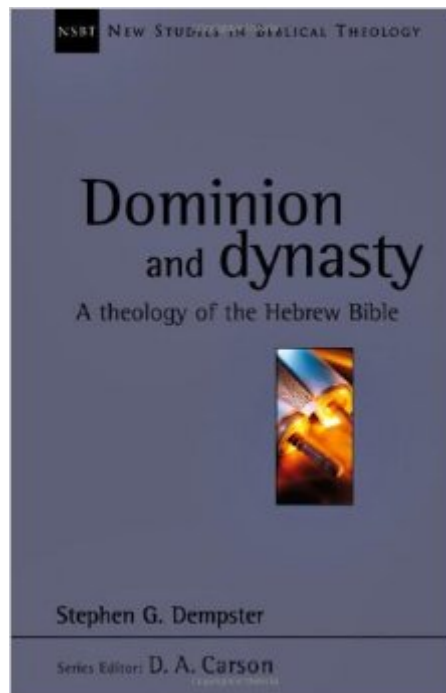


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Dominion And Dynasty: A Theology Of The Hebrew Bible (New Studies In Biblical Theology)



Synopsis

Christian theologians rarely study the Old Testament in its final Hebrew canonical form, even though this was very likely the Bible used by Jesus and the early church. However, once read as a whole, the larger structure of the Hebrew Bible (Tanakh) provides a "wide-angle lens" through which its contents can be viewed. In this stimulating New Studies in Biblical Theology volume, Stephen G. Dempster argues that, despite its undoubted literary diversity, the Hebrew Bible possesses a remarkable structural and conceptual unity. The various genres and books are placed within a comprehensive narrative framework which provides an overarching literary and historical context. The many texts contribute to this larger text, and find their meaning and significance within its story of "dominion and dynasty," which ranges from Adam to the Son of Man, from David to the coming Davidic king. Addressing key issues in biblical theology, the works comprising New Studies in Biblical Theology are creative attempts to help Christians better understand their Bibles. The NSBT series is edited by D. A. Carson, aiming to simultaneously instruct and to edify, to interact with current scholarship and to point the way ahead.

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According to Dempster, the problem with many biblical theologies is that they end up being the particular theologies of the theologians doing the theologizing. He argues that this is because thematic approaches often impose a lens upon the reading of the larger Text; they often miss the

`Text' for the `texts' that make it up. Dempster proposes that instead, biblical theology should strive to acquire its lens from the Text itself, necessitating a belief in the unity of the one Text.

Furthermore, if there is unity to the one Text, then questions pertaining to the literary structure of that Text have profound hermeneutical implications. He then proposes that the literary structure perhaps most helpful in determining the central message of the Old Testament is the Tanakh, since it is the oldest such structure and very likely the Bible of Jesus Christ. Discerning a fundamental theme of this text then becomes imperative to the discipline of hermeneutics. When it comes to any such theme(s) in the Hebrew canon, Dempster argues that the central storyline is composed of two main themes, dominion and dynasty, being realized through the house that God is building for David. Get past the introductory chapters and the rubber really hits the road in chapter 3 as he starts with Genesis, showing how Adam and Eve were made God's vice-regents over the land, failed at this task, and were then promised a coming seed to reestablish divine dominion. This proceeds to Abraham who was promised land for his descendants, who would be innumerable. One of these descendants, Jacob, at the end of Genesis then foresees Judah exercising dominion over the whole world.

In the last ten years there have been many Biblical Theology books and articles that may not use the label "New Covenant Theology," but nevertheless have much in common with it. Stephen G. Dempster (Atlantic Baptist University, Canada) has written such a book with his recent *Dominion and Dynasty*. Dempster firmly believes that there is one divine author behind the many human authors, which leads him to seek the unity of the text of the Old Testament. In the introduction, he covers foundational methodological issues. The reader must approach Scripture on its own terms, and this is properly done by constantly exposing oneself to the text by reading and re-reading Scripture, tracing themes throughout the canon, and noticing inter-textual links. Next, Dempster addresses the issue of whether the Old Testament can be viewed as a Text or text(s). The author is convinced that when one approaches the Tanakh from a literary standpoint, it should be viewed as a unified Text. Due to the size and diversity of the Tanakh, many historical critical scholars deny unity and thus never see the big picture and thus fail to grasp the whole. Dempster also argues that the order of the books is very important, opting for the order of the Hebrew canon, which is the oldest and is almost certainly the order in which Jesus read his Bible. Dempster then surveys various approaches to Old Testament theology. His approach will be a literary approach looking for unity as he follows the chronological storyline of the Hebrew canon. Chapter two is a preview of the storyline. Dempster sees the twin themes of dominion and dynasty (geography and genealogy) as

uniting the Bible.

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