasting that with how Paul never describes believers' relationship with the Torah in equivalent fashion.

In chapter four, Rosner cites evidence that Paul replaced the Law of Moses with "the Law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2; 1 Corinthians 9:21, Romans 3:27, 8:1).

He notes that Paul's audience is given instructions "to walk and to please God" (1 Thessalonians 4:1), not in accordance with Torah commandments, but through the new halachah of the teaching and examples of Christ and the apostles (Colossians 2:6; Ephesians 5:2; Philippians 3:17; 2 Thessalonians 3:6; Galatians 2:14).

Chapters five and six are devoted to Paul's reappropriation of the Law of Moses to serve as a source of prophecy and wisdom. Rosner notes that Paul describes the Torah as being "for us" on three occasions (1 Corinthians 10:9–10, 10:11; Romans 4:23–25). The first two instances pertain to wisdom in living, but the Romans passage pertains to the prophetic character of the law as the forerunner of righteousness by faith. Regarding the Torah as a source of wisdom, rather than law, Rosner surveys multiple ethical categories (tithing, greed, stealing, etc.) and says that Paul does not ground his ethics in the commandments of Torah, but rather in the wisdom of Torah. In Romans 13:9, Paul cites four of the Ten Commandments, but does not say Christians are obligated to keep them, but rather "he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law" (Romans 13:8). The one commandment to love—emphasized by Christ and Paul himself—is the binding command; the Torah serves as a wise guide as to how to accomplish the command.

In chapter seven, Rosner briefly summarizes his thesis: "According to Paul, believers in Christ do not read the law as law-covenant, but rather as prophecy and as wisdom" (218). He then presents helpful tables that categorize individual Pauline phrases according to the schema of "repudiation," "replacement," "reappropriation as prophecy," and "reappropriation as wisdom." Rosner ends the book with his own paraphrase of Paul's thought in each category.

There is much to commend in Rosner's multifaceted approach

to Paul's thought on the law. By avoiding the oversimplification of Paul's thought to a single principle, Rosner is able to plausibly account for more passages than a solely repudiatory (Luther) or partially-continuous view (Reformed). As a synthesizing view, Rosner's solution escapes easy classification. Against Lutheran and dispensational views, Rosner sees a positive role of the law in prophecy and wisdom, but he agrees with their emphasis on the Law of Christ replacing the Law of Moses as the guiding principle for believers. Against the Reformed view, Rosner denies that the law may be subdivided into civil, ceremonial, and moral laws, instead asserting that the entire law is repudiated as a source of obligations. However, in agreement with Reformed thought, Rosner sees a positive role of the law for Christians, just not as law-covenant. Unfortunately, Rosner does not interact much with the New Perspective on Paul besides disagreeing with its handling of Leviticus 18:5 in Paul's thought.

Although Rosner presents a compelling case for understanding the Pauline epistles, non-Pauline passages in the New Testament present his thesis with loose ends. Rosner never cites or discusses Matthew 5:15–19, thereby leaving a void in how to integrate Paul's theology of the law with Christ's. Rosner only gives the briefest of mentions to Acts 21:20–26 (50), where Paul underwent James's plan to undermine critics who thought that Paul was teaching against the law. James referred to myriads of Jewish believers who were "zealous for the law" (Acts 21:20). If Paul repudiated the law, then why did he go along with the plan and ally himself with Jewish brothers who were zealous for the law? Likewise, why did Paul continue to celebrate the festivals of the Hebrew calendar (Acts 20:16, 27:19), which are nowhere mandated in the New Testament? There may be a way to retain much of Rosner's thesis in light of these passages, but such a solution is missing from the book.

In his first chapter, Rosner states that neither Jews nor Gentiles who believe in Jesus are obligated to keep the law, but "Jewish believers may choose to live under the law" (31). This is a generous attitude toward more Torah-observant Jewish believers, but Rosner does not devote much space to fleshing out the idea. His book usually calls believers undifferentiated "Christians," rather than addressing "Gentile Christians" and "Jewish believers" as distinct subgroups in the body of Christ who have different covenantal and cultural identities. Indeed, in two locations (112, 216–18), Rosner undermines continued Jewish election, covenantal identity, and cultural markers. Because Rosner does not account for continued Jewish covenantal identity in the church, "voluntary observance" for Jewish believers does not enter into Rosner's "three moves." However, to counterbalance the harsh nomenclature of "repudiation" and "replacement," the Jewish apostles' continued observance—including Paul's—deserves a hearing.

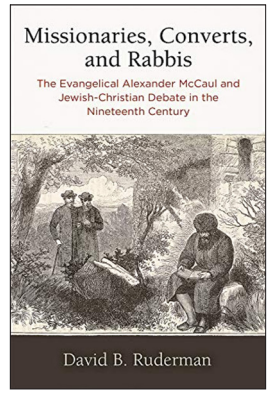
Finally, in his paradigmatic verse (1 Corinthians 7:19) and throughout the book, Rosner treats circumcision as something Paul repudiates along with the Torah (especially on 112). However, while circumcision is part of the Torah and can be emblematic of Torah observance as a whole (i.e., Galatians 5:3), circumcision is grounded in the Abrahamic covenant and was only repeated in the covenant at Sinai 430 years later. Thus, circumcision of Jewish believers' sons could survive a repudiation of the Law of Moses because circumcision predates the Law (cf. Galatians 3:17). This would account for why the Jewish apostles continued the practice of circumcising Jews (Acts 21:21, cf. 15:5), including even Paul, who circumcised the Jewish Timothy (Acts 16:3, cf. Romans 3:1–2) but refused to circumcise the Greek Titus (Galatians 2:3).

In sum, Rosner advances the discussion on Pauline use of the

law with his "three moves." The book is cogently argued and often convincing. However, when it comes to a more positive use of the law by Jewish believers—beyond just wisdom and prophecy—Rosner may need to consider a few more moves.

David B. Ruderman, *Missionaries, Converts, and Rabbis: The Evangelical Alexander McCaul and Jewish-Christian Debate in the Nineteenth Century (Jewish Culture and Contexts).* Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020

Reviewed by Brian Crawford



In the nineteenth century, *The London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews* was the oldest and most influential Jewish mission, and Alexander McCaul was its most celebrated missionary. In that century and today, McCaul has been best known for his comprehensive and relentless attack on Orthodox Judaism in his series of essays entitled *The Old Paths*, first published as one volume in 1837. In *The Old Paths*, McCaul attacked rabbinic halakhic innovations, Jewish sayings about Gentiles, the rabbinic practice of astrology and magic, rabbinic treatment of women, the oral law's contradictions with the Tanakh, and rabbinic oppression of the poor.

Despite McCaul's stature, there was no published study of McCaul's life and works until David Ruderman's 2020 monograph, *Missionaries, Converts, and Rabbis*. Ruderman,

a professor of Modern Jewish History at the University of Pennsylvania and a Reform rabbi, is to be commended for his impeccable scholarship on McCaul and his fair treatment of evangelicalism and the missionary enterprise. Ruderman's portrait of Alexander McCaul provides readers an opportunity to consider how to accomplish the Apostle Paul's admonition to "speak the truth in love" (Eph 4:15). McCaul's rhetoric against Judaism and the Talmud was harsh, but his critiques, arguably, often had basis in truth. What happens when truthful arguments are presented in a condescending tone to Jewish people? *Missionaries, Converts, and Rabbis* narrates how this played out in a nineteenth-century context.

Ruderman's book investigates the life and works of McCaul and traces his impact on his colleagues and adversaries. In chapters 1–3, Ruderman details McCaul's ministry with the *London Society*, the writing and impact of *The Old Paths*, and McCaul's lesser-known emphasis on defending biblical inerrancy toward the end of his life. These chapters present a textured profile of McCaul from a variety of original sources. For example, Ruderman presents touching vignettes of McCaul's life from his daughter Elizabeth Finn (20–22). Finn claimed that her father had written out the Torah in Hebrew five times, and that he taught her Hebrew, Yiddish, and cursive Hebrew script as a girl (20).

The remaining chapters of Ruderman's book are devoted to the reactions of McCaul's friends and adversaries. Chapter 4 details the life of Stanislaus Hoga (1791–1860), a Jewish believer in Jesus who translated *The Old Paths* into Hebrew in 1839, but subsequently repudiated the book and the work of the London Society. He objected to McCaul's aggressive approach to criticizing Judaism and the Society's insistence that Jewish believers cease practicing the Mosaic law. Chapter 5 profiles two

Christian opponents of McCaul, Reverend John Oxlee (1779–1854) and magazine editor Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna (1790–1846), both premillennial Zionists who forged romantic attitudes toward Judaism. Oxlee was originally a supporter of the London Society, but he promoted the adoption of Kabbalistic metaphysics and the observance of Torah by Jewish converts, ultimately leading to a break with the Society and their evangelistic goals. Tonna also insisted that Jewish believers should be encouraged to observe the Torah, but she disavowed direct evangelism as ineffectual until the return of Christ to Zion. Chapter 6 focuses on the tragic life of Moses Margoliouth (1818–81), a Jewish convert and follower of McCaul who published his own anti-Talmudic work in the style of *The Old Paths*. Margoliouth was supposedly a model convert, repudiating Torah observance and obtaining ordination in the Church of England before experiencing anti-Semitism in Christian circles and souring to the prospects of getting many Jewish converts. He, too, came to be a sharp critic of the London Society. Finally, chapters 7–8 focus on a selection of McCaul's Jewish opponents, Isaac Baer Levinsohn (1788–1860), Samuel Joseph Fuenn (1818–90), and Raphael Kassin (1780–1871), none of whom were Orthodox Jews but still attempted to refute McCaul's attacks on Orthodoxy. At the end of his historical survey, Ruderman reflects,

> In the final analysis, the story of McCaul and each of his seven associates and their intense encounter with the other was less about mutual affection and admiration and more about the acquisition of self-knowledge through contrast and contestation, through an intense exposure to the other, leading ultimately to the construction of religious and cultural identities sometimes internally inconsistent and even conflicted (201).

David Ruderman has provided a multifaceted portrait of Alexander McCaul and those he influenced, skillfully tracing

their conflicting motivations, theologies, strategies, perspectives, and attitudes. His monograph sheds light on a significant moment in the early Jewish missions movement, and that moment is not without relevance today. Ruderman's cast of characters prefigure twenty-first century debates on the limits of Jewish identity, the relationship of apologetics and evangelism with anti-Semitism, rabbinic authority, ethics and rhetoric, the role or non-role of Torah observance, Hebrew Christianity versus Messianic Judaism, and the dynamics of syncretism and separation regarding Judaism and Christianity. It is likely that many readers will find an attraction to one or more of the cast of characters, and a dislike of others. However, since these characters lived in a world removed from today, they can serve as a morality tale, even a mirror for self-introspection and correction.

Ruderman's balanced handling of these topics is to be commended. For example, despite McCaul's attacks on Judaism, Ruderman avoided depicting McCaul as an anti-Semite, for McCaul was also an outspoken defender of the Jewish people. Moreover, Ruderman treats evangelical theology, motivations, and goals fairly. In fact, each of the three groups mentioned in the book's title are treated respectfully and are given an opportunity to present their reactions to McCaul's work.

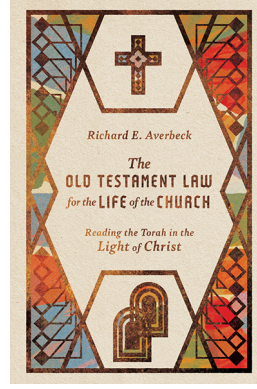
One weak spot, however, is in Ruderman's handling of Isaac Baer Levinsohn's responses to McCaul in chapter 7. Levinsohn's arguments against McCaul often amounted to ad hominem: McCaul had poor credentials, and McCaul unfairly criticized Judaism for things that Christians were guilty of. Unfortunately, Levinsohn's critiques were often strawman arguments against McCaul's positions (i.e., arguing as if McCaul was Catholic), or did not handle McCaul's arguments directly. Levinsohn's main strategy appeared to be mere whataboutism, a redirection of criticism onto Christianity without addressing the original

critiques. Instead of pointing out this sophistry, Ruderman tips his hand by narrating that Levinsohn's book "successfully refuted" McCaul and that he was "capable of responding effectively to the formidable McCaul" (163). However, it appears that Levinsohn only *rhetorically evaded* McCaul's critiques, rather than refuting them, so Ruderman's analysis could use refinement.

Alexander McCaul's nineteenth-century example remains ever relevant today; in the twenty-first century, the names of the principal characters may be different, but the same issues, debates, and schools of thought are present in contemporary Jewish-Christian relations. Those in the Jewish missions world would all be wise to learn lessons—both good and bad—from this fascinating evangelical apologist to the Jewish people, and David Ruderman's historical overview is an excellent place to start.

Richard E. Averbeck
The Old Testament Law for the Life of the Church: Reading the Torah in the Light of Christ
(Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 2022).

This review is based on the Kindle Edition.



Reviewed by Gregory Hagg

Dr. Richard E. Averbeck is currently Emeritus Professor of Old Testament and Semitic Languages and Lecturer at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School where he taught for 27 years as Professor of Old Testament and Semitic Languages. Previously,

he taught in the Old Testament and Ministry departments at Dallas Theological Seminary and Grace Theological Seminary for 14 years. He earned his PhD at the Annenberg Research Institute (Dropsie College).

Of particular interest is Averbeck's work as the director of the Spiritual Formation Forum, having added an MA in Biblical Counseling to his academic credentials. He is also a licensed therapist who is adept in the application of Scripture to the believer, a fact which shows up prominently in this thoroughly academic and thankfully practical volume on the Law. He is aptly suited to draw significance from the Law to the Christian life.

The two articles above by Dr. Averbeck have provided an excellent summary of the major tenets of his book reviewed here in the fourth volume of *the Journal of Messianic Jewish Studies*. His lectures and articles on the goodness, weakness, and unity of the Law come from decades of study on this topic.

Introduction.

Averbeck launches this volume by clearly stating the primary hermeneutical problem. What role should the Old Testament law play in the life of the Christian? Is the Law of Moses obsolete or irrelevant? His introduction extolls the virtue and excellence of the Old Testament scripture reminding the reader that "old" means former, not obsolete.

He acknowledges that we are forced to deal with direct and indirect application of the Law, "Our goal will be to understand how the Old Testament law does and does not come through into the New Testament for the church and the life of the believer" (3).

After a helpful description of five basic views of the Law (Reformed, Theonomy, Dispensational, Lutheran, and

Holiness) Averbeck opts for the fifth view, which shows how the "ceremonial" aspect of the Law applies to the Christian life today. This is the primary contribution of his book, seeing the use of the Law as "guidance for the promotion of holiness today."

He states that dispensationalism asserts, "The Old Testament law no longer has a regulatory function but continues to have a revelatory function. That is what Paul refers to when he says the law is good (e.g., Rom 7:7-14)" (11). Averbeck believes more needs to be said.

When he says concerning the Lutheran view, "Individual commands from the law may be binding on the believer, but only those repeated within New Testament teaching for the church"

(11-12), Averbeck wants to refine this understanding to take more seriously the unity and application of the entire Law for the believer today.

While he recognizes the challenge, he seeks to find the contribution of every part of the Law to the church. "This does not mean we should bring every specific law in the Old Testament over directly into the church and the Christian life. However, every law does contribute to some dimension of the law that, in turn, does indeed apply to the Christian life as part of the "law of Christ" (18). An exhaustive study of each of the 613 commandments is beyond the scope of his book, but the application of them would be a worthy project.

Part One

Part One, Covenant and Context, has two chapters that deal with the covenants in the Old Testament and the nature and progression of the redemptive covenants. Here Averbeck succeeds in simplifying the complex discussion of the

interrelatedness of the Mosaic Law to the Covenants given to Israel. Of special interest is how he sees the Law fitting into the New Covenant.

He does not skirt the issue of theological systems such as Covenant Theology. While acknowledging the contribution of that system, Averbeck argues for a better way of understanding the actual covenants of the Old Testament. "The point is that the explanation of the covenants in the Bible that follows here depends on the explicit covenants in the Bible, not on any particular form of systematic theology" (36).

After delineating these covenants (Genesis 6, 9, 11, 12, 15, etc.), he provides comparative literature from the Ancient Near East. This is a major strength of the work. Averbeck's exceptional expertise in cognate studies will satisfy the scholar. Unfortunately, some of the discussion may fly over the heads of many readers.

The interrelatedness of the Mosaic covenant to the Lord's Table, complete with the blood oath and covenant meal, is a fascinating observation. While some may say that too much is made of the parallels, Averbeck offers an astute analysis of the Christian covenant-renewal ritual (51-52).

Part Two

The second part, The Old Testament Law in Context, chapters 3-7, provides a thorough discussion of the Law of Moses within the Hebrew Scriptures. He also shows how the Law is presented in narrative genre and repeated in various ways. The section includes an exposition of the Book of the Covenant, the Kingdom of Priests, the Offerings and Sacrifices, and laws of Holiness and Purity. Parts One and Two provide an exceptional exegetical treatment of the Pentateuch.

Here Averbeck presents the most academically rigorous

material in the book. He plumbs the depths of Ancient Near Eastern parallelism with the Old Testament. Averbeck also goes into considerable detail concerning the Levitical system of tabernacle, sacrifice, and purity laws. The style of his writing makes this material equally accessible to the Christian who is not trained in technical matters as well as the serious scholar, professor, or pastor. Decades-long research by this eminent scholar of the Hebrew Scriptures is on display in this portion of the book. Averbeck's shares his grasp of cognate studies with the reader in a manner that clearly elucidates the biblical text rather than obscuring its meaning.

As he states in the introduction, "One of the major problems with the way the discussion has been carried on, as I see it, is the tendency to write on the New Testament use of the Old Testament law without expending the necessary time and effort to know the law well in the first place in its Old Testament and Jewish context. This is one of the ways I hope to contribute to the discussion in the present volume" (3). In this volume the reader it taught by one who has expended the necessary time and effort to know the law well.

Application to the Christian is ever in Averbeck's mind. Even the "goring ox laws" find a connection to 1 Timothy 5:18. Oxen are to be treated well as they work (Deuteronomy 25:4).

He states, "It is mean and abusive to muzzle an ox while it is walking in food. Think of the ox straining at the muzzle to try to eat some of the grain. It amounts to torturing the ox. Similarly, it is vicious and callous for people in the church to benefit from the ministry and not supply the needs of the minister (94).

Part Three

The third part, The Old Testament Law in the New Testament, is the most practical portion of the book regarding "The

Christian and the Hebrew Scriptures." Chapters 8-11 deal with the topics of Jesus and the Mosaic Law, the Law in Acts and the Epistles, the Goodness of the Law, the Weakness of the Law, and the Unity of the Law. While his articles in this volume of *the Journal of Messianic Jewish Studies* distill the last three topics, his 382-page book expands those ideas and surrounds them with countless illustrations and detailed explanations.

For most readers this third section will be seen as the greatest contribution of the book. Averbeck isolates the most controversial passages. His explanation of Matthew 5:17ff is an example of how lucid and convincing his comments are. He states, "According to Matthew 5:18, absolutely no part of the Old Testament law has passed away, not even today, nor will it until heaven and earth pass away" (233). Jesus does not end the Law, but He is the example of fulfilling the Law. "If one wants to know how to live properly according to a full and filled up understanding of the law, they need only hear his teaching and observe his way of life as narrated in this Gospel" (234). Further, he states Jesus disputed the Law's meaning with His opponents, ". . . but he never intended that anyone undermine its key importance for guidance in the lives of his followers" (254).

Two areas deserve special consideration—sacrifice and temple. How do the ceremonial aspects of the Law apply today? Many, if not most, expositors argue that Jesus Christ's final sacrifice for sin renders such application irrelevant. If Averbeck is correct, this is not a tenable position, given the unity of the Law. That is, we should not apply some of the Law, like moral and civil, and then ignore other portions of the Law. So, what is the role of the sacrifices? Dr. Averbeck's treatment of the issue seeks to answer the question in a manner that will likely satisfy most readers.

Sacrifice is at the core of the Christian faith. Early in the book he refers to Luke 9:23 and states, "Christ gave himself as a sacrifice for me. If I am going to become like him, I must give myself as a sacrifice too, as he said, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me" (19). It makes sense that Jesus may have been referring to the "sacrifices" of the NT believer found in Romans 12:1, Hebrews 13:15-16, and 1 Peter 2:4-10.

These connections tell us how we are to live as believers, so, "From this point of view, the 'ceremonial' law is as applicable to the Christian life as the 'moral' law (22).

In this section, Part 3, Averbeck also underscores the temple imagery that links Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament. "The church and the believer are the temple of the Holy Spirit today. . . . We need to take seriously the new covenant line about having the Old Testament law written on our minds and hearts (Jer 31:33). The Holy Spirit does this writing on the heart and mind (Ezek 36:26-27; cf. 2 Cor 3:3-6). Jesus taught the law this way in the Sermon on the Mount and throughout the Gospels. The whole Old Testament law hangs on Jesus' two great commandments. They come from the Old Testament law too" (330).

Add to this the concept of the priesthood of the believer offering spiritual sacrifices, and we are drawn to ceremonial imagery. Also, Jesus is the cornerstone of a spiritual temple being built now (1 Peter 2:4; Ephesians 2:20). These connections might lead one to think in terms of "replacement." Of course, this is a basic argument used by those who see no future role of national Israel in the plan of God. They say if these things are true, then the OT Law, Prophets, and Writings (the Tanach) are fulfilled in Jesus and the church. Nothing else remains. However, why limit this application to the "already"

enjoyment of kingdom blessings and not extend it to the "not yet" things to come? Averbeck seems to allow for both in his analysis.

He implies that Ezekiel 40-48 should be taken in a "relatively literal way" with future sacrifices in a future millennial temple: "If this is the case then the sacrifices offered in that temple would have the same purpose as those in the Old Testament—on the physical and temporal level on earth. This includes the burnt, grain, drink, peace, sin, and guilt offerings for making atonement, as well as the Zadokite priesthood; the daily, weekly, and monthly regular cult; and the annual festivals (see Ezek 40:38-43; 42:13-14; 43:18-27; 44:15-16; 45:15–46:24)" (338).

Conclusion.

It would take a book several times the length of this one to discuss all the individual commandments of the Law and how they apply to the Christian today. The reader will leave the book wanting more specifics. Questions certainly remain. However, Averbeck wants believers to acknowledge the goodness of the law as it is viewed through New Covenant lens. It was always the intent of the Lord to transform the inner man. Averbeck seeks to give validity to the Law from a biblical and theological perspective. The entirety of the Mosaic Law must find usefulness in the church today, but how? Dr. Averbeck states, "In my view, we should not be thinking in terms of the limits of the application of the Old Testament law in the life of the church and the believer but rather the real issue of how it applies—all of it!" (329).

Yet he is quick to add that no law has ever transformed or saved. "The Old Testament law continues to be good for the believer, but it is also weak. It never had the power to change

the mind and heart of any believer in any age. . . . The Spirit does that by bringing all that God has freely given us in Christ to bear down deep within us—our thoughts, motives, perspectives, purposes, and all" (332).

Appendix

The appendix, "Jewish Messianic Believers and the Torah" is an extra added attraction of this book. Dr. Averbeck speaks to the special significance of this book to the overarching theme of this volume of *the Journal of Messianic Judaism*. After a detailed account of the intersection of his personal academic career with Jewish evangelism and discipleship, Averbeck offers "Biblical Support for the Messianic Movement" (336). Anyone in the movement will want to carefully study Dr. Averbeck's "Cautions for the Messianic Movement Today" (340). He is also currently a member of the Board of Directors of Chosen People Ministries, so his observations in this area of Messianic Judaism are particularly helpful to all who are committed to sharing the good news with the Jewish people.

Application is always on his mind, and this is especially true as it relates to the evangelism of Jews and Gentiles. He addresses the missional observance of the Law when he speaks of Paul's stated goal in following the Law of God while under the Law of Christ and not under the Law of Moses (1 Corinthians 9:19-23). In a light-hearted moment Averbeck puts these words in the mouth of the Apostle Paul, "I just do not give a rip about that! My passion is for preaching the gospel in the most winning way possible without any compromise in my commitment to Yeshua" (339).

The reader will be delighted to see an extensive bibliography and subject index followed by a thorough Scriptural index

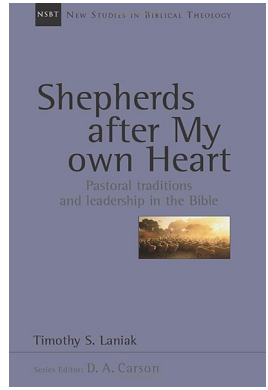
listing nearly all the problematic passages in both testaments. Averbeck offers commentary on most of the thorny issues. Although his explanations will not satisfy everyone in every instance, his exegesis is superb, and his gentle way of expressing the application is quite appealing.

Some readers will want to hear more from him about passages that seem to set aside the Law or "render the Law inoperative (καταργέω)" during the church age (Ephesians 2:15; 2 Corinthians 3:7; Romans 7:6). Others may appeal to a kind of progressive revelation that says observance of the Law is only required of the New Covenant believer when it is repeated (literally or in principle) in the New Testament. Still others will want more on how Paul seems to re-purpose or restate the Law to make a particular point. In other words, perhaps more needs to be said about the weakness of the Law and the uniqueness of walking in the Law of Christ. Perhaps the old distinction of Continuity versus Discontinuity would help inform the discussion.

Regardless of any possible critique, this excellent book serves as a helpful review for those already committed to the dictum "all the Bible was written for us, but not all the Bible is written to us (2 Timothy 3:16-17). The unity of the Law is maintained while the emphasis on the Spirit's role is emphasized. This book presents a healthy challenge to those committed to the careful application of "all Scripture."

Hopefully, this review will entice the reader to acquire *The Old Testament Law for the Life of the Church*. No short review can do justice to Dr. Averbeck outstanding work. It deserves careful study and, above all, serious application of the Law to the Christian today.

Timothy S. Laniak,
Shepherds after my own Heart: Pastoral Traditions and Leadership in the Bible
(New Studies in Biblical Theology)
Nottingham, UK: Apollos, Inter-Varsity Press, 2006



Reviewed by Richard Flashman

Shepherds After My Own Heart (Shepherds) was written by Dr. Timothy Laniak. Dr. Laniak is the Senior VP of Global Content for the "Our Daily Bread Ministries," and the co-founder of Bible Journey Inc. of Charlotte, NC. Before that he served as Professor of Biblical Studies at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary (GCTS) Charlotte, NC Campus for twenty-six years as well as the past Dean of that campus for eight of those years. He holds a ThD in Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Period Judaism from Harvard University as well as an MDiv from GCTS and a BA in Biblical Studies and Social Science from Wheaton College of Wheaton, IL. His published works include, *Finding Lost Images of God* (Zondervan 2012), *Guide for Hebrew Exegesis* (Logos, 2009), *While Shepherds Watched their Flocks* (Shepherd/Leader Publications, 2007), *Esther, NIBC Commentary Series* (Baker 2003) and *Shame and Honor in the Book of Esther* (Scholar Press, 1998).

In the interest of full disclosure, Dr. Laniak was my mentor in the GCTS DMin Program and the first reader for my DMin thesis. I count him as a friend.

As part of the preparation for writing *Shepherds*, Dr. Laniak and members of his family lived with and interviewed Bedouin

shepherds in the remote pasturelands of the Jordanian hill country. From that experience he gained firsthand knowledge of life in a contemporary middle eastern shepherding family which in turn provided practical insight and real-life texture to the biblical-theological study reflected in *Shepherds*. Many characteristics of shepherding mentioned in Scripture were validated during the time spent with his Bedouin hosts back in 2003.

Dr. Laniak asserts that "a discernible pastoral stream of tradition flows through Scripture . . . this tradition provides a broader context for the nature of leaders in the covenant community, and for understanding the nature of that community as the flock of the divine Shepherd," (p. 24). In other words, shepherding is a foundational biblical metaphor for the leadership role in the covenant communities established by God, both old and new.

No single metaphor can provide a comprehensive picture on any topic, including the role of leadership in the covenant community, but "Shepherding is a felicitous metaphor for human leadership because both occupations (shepherds and covenant community leaders) have a comparable variety of diverse tasks that are constantly negotiated (based on changing conditions). . . . A good shepherd is one who does what is required by each circumstance in each context," (*Shepherds*, p.40-41). Laniak notes that the stories associated with the shepherding metaphor in the biblical narrative go a long way in providing even richer meaning to the root metaphor itself. When we think of the "Good Shepherd" a whole "host of associations" come to mind about the role of leaders from the great history of salvation.

As a result of their work, shepherds were known for their independence, resourcefulness, adaptability, courage, and vigilance. Their profession cultivated a capacity for

attentiveness, self-sacrifice, and compassion. . . . For these and other reasons, the shepherd naturally became an icon of leadership," (*Shepherds*, p. 57). So much so, that the shepherd moniker was adopted by ANE monarchs and associated with the gods themselves.

In perusing this theme Dr. Laniak attempts to find the continuity between the older and newer Testaments and to balance the interests of both cultural backgrounds and literary context. He writes introductory chapters on shepherding cultures from his experience with the Bedouin shepherds (see above), and another chapter on the pastoral language in ANE extra-biblical official documents, including those of ANE rulers. He does this to better understand cultural and literary context of the shepherding metaphor of the Bible.

According to Laniak the "pastoral stream of tradition" in scripture is embedded in two great expressions. First in the "exodus/wilderness complex" represented by Moses' leadership of Israel from Egyptian bondage to the precipice of the promised land 40 years later. In that tradition the Lord reveals himself as the Shepherd of his people, their protector, provider, and guide, through the office of his faithful under-shepherd Moses.

Once in the Land, God's people eventually demanded a king to lead them, so the Lord ultimately raises up the shepherd-king David and his lineage. Laniak notes that many of the Messianic promises are situated in this Davidic stream. But ultimately these men are just under-shepherds, as the true Shepherd Ruler of his people is the LORD himself.

After investigating these two shepherd streams Laniak turns to the prophets of Israel who "make sustained use of pastoral imagery: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Zechariah," (p. 25).

The next section tracks the shepherding theme through

the four Gospels. Mark picks up on the theme of the second exodus. Matthew, the compassionate Davidic shepherd, Luke, the seeking and saving shepherd, and John the self-sacrificing shepherd.

After the gospels, Laniak by-passes the "Pastoral Epistles" to the reflections of shepherd leadership in *1Peter, and the Revelation of John*. Laniak notes that both these authors understand the people of God as a persecuted community in exile called to follow the divine shepherd even to the point of death.

Finally, Laniak summarizes the key take aways of his biblical and cultural research noting that,

> 1. Shepherd leadership is comprehensive in scope. Biblical shepherds are accountable for the lives and well-being of their sheep. All their decisions and behaviors are to be done for the benefit of the flock. This does not mean they are to indulge the people of God. Rather they are to care for and exercise discipline over those entrusted to their leadership. They are to wield the Iron Rod of Psalm 2:9 and the nurturing love of Isaiah 40:9-11. Toughness and tenderness, compassion and social order, authority and gentleness, courage and conflict, all are part of the biblical shepherding role (1 Corinthians 4:21).
>
> 2. False or bad shepherds use their positions to serve their own needs. They forget whose flock they serve. It's the Lord's flock, not theirs (John 21:15-17), and they are responsible to God and the flock for the biblical quality of their leadership.
>
> 3. God wants humans to enlist in his mission. This is a risk for God. The human role is derivative of the divine

role. God grants royal prerogatives to his creatures to lead in anticipation of the day they will rule and reign with him forever. Shepherd leaders are first and foremost sheep who relate to their divine Shepherd. "The Lord is my shepherd." They are appointed and empowered by God. This requires humility toward God and responsiveness to God's people. New Testament leaders are God's coworkers in a supporting role (1 Corinthians 3:9).

4. God's people are vulnerable and dependent. They are prone to wander, scatter, and get lost. Bad leadership, which either neglects or abuses the flock, puts them at risk for all the above and more. One day, all such leaders will have to give an account for their stewardship.

5. Pastoral Leadership is part of a larger redemptive historical narrative that depicts the Lord's
leadership in wilderness settings. The Lord is the Shepherd of his people, leading them by under-shepherds through hostile, arid places to the abundance of the Promised Land (Revelations 7:15-17). Laniak points out that this is what the Torah Festival of Sukkot (Tabernacles) had anticipated all along.

6. While metaphors are creative in making meaning they are also limiting. No one metaphor
gives us the whole picture of God's acts in redemptive history. The shepherding metaphor is important but not comprehensive of God's attributes and behaviors. This is why the biblical authors often mix their metaphors in communicating the person and work of God, picturing him as a warrior, king, father, lamb, etc. Doing this communicates to the reader "the dynamic but ultimately inexpressible nature of God," (p. 250).

> 7. Through biblical pastoral imagery we are the heirs to an enduring metaphor that stretches back 4000 years and has been applied to the leadership of prophets, priests, kings, and those called to watch over and care for the Messianic communities of Yeshua. Through that enduring imagery God has provided his human co-laborers of every age with a powerful picture of the nature and challenges of their task. And in the Messiah Yeshua, The Good and True Shepherd, we have the example of one who was able to complete that task with selflessness and perfection.

As Laniak notes, this book has something for both the biblical scholar and the pastoral leader. Both will come away with valuable information and/or insights for their work (p. 26-27).

While Dr. Laniak notes Paul's farewell speech to the Ephesian elders, ladened with pastoral imagery as it is, he does so in the context of his study of Luke's Gospel and 1 Peter. In his Gospel of Luke study, he does not give Paul credit for the quote in Acts 20:28 and instead credits Paul's recorder, Luke, for it (p. 202). The informed reader understands that this can be a manner of referring to the biblical record, but it still begs the question if this might be part of an effort to avoid having to deal with Paul's pastoral theology.

While he does credit Paul when he quotes from this passage in 1 Peter, he is also quick to note (in the footnotes) that there is only one other place (Ephesians 4:11) that Paul uses the shepherding metaphor (fn. 37, p. 232). While true, still, it is hard to ignore the fact that when Paul wants to leave a lasting impression on church leadership, he goes to the shepherding metaphor, and presses it hard (Acts 20:25-31).

Dr. Laniak passes over the Pastoral Epistles in this otherwise comprehensive Biblical Theology of the shepherding metaphor.

There is no explanation for this in the body of his work, but in an introductory footnote he explains, "Pastoral imagery is not a central organizing rubric in the Pauline Corpus" (Introduction, fn. 7, p. 25). But he also states, "Paul is quite pastoral in his ministry, engages in second exodus theology at times (W.D. Davies, 1997) and refers to church leaders as shepherds occasionally," (Ibid).

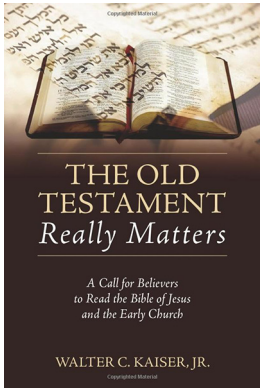
Assuming the accuracy of the above, one still must wonder why pass over such a rich collection of inspired pastoral insights and counsel. It seems in the Pastoral Epistles (and elsewhere for that matter) Paul, the quintessential biblical scholar, is practically applying the shepherd metaphor to the unique task of leadership in the messianic communities of his day. It's almost as if he is fleshing out his Acts 20:25-31 pastoral theology in his pastoral epistles.

In those epistles we get a senior leader in the messianic community counseling junior leaders (Timothy and Titus) to "keep watch" (Acts 20:28) over themselves (1 Timothy1:18-19a; 4:7, 12, 15-16; 6:11-14, 20–21; 2 Timothy 2:3-7, 15-16, 22-24) and the flock (1 Timothy 4:13-14; 2 Timothy 2:14; 25-26); to oversee and shepherd the flock (Acts 20:28; cf. 1Timothy 3:1-15, 5:1-21; 6:17-19; 2 Timothy 1:3-14; 2:1-2; 3:14-4:2; Titus 1:5-9; 13-14; 2:1- 3:3, 8-11, 14); to be "on their guard" (Acts 20:31, cf. 1Timothy 1:3-7) against "savage wolves" (Acts 20:29; cf. 1Timothy 4:1-6; 6:3-5; 2 Timothy 3:1-9; 4:3-4), and to do so selflessly for the good of the flock and not for personal gain (Acts 20:33-35; 1Timothy 6:6-10). Again, why pass over what seems to be such rich applications of the shepherding metaphor?

Aside from that omission, *Shepherds after My Own Heart* is a masterpiece of Biblical Theology on the critical issue of

leadership in God's covenant communities. Its rich academic and practical content will be a great source of information, inspiration, and even warning to the careful reader, whether serious academic or busy ministry/congregational leader. Enjoy!

Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *The Old Testament Really Matters: A Call for Believers to Read the Bible of Jesus and the Early Church.* Silverton, OR: Lampion House Publishing, LLC , 2022



Reviewed by Jeff Millenson

Walter Christian Kaiser, Jr., was born into a Christian home on April 11, 1933, in Folcroft, Pennsylvania. He entered Wheaton College in 1951, and, after earning his A.B. there, began graduate studies in the Old Testament at Wheaton Graduate School.

After graduate school, he pursued further studies in Old Testament and ancient history at Brandeis University and there completed a Ph.D. in Mediterranean Studies in 1973. In 1966 he joined the faculty at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, eventually becoming the chair of the Old Testament department. In 1980 he became the Vice President and Academic dean of Trinity and continued as such through 1992. In 1993, he was called to serve as the Distinguished Professor of Old Testament at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, and in 1997 became

the president of that institution. He retired in 2006. Currently he is President Emeritus and Distinguished Professor of Old Testament and Ethics at Gordon-Conwell.

Dr. Kaiser has been teaching and preaching the Old Testament for more than fifty years and has written over forty books on the subject. This current volume addresses the value and necessity of studying the Old Testament, rather than "unhitching" the Christian faith from these essential thirty-nine books.

In his preface, Kaiser points out how Jesus and the apostles fully engaged with the Bible they had (which we now call the Old Testament), why we must read and study the Old Testament to understand the New, and the heresy of disengaging, disbelieving, and rejecting the Word of God.

One of the reviewers of this book suggests that he will henceforth use it as a required textbook in his Old Testament Survey course. That's an excellent idea, for Kaiser paints the Old Testament with a broad brush, in language accessible to the average non-theologically trained reader, yet he unearths precious details and nuggets of truth because of his thorough knowledge of the language, the history, and the cultural milieu of the Old Testament.

The book has 18 chapters, each one discussing an aspect of the Old Testament narrative, covering the vast sweep of the Old Testament: Creation, Death and Immortality, the Land of Israel, Life and Wisdom, Psalms, the Messiah, and more. The final chapter concerns the New Testament book of Revelation, and Kaiser posits that it cannot be properly understood without reference to, and a thorough knowledge of, the Old Testament.

Rather than trying to cover each of the eighteen chapters in the book in depth (a review that would be a book in itself), I would like to highlight Chapter Four, "The Old Testament View of the Law of God Really Matters." One reason for this choice

is that I am a Jewish believer in Jesus as my Messiah, and I am always interested in a scholar's view of the relationship of the Old Testament Law to the modern Jewish or Gentile believer.

In the chapter, Kaiser makes an excellent point regarding what happens when we try to:

> . . . personally legitimize what is meaningful and true for each of us individually, apart from any standards set by God, then we make up our own rules and morals and become our own gods, saying, 'This is what it to means to me!' This is precisely what the Nazis reflected in the German society in the 1940s as they murdered more than six million Jewish people! (53).

In the same chapter, Kaiser points out that:

> We are helped when the broader command in the Old Testament is sometime followed by a narrower command that illustrates how it coordinates with both the larger view and the more specific aspects of the law. For example, Leviticus 19:13 has the indirect prohibition: 'You shall not defraud your neighbor or rob him,' but that is followed by the direct injunction, 'Do not hold back the wages of a hired man overnight,' while verse 15 adds, 'You shall do no injustice in court.' This then is also followed by a real case in point: 'You shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great.' Thus, the general principles are illustrated by the particular illustrations of the larger general principle (58-59).

Later in the chapter, Kaiser deals with several different views about how the Law can be applied to Christians today. He provides a helpful analysis of "Reconstructionism," also known as "Theonomy," and how it misses a crucial point in Numbers 35:31, which states that the Israelites were not to "'accept a ransom for the life of a murderer who deserves to die. He must be put to death.' This implied, therefore, that all other capital crimes . . . [could allow] a 'substitute,' i.e., a 'ransom' for any and every

case except murder" (60).

Kaiser then contrasts the view of Dispensationalism, which:

> . . . holds that God's administration of the Church is by grace and is therefore altogether separate from the way he administered Israel in the past by laws. The cultural differences are just too great between the Christians and the society of Israel; therefore there must be two separate programs for two separate peoples in God's plan (61).

Finally, Kaiser presents his own view, "The View of Principlization," which states that, "when we interpret Old Testament laws, we should look for underlying abstract principles that give to us the moral and spiritual teaching that stands behind the particular command" (63).

He then presents the "'Ladder of Abstraction" to explain his method of interpreting the laws of the Bible:

> In this method, the interpreter moves up the Ladder in a continuous way from the bottom rung of the detailed specificity found in an Old Testament particular law, all the way up the rungs to the high point of a generally observed overarching principle or paradigm that undergirds what is commanded in the text" (63).

In a similar way, the interpreter moves down the other side of the ladder to a

> . . . particular concrete application in the New Testament times, or even in our contemporary culture. So, it is not so much the concrete command from the Old Testament that is the focus of our attention, but it is the abiding truth of the principle that undergirds the comments that is the teaching to which God is calling us (64).

Kaiser concludes his chapter on the Law of God with this statement:

> God's law gives us the direction and the guidance we need.

> Moreover, the same law that seemed at times to set such high demands for us to observe was the same law that provided for forgiveness in the grace and mercy of God's provision of the animal sacrifices—a provision he set into play until he personally came and paid all our debt on the cross (65).

Kaiser often provides keen observations regarding connections between various passages of Scripture. For example, he points out the parallels between Psalm 22 and some of the "Servant" passages of Isaiah (171). He sees connections in Scripture that validate its wholeness:

> Three times in the Bible the theology of fulfillment has come ('It is finished'): (1) In the beginning, God put a stop (a Shabbat, Gen 1:31) to his creative work, (2) on the cross, once again our Lord said 'It is finished' (John 19:30), and (3) at the conclusion of the end times, God will once more say 'It is done' (Rev 21:6) (173).

Occasionally, Kaiser makes a statement that, while being theologically accurate, is not supported by the text. For example, he states that, "Even though Job was given the same number of children again, they too were actually doubled in number as well, for Job would meet his former family in heaven once more when the Lord returned in his second advent." But the book of Job is silent about Job's "former family" and does not suggest that his children were "doubled in number" (217).

At times, Kaiser dismisses an alternate viewpoint without providing grounds for his view. In the chapter about the book of Esther, while discussing the fact that God is not explicitly mentioned in the book, he states:

> However, some Bible students amazingly (but probably, uselessly) cite Esther 1:20; 5:4, 13; 7:7 as possible hidden acronyms of the divine name, YHWH (i.e., Yahweh) in this biblical book . . . . So the question is this: where is God hiding in this book, if he is there at all? Certainly not in the above

suggested acronyms! (232).

But the author does not explain how he can be so sure that God's name couldn't have been "hidden" in the text in just this way? Esther 5:4 is a good example of the suggested acronym: "May" (the word begins with a "yod"), "the king" (begins with a "he"), "and" (a "vav"), "Haman" (another "he") – yod, he, vav, he, which form the tetragrammaton YHVH (or YHWH). To dismiss the possibility of someone's "hiding" the name of God in the book in this way, it would help his case if evidence were cited proving that nowhere else in Scripture or contemporary Near East writings did that practice occur.

No book by Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., would be complete without some puns. Here are a couple of his most notable ones: regarding a view that Genesis 3:15 addresses only why mortals kill snakes, he says: "Image [sic] (it should read, "imagine") snaking that view of Scripture as being part of divine theology! Would such a reptilian view be worthy of being part of our Lord's point?" (93) [emphases mine].

The main drawback to one's enjoyment of this book is its poor editing. There are several typographical, grammatical, and editorial mistakes that mar the otherwise high quality of the book. Here's a partial list: Extra comma (xi); Misplaced apostrophe (xiv); repetition of an entire block of text (41-42), in "The King of the Promise-Plan of God," which mirrors 175-176, in "False Starts to the Role of Kingship"; comma splice (51); repetitive material (67, 68); missing comma that should join an independent clause and a dependent one (78); duplicate words: "he was he was focused on. . . ." (83); missing negator: "we are surprised. . . " [about Jerusalem's role in the future] – the context makes it clear that we are not to be surprised (84); sentence fragment (96); misplaced quote marks (100); "Zechariah" misspelled as "Zachariah"" (112);

another missing negator: "God would let his 'Favorite One' . . . see decay" should read, "God would not let his 'Favorite One' . . . see decay" (114); four pages (114-117) in the chapter concerning "Messiah" are quoted almost verbatim (159-162) in the chapter regarding "The Psalms and Worship" without any acknowledgement. The overlapping material, not surprisingly, concerns the shared topic of the Messianic Psalms; and a typographical error: "kinship" instead of "kingship" (168).

These errors are distracting to the reader. Perhaps a second edition of the book will be forthcoming in the future, at which time these matters can be addressed.

All in all, I highly recommend the book for anyone who wonders why we should read, study, and learn the Old Testament. It is especially important for those Christians who think that we no longer do need it – they are neglecting three-fourths of God's written Word for His people!