

4. Psalm 81:4 mentions the blowing of the shofar at the full moon, but does this really indicate an early northern Israelite form of Sabbath (p. 128)?

In ch. 2, Grund investigates the Decalogue Sabbath. She convincingly argues that the Sabbath commandment of Deut 5 is influenced by Exod 20. Because she regards Exod 20 as Priestly, for her, the weekly Sabbath evolved from the Priestly tradition, and the designation *šabbāt* must be late exilic or early postexilic. She thus dates the origin of the Decalogue Sabbath even later than the usual historical-critical understanding in which the Sabbath is regarded as Deuteronomistic and the literary dependency goes from Deut 5 to Exod 20.

In ch. 3, Grund explores the concept of Sabbath and time in the Priestly composition. The structural and temporal elements of the "creation narrative" in Gen 1:1–2:3 should reveal that P turned the conception of time from a pre-exilic lunar phase to a seven-day rhythm of evening–morning with the seventh day in focal position. Grund believes that the meaning of the seventh day in the creation story remains open but is then understood in the Priestly Exod 16, when Israel, like God, rests on the seventh day, thereby fulfilling the *imitatio Dei*. Its meaning is supposedly further elaborated by P in the cultic order in Exod 24:15b–18, as well as in Exod 31:12–17, when holy time (Sabbath) is coordinated with holy place (sanctuary).

Grund thus regards the Sabbath as a postexilic invention of the Priestly theologian(s) who associated the term *šabbāt* with the increasingly important day of rest, which had developed from a full moon day to a repetitive seventh day, and who used the verb *šbt* for the adherence of rest on this day.

In sum, Grund's careful textual analyses reveal quite a number of new and affirmative insights. Many of her findings are commendable (for example, her perceptive analysis of structural elements in the creation story). They suggest that a text-oriented approach to the Sabbath passages is indeed worthwhile. However, many might resent her literary-historical approach that focuses on the prehistory, *Vorlagen*, and different stages of the texts. I cannot help but regard her reconstruction of the literary history, and consequently her suggestions of how Israel's conception of time developed, as an example of highly sophisticated conjecture. I wonder if it will stand the test of time.

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Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum. *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012. Pp. 848. ISBN 978-1-4335-1464-7. \$45.00 cloth.

This ambitious volume created through the partnership of an OT scholar and a systematic theologian attempts to synthesize in 17 chapters the nature, progress, and significance of the main redemptive-historical covenants in Scripture. Some points highlighted are (1) the progression and interrelationship of biblical covenants as the backbone of the biblical storyline, (2) the prophetic nature of typology as a key element in the development of God's kingdom purposes, (3) the conditional yet binding (= unconditional) nature of all biblical covenants, (4) an Adamic creation covenant later confirmed through Noah, (5) a single

covenant with Abraham, (6) the Mosaic covenant's temporary nature, and (7) the climactic role of Christ's new covenant work as the *telos* of all previous covenant promises and purposes. Points two and seven are especially important for two of the book's theses: First, contrary to dispensational theology (DT), the land promises must be read both literally and typologically and be seen to find their ultimate fulfillment not in a geopolitical piece of real estate in this age but through Jesus in the new heavens and new earth. Second, contrary to classic covenant theology (CT), the physical genealogical principle that guides the makeup of the old covenant community finds its *terminus* in Jesus (not the church), thus highlighting that the new covenant community is shaped not by biology but by spiritual identification with Christ. The book, therefore, provides a biblical-theological argument for a middle way to understand redemptive history—a "progressive covenantalism" that is baptistic but non-dispensational and that highlights the culminating and superseding role of the new covenant work of Christ (p. 24). As such, the volume offers the broadest exegetical attempt to date arguing for a species of "new covenant theology."

I required KTC as a textbook for a capstone MDiv biblical theology course, and my reading included mostly pleasure but some pain. Wellum's three chapters of prolegomena are a great introduction to the topic of biblical theology and the question of the covenants, and they set the reader up for the feast of canonical, redemptive-historical exploration that follows. His concluding two chapters on theological integration aid the whole volume, summarizing Gentry's work and offering some provocative, theologically insightful theses. Two that stand out are his very perceptive overview of the Bible's land typology and his argument that the doctrine of particular redemption rightly understood requires baptistic ecclesiology, for the NT connects all Christ's priestly, mediatorial work with the new covenant. All of Wellum's chapters were thorough, focused, and clearly organized, and they framed the book well.

Gentry's 12 chapters shape the book's body and walk progressively and exegetically through the key OT covenant texts (supplemented with some NT texts). The chapters offer numerous exegetical gems and witness extensive and substantially convincing argumentation. Extremely insightful are the extended discussions of the *imago Dei*, the priestly royal sonship of Israel, and Jeremiah's new covenant. Even more illuminating than these, however, is the overview of Isaiah's new covenant vision, which delivers some of the most original theological insights in Gentry's portion.

These positives affirmed, Gentry's chapters as a whole are not well structured or unified and are at times unbalanced in presentation, such as when Gentry devotes 24 of 45 pages on the covenant with creation to a discussion of divine image bearing, or when he gives 11 of 39 pages on the Davidic covenant to the interpretation of Isa 55:3. While some attempts at synthesis have been made, the chapters in their present state still read too much like the independent essays they originally were. Each of the exegetical chapters would be aided by concluding reflections that clarify how the theological insights relate to the book's principle thesis—a middle way between DT and CT.

A number of other issues should be mentioned. First, at times Gentry and Wellum were not in full agreement. One example is in their handling of Adam typology (pp. 226–28 vs. p. 606), but an even more glaring difference relates to their treatment of messianic expectation. In spite of Wellum's strong stress

on the progressive development of messianic hope in every covenant, stemming from Gen 3:15 and climaxing in Jesus (e.g., pp. 627–31, 636, 644, 650), Gentry addresses the entire covenant with creation without any reference to the *protoeuangelion*, gives only one page in his discussion of Gen 22:17b–18 to affirming the views of Collins, Alexander, and others that 3:15 anticipates a singular, male descendant, and then holds off highlighting messianic hope until the discussion of the Davidic and new covenants. I wish Gentry had done more in the body to exalt the portrait of Christ that is organic in the pentateuchal text and affirmed by the apostles and that Wellum himself suggested would be their practice (pp. 103–5).

Second, the authors helpfully identify and highlight an intentional and necessary tension in the progression of the biblical covenants between unconditional/unilateral promises and real bilateral conditions. Scripture's cumulative result is a stress on how the covenant purposes of God are brought to fulfillment not only through a faithful covenant Father but also through a faithful covenant Son, whose active obedience meets all necessary conditions (pp. 643, 666, 705–6). This is beautiful! However, the authors fall prey to the same misinterpretation of many predecessors by wrongly treating extrabiblical royal grants as unconditional. Both grants and suzerain-vassal treaties were conditional for every generation; what made grants distinct is that they were perpetually binding, ensuring that the promised land or kingship would stay in the family, even if certain individuals forfeited their participation of the covenant blessing (so too, Weinfeld in 1970, Knoppers in 1996). An example is found in this excerpt from a grant of royal succession and land bestowed by Hattusili III of Hatti on Ulmi-Teshshup of Tarhuntassa (Beckman, *Hittite Diplomatic Texts*, 2nd ed., 109): "If any son or grandson of yours commits an offense, then the King of Hatti shall question him. . . . If he is deserving of death, he shall perish, but his household and land shall not be taken from him and given to the progeny of another." The required obedience organic to grants does not alter the authors' proper identification of both conditional and perpetual elements in the biblical covenants, but it does suggest that covenants like the Abrahamic and Davidic can still be viewed as grants while affirming their conditional features.

Third, vital to Gentry's overall proposal is the distinction he sees in the phrases כרת ברית, "to cut a covenant," and הקים ברית, "to confirm a covenant," the former referring to covenant initiation and the latter to covenant fulfillment or upholding (p. 155). Along with literary contextual clues, Gentry uses this lexical distinction to argue that the Noahic covenant (Gen 6:18; 9:9, 11, 17) confirms a previously ratified covenant with creation in Gen 1–3 and that the Abrahamic covenant of Gen 17:7, 19, 21 upholds and develops the covenant ratified in ch. 15 and anticipated in 12:1–3 (so too Dumbrell, contra Williamson).

While I generally agree with the application of Gentry's distinction, I believe his thesis must be tweaked, because Scripture treats as "cutting" acts not only covenant initiation (e.g., Gen 15:8; Exod 24:8; Deut 5:2–3) but also covenant reaffirmation (Exod 34:10) and renewal (Deut 28:69[29:1]; Josh 24:25; 2 Chr 34:31)—a point Gentry himself at least partially recognizes (see p. 161 with n. 40; pp. 380–82, 390 with n. 2). Moreover, Ezekiel applies both phrases to the new covenant (הקים = Ezek 16:60, 62; כרת = Ezek 34:25; 37:26; cf. Jer 31:31–33;

32:40; Isa 55:3), a fact that forces Gentry to qualify his earlier assertion that the phrases are “completely consistent” in their distinct usage (p. 155) to stating that they “normally” or “usually” follow this pattern (pp. 475). (Gentry has already attempted to respond to and update his view of Ezek 16, on-line: <http://thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/tgc/2012/09/20/gentry-and-wellum-respond-to-kingdom-through-covenant-reviews/>.) I propose that the consistent usage of both phrases can be maintained if one views כרת ברית as a more general category that includes both initiation and confirmation or renewal but הקים ברית as the more specific phrase that always denotes the upholding of a previously ratified covenant (so too, Milgrom). I further suggest that, in Ezek 16:60, 62, “my covenant” that Yahweh will “remember,” resulting in the establishment (הקים) of an “everlasting (new) covenant” that will include redeemed Gentiles, is not the Mosaic covenant (as originally argued by Gentry) but the Abrahamic (a point now affirmed by Gentry). This is suggested by the apparent allusion to Lev 26:42, where the phrase “I will remember my covenant” refers to the Abrahamic covenant and affirms God’s promise to Abraham in Gen 17:7 to confirm (הקים) his “everlasting covenant”—a covenant that will include Abraham’s fatherhood of a multitude of nations (17:4–6).

My final critical comments relate only to the need for consistency in the use of Hebrew, transliteration, and translation and for the inclusion of at least one chapter overviewing the NT teaching on the covenants. Many extended discussions are offered on key NT texts, but they are hidden in unexpected places, as in the commentary on Rom 11:13–27, Eph 2–3, and Rev 21 in the midst of the overview of Jeremiah’s new covenant prophecies (pp. 497–502). Furthermore, very little space is given to Hebrews, even though the warning passages are very important for the CT position against which the authors are arguing.

These issues noted, I find myself in substantial agreement with how Gentry and Wellum articulate the progressive development of God’s kingdom through covenant climaxing in Christ. I also appreciate their stress on the newness and superseding nature of the new covenant and yet the lasting value and necessity of the old covenant material, not simply for relaying the story of redemption but in capturing for believers an ethical portrait of the unchanging righteousness of God (pp. 512–13, 635). Their thesis is both clear and compelling, and I am confident that their faithful labors will produce healthy fruit in the church and academy for the glory of Jesus.

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Michael Lodahl. *Claiming Abraham: Reading the Bible and the Qur’an Side by Side*. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2010. Pp. x + 227. ISBN 978-1-58743-239-2. \$22.99 paper.

*Claiming Abraham* is a collection of Michael Lodahl’s theological reflections arising from a comparative reading of biblical texts, Christian and Jewish traditions, and the Qur’an. Proceeding along thematic lines, Lodahl explains similarities and key distinctions in the three major monotheistic faiths—Christianity,