

Rein Bos. *We Have Heard That God Is With You: Preaching the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008. 384 pages. \$28.00.

One could well apply to the author of this fine guide to preaching the Christian Old Testament Matthew's description of every scribe trained for the kingdom of heaven: "like a householder who brings out of one's treasure what is new and what is old" (Mt. 13:52). Bos takes delight in displaying before Christian preachers the many treasures in what we call the Old Testament: treasures that have lain forgotten or discarded or encrusted with centuries of Christian interpretation that has marred their beauty and depressed or nullified their value. He also exhibits new ways that Christians can come to treasure Old Testament texts without defacing the ongoing value for Jewish readers of these same ancient works or employing them in order to denigrate Jews and exclude them from God's covenant with Israel.

This very comprehensive book is arranged in three major parts. Part I surveys the rich history of Christian preaching of the Old Testament, from its interpretation in New Testament works through the sermons and theology of Karl Barth. This survey will be a great aid to preachers by virtue of naming and describing approaches they have no doubt employed ("Promise and Fulfillment," and "Salvation History") as well as those they were taught in seminary to avoid ("allegory" and perhaps "typology"). To a large extent the Old Testament has been left "Dreadfully Empty of Grace and Blessing" by the time Christian preachers have gotten done with it. Not only are Jews stripped of their ongoing role as heirs and stewards of God's covenant or simply ignored, but the Old Testament texts themselves are left devoid of ongoing meaning for Christians, except perhaps as forerunners of something far superior. The survey leaves Bos convinced that what is needed by modern Christian preachers is a "bunch of keys," not one single key, if we are to unlock the treasure house of the Old Testament to benefit Christians today.

Part II searches through the history of Christian interpretation for possible keys and uncovers a set of four that can do the job as desired: *Sensus Israeliticus*, Christological Sense, Ecclesiological Sense, and Eschatological Sense. Bos uncovers these four senses by analyzing the ways in which the apostles and evangelists recontextualize the words of Moses and the prophets (136-7). This use of the Old Testament in the New contrasts with subsequent Christian use that was limited to the Christological sense. These four terms describe layers or dimensions of meaning. They function as a multi-voiced choir. Part II also contains a very illuminating examination of what is meant by the "literal sense."

Part III is devoted to illustrating the way each of the voices of this choir sing the notes of the score. Through it all Bos constantly reminds us that Gentile Christians are guests in the house of Israel and not a replacement of Israel. He coaches Gentile Christians sagely and sensitively on how to maintain our integrity as Gentile Christian guests while fully respecting the integrity of our non-Christian Jewish hosts. One of his most intriguing explorations is of the way the experience of Jesus as Son of Man leads us to a new appreciation of what it has meant for Israel to be Son of Man. Jesus' prophecy that the Son of Man must be handed over to the religious authorities, condemned and killed was fulfilled not only in Jesus but in centuries of Jewish experience at the hands of Christian religious authorities (193). This is but a sampling of the treasures to be found in Part III.

Bos' entire book draws deeply on his masterful grasp of the theological disciplines from which preachers need to draw: Old Testament and New Testament exegesis, as well as history of theology and preaching. The entire book is rich in excerpts from sermons that exemplify how preachers have articulated various interpretative approaches.

Preaching is where the rubber meets the road in the Christian reading of the Old Testament. The efforts of scholars to interpret the documents in their original contexts are only one step towards remedying the problem of the abusive ways in which Christians have treated the Old Testament. To stop work after a responsible excavation of these ancient artifacts is to leave them vulnerable to whatever use those who find them wish to put them to. Christians will surely all go beyond leaving them *in situ*, consciously or not. Bos evaluates the various ways we have appropriated them and offers an alternative to the abusive traditions that honors their ongoing use by Jews, opens the way to deeper sharing of interpretations by Christians and Jews, and makes a place for a specifically Christian meaning that not only does not violate these other two commitments but benefits from them.

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