

***Title: Pre-intensive review (1500 words) of the three following articles (500 words on each), submitted as one document (10%). The articles are available on Google Classroom.***

*Course: Biblical Theology*

*Lecturer: Dr. Peter Lau*

*Student: Scott Thong Yu Yuen*

*Programme: MCM, 2022*

*Word Count: 1567 words*

*Date of Submission: 06 May 2022*

#### **DECLARATION**

I certify that this ASSIGNMENT is my own work. I have acknowledged all material and sources used in it, and that I have not plagiarised in part or whole the work of others without stating the references.

#### **Bible Overviews parts 1-4 (by David Gibson) – 535 words**

Gibson begins his series of short articles by explaining that a ‘Bible overview’ is not a sequential yet disconnected overview of different books or characters in Scripture. Rather, it is about identifying and explaining overarching themes and patterns running throughout the entirety of the Bible, looping through multiple books.

And what might those themes and patterns ultimately be? No less than Jesus Christ as the focus and fulfilment of the grand story that is gradually revealed in the progression of the Old Testament. Indeed, through a diagram Goldsworthy seems to describe the Old Testament’s contents

between Genesis 12 to its last verse as almost, very nearly an interlude – with God making the promise and God fulfilling the promise, bookending that rather large section of “partial fulfilment”.

With the advent of Christ’s first coming, all those Godly promises undergirding the Old Testament came to long-awaited fruition – and we now play a part in the unfolding present Kingdom as subjects of Christ, the true and proper King.

I can heartily agree that the Bible can be seen as basically the story of how God set up a perfect tale, only to have humanity mar it, leading God Himself to intervene and repair it. I have myself preached messages about how God (through becoming the man Jesus Christ) took up *both sides* of the covenant pledge<sup>1</sup> (e.g. two fires passing through the blood in Genesis 15:7; both copies of the ‘contract’ in Exodus 25:16<sup>2</sup>). As Goldsworthy puts it: “Jesus is the true man: Jesus is everything you and I were meant to be” and Jesus has “come to fulfil all of God’s purposes for man”.

Mankind plays a part in God’s grand story, yes – beginning with their introduction in the first act<sup>3</sup> of Genesis 1-2. However, they are all ultimately bit players rather than the lead actor. That privileged role is reserved for God Himself (along with the director’s chair), for nobody else could ever hope to carry out that part to the necessary perfection. We are introduced to a large cast of engaging human characters, but none of them fully bring the story to its climax within the short span of their finite lifetimes. If anything, their long second act of failings and shortcomings create a yearning for overcoming and closure – and eventually paint a contrast with the perfect man in Christ, God’s triumphant third act.

The Biblical narrative is ‘The Greatest Story Ever Told’ (and that the 1965 film by this name focused on the life of Jesus Christ, is in itself telling). Yet if a passerby were to walk in and then out at some random moment during the nadir of human failings, they would fail to grasp the full intent of the director – they are exposed to but one brief scene in an epic production. So it is, when a student of the Bible fails to examine the whole, overarching plot of Scripture through the lens of Biblical Theology.

### **Preaching Christ From the Old Testament (by Sidney Greinadus) – 522 words**

Greinadus in his essay argues for the necessity of always bringing Christ out from any message about the Old Testament. He sets the tone with an amusing but memorable anecdote, one that reminds us: we are Christians following Christ to the foot of the cross, not Israelites following Moses around the wilderness!

Greinadus provides four pertinent reasons for “preaching Christ”, each backed by Scripture and/or plain reason. He carefully defines what he means by this, warning readers not to be either too generic (such as preaching God in general) nor overly restrictive (such as by only focusing on the crucifixion). By his reckoning, Scripture supports preaching from the Old Testament on the person, work *and/or* teaching of Christ.

Greinadus backs his views by appealing to a slew of New Testament passages stating that Christ is the subject and fulfilment of the Old Testament. In closing, he provides a brief introduction

---

<sup>1</sup> Scott Thong, “The Son of Man”, *Scott Thong* (accessed 05-May-2022): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=31ZTrpZ12IA> [08:20 to 13:13]

<sup>2</sup> Carmen Imes, *Bearing God’s Name: Why Sinai Still Matters* (IL/USA: IVP Academic, 2019), Perlego Edition, Chapter 2, Written In Stone: Why Two Tablets?

<sup>3</sup> Wikipedia, “Three-act structure”, *Wikipedia* (accessed 05-May-2022): [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Three-act\\_structure](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Three-act_structure)

and seven methods to get the practitioner started on properly preaching Christ from the Old Testament.

Personally, I will have to admit that when first reading Greinadus' essay, I did not find myself aligned with his stream of thought. Over the years, I have developed an appreciation (particularly from scholars such as Michael S. Heiser<sup>4</sup> and Michael L. Brown<sup>5</sup>) for the importance of understanding and applying the original sociocultural context of the Old Testament in order to properly understand the writer's intent.

After dwelling upon Greidanus' essay, I gradually came to agree with the importance of demonstrating Christ from Old Testament passages (with caveats – see my companion essay *Pre-Intensive Reflection*). After all, what the original recipients might have understood of those passages is one thing – what the timeless God intended by conveying those words is another. If the full and correct exegesis of passage could be done by a synagogue rabbi (as the introductory recollection describes), then what need is there for the New Covenant? To follow the Laws of Moses would suffice for salvation!

Yet as we all know, the Laws of Moses are not sufficient – for they are “but a shadow of the good things to come (Hebrews 10:1)”. Even if the Law was sufficient, no mere mortal could fully keep them: “For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it (James 2:10)”.

Whatever the Law (whether the Books of Moses, or the Old Testament entire<sup>6</sup>) once represented, its function been replaced by decree of the Lawgiver (Acts 4:12, 17:30-31). No longer is anyone – whether Jew or Gentile – to look merely to the books of the Old Testament for their salvation, but rather to the one who declared He would “fulfill them (Matthew 5:17)”. Indeed, the very Old Testament itself promised that “a new covenant (Jeremiah 31:31)” was to come.

And so it is that I have come to align myself with the view that when expounding from the pulpit on the Old Testament, a follower of Christ should not have to catch themselves and query: “Am I a Jew? (John 18:35)” – for we are “called Christians (Acts 11:26)” after the one whom “we preach (1 Corinthians 1:23)”.

### **Lecture 1: The Necessity and Viability of Biblical Theology1 (by Graeme Goldsworthy) – 510 words**

Goldsworthy makes the case that while much focus has been placed on the authority and content of Scripture, a third aspect is somewhat neglected – yet absolutely essential to a proper Christian understanding of the Bible. This third aspect could perhaps be distilled as the ‘inner unity’ of the Bible.

The overarching narrative and message of the whole Bible cannot be derived from isolating any one of its books or sections and examining them piecemeal – no one chapter or scene is truly standalone, and none is superfluous (just as with a well-crafted novel). The best authority on the matter is the author themselves (once more, similar to the true meaning of a novel’s plot) – in the case

---

<sup>4</sup> Michael S. Heiser, *Facebook* (accessed 05-May-2022): <https://www.facebook.com/DRMSHPhD/posts/373292354167914>

<sup>5</sup> Michael L. Brown, “Responding to the Latest Christian Leader to Renounce His Faith”, *AskDrBrown* (accessed 06-May-2022): <https://askdrbrown.org/library/responding-latest-christian-leader-renounce-his-faith> [paragraphs 15, 23]

<sup>6</sup> Michael S. Heiser, “Why does Jesus Refer to a Psalm as The Law? Michael Heiser”, *Bible Nerds* (accessed 05-May-2022): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FZdUNXBB1no>

of the Bible, God speaking through Scripture is the interpretive key to understanding Scripture. In particular, the inspired writings of the Apostles serve as our guide: “the New Testament must interpret the Old”.

Goldsworthy also briefly covers several challenges to Biblical theology, but in the short space he has, only suggests a presuppositional address of them all (which comes across as somewhat lacking).

I can agree with what I perceive to be Goldsworthy’s main thesis – that it is of the utmost importance to any believing Christian to grasp the full message of the Bible, as presented by the whole Bible itself. No merely human system of interpretation or philosophical lens can replace what amounts to God Himself communicating His intent through the pages of Scripture – not any one part or aspect of it, but the ‘package deal’ so to speak.

After all, the many books of the Bible written by the many different human hands were guided by the one Author (yet not merely dictated like some sort of robotic automatic writing<sup>7</sup>). And I fully agree that the New Testament looking back upon the Old with the guidance of the Holy Spirit is “inspired interpretation of the Old Testament.”<sup>8</sup>

I cannot fully agree, however, with Goldsworthy’s claim that “all prophecy and promise in the Old Testament were fulfilled in Christ at his first coming.” Unless a rather narrow definition of ‘all prophecy and promise’ is applied, it is clear that various foretellings have yet to be brought about – for example, the full return of Israel to the land (Ezekiel 37’s dry bones), or God’s complete reclaiming and judgment of the nations (Psalm 82:8, 110:5-7), or any passage that eschatologically declares ‘on that day’ or ‘the day of the LORD’. This is not a major sticking point, however – and Goldsworthy is self-aware enough to note that his “understanding is not that of many evangelicals.” I suppose that I am among those ‘many evangelicals’ in this case.

Overall, I concur with Goldsworthy that it is not enough to merely know and believe what the Bible records about the characters and events within – if we are to properly go about “increasing in the knowledge of God (Colossian 1:10)” then we also need to know what the Bible explains about *itself*.

---

<sup>7</sup> Michael S. Heiser, *Facebook* (accessed 05-May-2022):  
<https://www.facebook.com/DRMSHPhD/posts/296764761820674>

<sup>8</sup> Michael S. Heiser, *Twitter* (accessed 05-May-2021):  
<https://mobile.twitter.com/DRMSHPhD/status/1380973864868487168>

## Bibliography

Brown, Michael L. "Responding to the Latest Christian Leader to Renounce His Faith." *AskDrBrown*: <https://askdrbrown.org/library/responding-latest-christian-leader-renounce-his-faith> (accessed 06-May-2022).

Heiser, Michael S. *Facebook*: <https://www.facebook.com/DRMSHPhD/posts/296764761820674> (accessed 05-May-2022).

Heiser, Michael S. *Facebook*: <https://www.facebook.com/DRMSHPhD/posts/373292354167914> (accessed 05-May-2022).

Heiser, Michael S. *Twitter*: <https://mobile.twitter.com/DRMSHPhD/status/1380973864868487168> (accessed 05-May-2022).

Heiser, Michael S. "Why does Jesus Refer to a Psalm as The Law? Michael Heiser." *Bible Nerds*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FZdUNXBB1no> (accessed 05-May-2022).

Imes, Carmen. *Bearing God's Name: Why Sinai Still Matters*. IL/USA: IVP Academic, 2019, Perlego Edition.

Thong, Scott. "The Son of Man." *Scott Thong*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=31ZTrpZ12IA> (accessed 05-May-2022).

Wikipedia. "Three-act structure". *Wikipedia*: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Three-act\\_structure](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Three-act_structure) (accessed 05-May-2022).