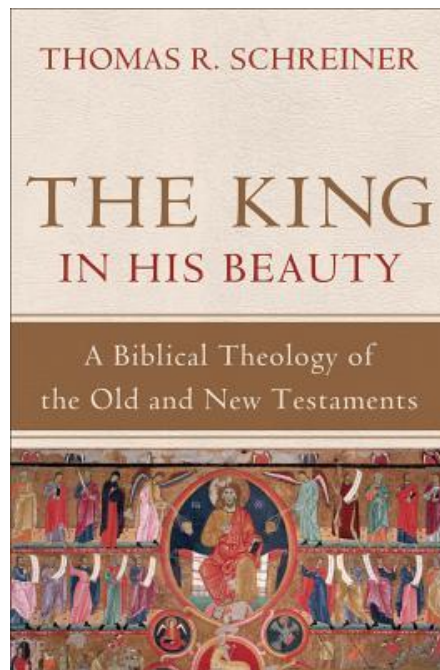




The King in His Beauty: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments

Thomas R. Schreiner

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Thomas Schreiner, a respected scholar and a trusted voice for many students and pastors, offers a substantial and accessibly written overview of the whole Bible. He traces the storyline of the scriptures from the standpoint of biblical theology, examining the overarching message that is conveyed throughout. Schreiner emphasizes three interrelated and unified themes that stand out in the biblical narrative: God as Lord, human beings as those who are made in God's image, and the land or place in which God's rule is exercised. The goal of God's kingdom is to see the king in his beauty and to be enraptured in his glory.

The King in His Beauty: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments Details

Date : Published July 15th 2013 by Baker Academic

ISBN : 9780801039393

Author : Thomas R. Schreiner

Format : Hardcover 714 pages

Genre : Religion, Theology, Nonfiction, Christianity, Old Testament

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From Reader Review The King in His Beauty: A Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments for online ebook

Chris says

I had this book on my wish list the year before it came out.

For three reasons. **First**, Dr. Thomas Schreiner is one of my favorite scholars. I read through his prestigious commentary on Romans, and developed a deep appreciation for his scholarly writing voice, and well as the sheer depth of his focus. **Second**, Biblical Theologies are a favorite area of study for me---at least for the last year. It is often entrenched in complexity, so Graeme Goldsworthy's definition will serve the purpose of this blog post well: Biblical Theology is "the study of how every text in the Bible relates to every other text in the Bible" (Christ-Centered Biblical Theology, 40). To boil it down further, *it's the unifying storyline of Scripture*. **Third**, the name alone is awesome: The King in His Beauty. This just makes me want to pick it up and swim in glorious truth!

Now that I'm done with this hefty book (700+ pages), I've provided a not-brief summary of what it's about, some reasons for reading it, potential drawbacks, and a few concluding remarks. Let's go for a swim!

SUMMARY

The King in His Beauty is foremost a Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments. Biblical Theology (BT) may sound confusing if you've never heard the term before, because we sometimes use the word "biblical" when referring to something correct or orthodox; so it may sound like we are talking about a theology that is orthodox. But that's not what we are talking about (although it assumes the theology is correct!). BT is an area of study, dealing primarily with the story of Scripture, a search for the "center" to that story, and the process of how God reveals that story. Think of it as a view of the Bible from 30,000 feet: you are taking it all in at once.

Schreiner's intent with writing a BT is simple: to focus on a prominent Biblical theme as it is unfolding so that the average, non-academic reader can understand and enjoy. As Schreiner moves through Scripture, he does so in segments which I've found very helpful in following both his train of thought, and the storyline of Scripture. The segments are as follows:

Creation to the Edge of Canaan (Genesis-Deuteronomy)

The Story of Possession, Exile, and Return (Joshua-Esther)

Israel's Songs of Wisdom (Job-Song of Songs)

Judgment and Salvation in the Prophets (Isaiah-the Twelve)

The Kingdom in Matthew, Mark, and Luke-Acts (Matthew-Acts)

Eternal Life in the Gospel and the Epistles of John (John, John's letters)

The End of the Ages Has Come according to the Apostle Paul (Paul's 13 letters)

Living in the Last Day's according to the General Epistles (Hebrews, James, 1&2 Peter-Jude)

The Kingdom Will Come (Revelation)

As Schreiner moves through these segments of Scripture, he shows them all anchored in the prominent theme of the Kingdom of God, or as he refers to it, *The King in His Beauty*. He argues that the Kingdom of God, defined as the rule of God spanning the cosmos, including human beings, by means of covenant, and expressed in judgment, "thematically captures the message of Scripture" (xiii-xv).

The book was not written for scholars, but is scholarly (the footnotes are a feast!). So as he teases out the theme of God's Kingdom in the Bible, he stays out-of-the-way, yet within close distance to the events as they happen, speaking with a depth of clarity and simplicity even in such seemingly abstract books as Amos or

the Psalms. It is this simple clarity on complex topics that makes Schreiner magical. Here are a few other delicacies in the book...

STRENGTHS

Humility.

The first thing that caught my eye with Schreiner is his hesitation to claim that his methodology is the only one worthy of consideration---although, this would be forgivable given his extensive research in the field of BT. Yet his humility also comes with a firm conviction from years of research.

Canonical.

I love that Schreiner breaks the Bible into sections which is how he arranged his own table of contents. As a result, you know exactly where Schreiner is taking you in this dash through the Scriptures.

Divisions.

A great amount of attention is given to the *divisions* of Scripture as well as the *storyline* of Scripture. The story shows the unity of the Bible, but the divisions show you the process of the story's revelation---think of it as the structure of the story. Schreiner explains these carefully, especially the covenants as they are revealed in history, an important element in understanding BT.

Conclusions.

Schreiner knows how to get an idea stuck in your head. He does this particularly well in the summaries at the end of every section. In addition to this, he inserts "interludes" to recapitulate sections and divisions of Scripture. This makes for a clearly developed thesis running through the entire book, which is constantly dripped down into the readers mind as the book progresses. The King in His Beauty even *progresses* in the same way as the Bible does! Brilliant.

DRAWBACKS

There aren't many, but here are a few things I wouldn't mind changing.

Overlap

The King in His Beauty has some similarities to the recent book by James Hamilton, *The Glory of God in Salvation Through Judgment*. Both of them, though not explicitly mentioned in their titles, are largely about the Kingdom of God (Schreiner emphasizes the King, while Hamilton emphasizes the King's *rule*). I understand that there is significant overlap in topics and themes in the realm of BT, so this isn't a significant obstacle to an otherwise wonderful book. And even though a few similarities in themes exist between Schreiner's book and James Hamilton's, there are also noticeable differences that set them apart. For example, Schreiner seems to focus more on the King Himself, than on the King's rule. I love this! The centrality of Christ in this tome is what illuminates it most brightly.

Writing voice

Schreiner writes to show the "majesty and beauty" of the Biblical storyline while keeping a distance from "technical work for scholars" (x). While the substance of what he writes about is enough to cause one's heart to soar, the technical language sometimes affects that experience. For example, I would have loved to see more over-the-top adjectives in his descriptions, since his stated desire is to show the *majesty* and *beauty* of Scripture (although this may be a faux pas in the academic world, I'm not sure). This is not to detract from Schreiner's writing style or wording---he is a great writer, and he makes the concepts he is championing absolutely clear---rather, it seems a gargantuan piece to bite off: writing as a scholar, with scholarly material, but for the average person. At times, I wish he wasn't trying to write to so broad and finicky an audience, as his understanding of BT are captivating. I say, write like a scholar---because you are a fine one, sir.

CONCLUSION

Thomas Schreiner needs very little introduction in Biblical studies. *The King in His Beauty* exemplifies his ability to take deep, complex truths and explain them in a way that the average person can understand, all without the ever-present danger of dumbing everything down. Reading this book immediately brings the reader before the person and work of Jesus Christ as presented through the entire sweep of the Bible's storyline. All the while, Schreiner shows how Scripture interacts with various details of God's story, such as the fascinating emphasis on King David and the promises associated with him. Schreiner's navigation through the Christian Bible is wonderful, simple, and clear. Partly, because he doesn't waste time interacting with critical thought (not the book's intent), although the footnotes alone will keep you embroiled in book

purchasing.

Intended audience.

The King in His Beauty is not a book you grab off the shelf to skim through while sipping your morning tea--it's for serious students of the Bible. Specifically, non-academics who want to enrich their understanding of the Bible's unity, see the Kingdom of God unfolding in Scripture (even books that do not mention "kingdom" explicitly), or want a starting place for enjoying Biblical Theology. Yet, it is so clearly and simply written, that it can also serve the average person as they move through a one-year Bible reading program, for example.

Make no mistake, the church is better off for having Thomas Schreiner, his broad scope of theology, and his love for the Bride of Christ. All of which is made more evident in his latest book on the true Protagonist of the Bible.

(This review first appeared on my blog: <http://doctrineontap.com/2013/11/11/b...>)

Matt Crawford says

By far the best book on Biblical Theology I have been privy too. Schreiner spans the entire bible. His concern is the text rather than limiting his exposition to particular themes. Rather than a collection of several small themes or one particular big theme, he puts the author of the books of Bible front and center. He does show the themes that the text presents, but does not sacrifice the text in lieu of it. IN the later chapters, he makes it a point to use the title in some of the chapters concluding paragraphs. There is a summary of the narrative in each collection, as well as how it connects with the books canonically close to it. The Old Testament points toward Christ and the New Testament reflects on Christ.

Sam Knecht says

This is the first Genesis-Revelation biblical theology I've read, so I don't have much to compare it to. Schreiner gives an eye-opening account of God's revealed characteristics as king and the marks of His kingdom.

Bret James Stewart says

Schreiner has produced a very well-done book. First off, it is hard cover and, therefore, sturdy and great for study in that it can be left open while referencing other works. It is clearly laid out with no errors I recognized. There is a bibliography and indices for author, scripture, and subject, which are a must for serious scholarly works. The book is not heavily academic and includes footnotes, which I appreciate as sources and information are readily available to expand upon the ideas of the text or provide citation of sources.

This volume focusses upon the theme of the kingdom of God as the dominant characteristic of Biblical Theology. This includes God's sovereignty and desire to bring glory and praise to His name. I think this approach is valid. Of course, in creating a biblical theology, Schreiner goes more or less through Scripture in the canonical order, with a few exceptions. He has what might be termed an evangelical approach (or fits

nicely within its parameters--I do not wish to label the author in a manner in which he may not agree). Occasionally, he seems to have a Calvinistic perspective regarding election/salvation. As a work of modern scholarship, it is not surprising that some of the contemporary issues such as the New Perspective on Paul are addressed.

I found the text engaging, and I was encouraged to consider some biblical/theological concepts with which I am not familiar. This is a good thing. The author's style is accessible without being dumbed down, and I think it would readily appeal to the general reader.

As a biblical theology, this book could serve as biblical survey since the premise is foundationally fit. I believe this would appeal to students and general readers who want an overview of Scripture and/or a view of the kingdom of God as posited above. I really have nothing negative to say about Schreiner's work, and I think it would add value to any Christian's bookshelf.

Scott says

Tom Schreiner has done what few scholars have done: written a New Testament theology, a book on Paul, major commentaries on Romans & Galatians, and with **The King In His Beauty** now completed a whole-Bible biblical theology - the Triple Crown for biblical scholars. However, **The King In His Beauty** seems to have a different focus than his other major works. While his NT Theology & book on Paul are masterful evangelical scholarship written for the academy, **The King In His Beauty** - while still strong scholarship - is a book written for the church. It is for this reason that I think, as regards Schreiner's legacy, this may be his greatest work. There are three reasons in particular why I think **The King In His Beauty** will go down as Schreiner's widest-read, most helpful book.

First, his approach. There have been many books approaching the best way to understand the Bible in recent years, most notably books in the New Studies in Biblical Theology series. Generally, these books will be thematic in that they approach the Bible looking at a series of themes like "temple," "new creation," or "kingdom" (e.g. T. Desmond Alexander **From Eden to New Jerusalem**; GK Beale **We Become What We Worship** etc.) The strength of these books lies in helping the reader to begin to see things in their reading of Scripture that they maybe would not have previously seen (i.e. the Church as the "new Temple" in that God's presence no longer resides in the Temple but in his people, the Church.) The weakness of these books, however, is that in an attempt to explore themes, what each individual book contributes to the canon of Scripture can be minimized.

Schreiner however (like Jim Hamilton's **God's Glory in Salvation Through Judgment**) prefers to take a canonical book-by-book approach. Schreiner has a chapter on every book of the Bible (sometimes lumping together Paul or the Synoptics) with "Interludes" after each major portion of Scripture (i.e. an Interlude after the Pentateuch, summarizing it's overall contribution to the canon). This approach is tremendously helpful for someone who is wanting to know how a book like, say, Leviticus, is supposed to be understood this side of redemptive history. In fact, in the Old Testament portion of **The King In His Beauty**, Schreiner has at least a few paragraphs on Christological implications from each book of the Bible.

Second, Schreiner's ability to stay "above the fray" of endless scholarly discussion and "keep the main thing the main thing." Books like **Kingdom Through Covenant**, **God's Glory in Salvation Through Judgment**, and **Dominion & Dynasty** are incredibly important contributions to scholarship, and by implication need to be thorough and "show their work," yet sometimes can leave lay-readers (like myself) burdened in

discussions about whether or not a chiastic structure is present, or the meaning of a Hebrew word. Because Schreiner's primary audience is the church, he has the fortunate ability to summarize complex, heady discussion into a sentence, footnoting the findings from other works. As one who has read many of the works he regularly footnotes from, this is incredibly beneficial. And because Schreiner is able to say "my view is x", footnote, and move on, this book will also be more readable for a wider audience than other biblical theologies written in recent years.

Finally, and related to both of the previous points, Schreiner's ability to write a powerful whole-Bible biblical theology that is both readable and engaging for elders, pastors, and - most importantly - any Christian who wants to know more about God as he has revealed himself in Christ Jesus through his Word. This book is full of treasures from the Word of God through a godly scholar and teacher. I honestly had a hard time putting it down at times as I found myself swept up into the unfolding narrative of Scripture. My understanding, grasp, and love for the Bible has increased because of *The King In His Beauty*.

Tom Schreiner has done us all a great service in writing *The King In His Beauty* my prayer is that, for the glory of God, it would bless the church by stirring a desire in the saints to behold the King in all of his beauty.

David Steele says

The King In His Beauty by Tom Schreiner is a book about biblical theology. But my suspicion is that 0801039398_bthe author would agree enthusiastically with my assertion that the book is a worship manual. Schreiner's work weigh in at 646 pages. Each page is filled with heart-warming theology and mind-stretching propositions. But when the work is considered as a whole - it is, in the final analysis a worship manual.

The book is arranged in nine parts.

Part 1: Creation to the Edge of Canaan

Part 2: The Story of Possession, Exile, and Return

Part 3: Israel's Songs and Wisdom

Part 4: Judgment and Salvation in the Prophets

Part 5: The Kingdom in Matthew, Mark, and Luke-Acts

Part 6: Eternal Life in the Gospel and Epistles of John

Part 7: The End of Ages Has Come According to the Apostle Paul

Part 8: Living in the Last Days According to the General Epistles

Part 9: The Kingdom Will Come

Schreiner makes it clear that Redemptive history is going somewhere: "The Scriptures promise that there will be a new heaven and a new earth - a new creation where the glory of God will illumine the cosmos. So,

the kingdom of God has a threefold dimension, focusing on God as King, on human beings as subjects of the King, and the universe as the place where his kingship is worked out."

The author demonstrates over and over again that Christ is the King; that Christ intends to fulfill his promises; that the offspring of the woman will be the Victor; he will triumph over the serpent through the son of David (Gen. 3:15). He reiterates the theme that runs throughout the Scripture, namely, the theme of judgment followed by salvation. But the most penetrating reality in Schreiner's work is the main truth he wishes to communicate, namely, the people of God will see the King in his beauty.

This is the book I've been searching for since my days as Seminary student. For years, I was taught the distinctives of classical Dispensationalism that saw two peoples of God, a distinction between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven, a rigid distinction between Israel and the church, and a pre-tribulational rapture. Schreiner is not content to rest in the land of classical dispensational theology, a terrain that is filled with horrible hermeneutics and wacky exegetical propositions. He moves forward and as far as I can tell, lands squarely in a historical premillennial arena.

One paragraph in particular is worth citing; a paragraph that has ended a thirty year search for answers to the dispensational dilemma. Schreiner writes, "The coming of Jesus Christ means that the old covenant, the Sinai covenant, has passed away, and the new covenant has become a reality. The promises of Abraham are being fulfilled in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Now inclusion in the people of God is not restricted to Israel but is open to both Jews and Gentiles who believe in Jesus. Those who trust in him are truly children of Abraham (emphasis mine). Those who belong to Jesus Christ and who have received the gift of the Spirit are truly circumcised. Those who are members of the new creation are the new and true Israel of God. In the church of Jesus Christ the worldwide promises given to Abraham are becoming a reality, for Jews and Gentiles are one body in Christ, equally members of the people of God together" (p. 642).

Schreiner also clears up the essence of the land promises that are a major part of the dispensational warp and woof: "The new new heavens and the new earth fulfill the land promise given to the patriarchs, but now the promise encompasses the entire universe" (p 617).

The King in His Beauty is a fitting companion to recent works that have also jettisoned classical dispensational distinctives, namely, Kingdom Through Covenant by Gentry and Wellum and God's Glory in Salvation Through Judgment by James Hamilton. Indeed, it is an essential part of every pastoral toolbox. But "toolbox" is the wrong metaphor. The King in His Beauty is a treasure chest. Readers who open this treasure chest will be immediately struck with the majesty, sovereignty, and the beauty of the Lord Jesus Christ! Open the worship manual and respond rightly with God-centered worship!

www.baldreformer.wordpress.com

Highly recommended

Dwight Davis says

Calling this a "biblical theology" is misleading. It is more of an overview of the story of the bible with little to no exposition or theology being done.

Schreiner offers nothing new here, just a book by book survey of the bible. I'm not entirely sure why this book exists. It is of no lasting value and contributes nothing that has not already been contributed before. I'm really disappointed.

I guess I could recommend this to those who have next to no experience with the bible and would benefit from a book by book exposition to get a general overview. But as mentioned before, those books existed before this came out. I just don't really know what to do with this.

Brian Pate says

Excellent! Helped me grasp the big picture of the Bible.

Dustin says

There are some books that are good for theologians, but not good for laypeople. Rare is a book which pleases both. This is one, in my opinion. Tom Schreiner makes each book/genre of the Bible easy to understand by examining its various themes and topics.

Philip Taylor says

Quite simply brilliant. Richly suggestive for further study and devotional. At the risk of getting a hit put on me by Colin Campbell, if you have a good study bible and this book then you could quite happily thrive without anything else. Schreiner essentially gives a high-level running commentary of every book in the Bible. But his comments are also deep (see Genesis and Matthew to get a feel for what I am saying). I defy anyone to read his comments on Revelation and not be encouraged.

Trevor Binkley says

This is a phenomenal resource! I was thoroughly impressed with Schreiner's combination of clarity and brevity. He touches down on the unfolding theme of Kingdom in every biblical book, looking at it as the key theme running through the Scriptures.

I have read numerous Biblical Theologies, but this is the first one that I would recommend to everyone. Whether you desire to simply understand the Scriptures better, or you need a solid resource for studying to preach or teach the Bible, this is a must have.

Brian Collins says

In this biblical theology Thomas Schreiner studies the themes of the books of the Bible (Paul's epistles are grouped together in a single section, as are some other smaller sections, like Luke-Acts). Schreiner either follows a thematic approach or a literary one in which he traces the main themes of successive sections. Overall, his comments are insightful and the book gives a good overview of Scripture's main themes.

Michael Rachel says

I waited for this volume with eager expectation. Sadly, after reading it, I am surprisingly disappointed. My main contention is, I fail to understand why Schreiner wrote this book! I struggled to see what he was adding to the BT discussion and what contribution he made in light of other masterful BT works in the last several decades. This book read more like an introduction to the Bible 101 than what I expected from someone of the caliber of Schreiner.

Despite my unpleasant attitude towards this book, I would recommend it to anyone who is unfamiliar with the broader discussions of BT both within and without the Reformed world (though I wouldn't label Schreiner "Reformed"). Those who are looking for a general and broad overview of the main theological points discussed in a canonical way, might benefit from reading this volume.

Nate Claiborne says

I don't know if I'll complete a cover to cover of this, but I finished the Pentateuch section, a couple of prophets, a gospel, and some epistles to get the overall flavoring of Schreiner's project.

This is a great theological overview of the Bible. Schreiner engages key themes and spends more time on exposition than scholarly interaction, which makes this perhaps ideal for your average (though dedicated) reader. Pastors will benefit as well, and I've consulted the sections on each book prior to teaching them. This lies somewhere between a textbook and a devotional exposition of Scripture.

Matthew says

Honestly one of my favorite books I have ever read. Schreiner deftly moves through each book of the Bible (while grouping some, such as Paul's epistles), showing how each connects to the Bible's overall storyline and themes while letting them speak for themselves. It is a treasure trove of Biblical knowledge, wisdom, and insight. It's written at a level that I think most Christians could handle, despite its length, and I would recommend this book to anyone wanting to get a better handle on how the whole Bible fits together as one coherent story, centered on the kingdom of God, fulfilled in Christ.
