FROM THE AUTHOR

AUTHOR
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Biblical scholars are attracted to writing commentaries. And you have done that. Was the process of writing a biblical theology very different?

Actually I think the temptation of both enterprises is similar. In writing a commentary it's easy to be led by scholarly debates. So I try to work with just me and the text for quite a while before I use scholarly resources to check and fill out what I've thought so far. Writing the *Biblical Theology* wasn't so different, but in this work I didn't want to be led too easily by systematic theology's categories.

In writing, I first made a few potential chapter headings such as God and creation and the people of God and Jesus. Then I read the Bible and put things under those headings and introduced further headings as the material accumulated. Then I read other people's theological works to check out and expand what I'd seen on my own.

What would you like readers to know as they approach your work?

Maybe much of the answer is implicit in the way I answered your first question! I was trying not to write a systematic theology but to work with the Bible's categories.

I'm not against systematic theology; the two things are just too different. Systematic theology seeks to put biblical truth into the framework and ways of thought of the context in which the systematic theology is written. Biblical theology as I was trying to do it tries to stick closer to the Scriptures' own categories.

But I was trying to be systematic (which is itself probably a Western thing, at least in a pre-postmodern context). And that makes for a difference over against most work in biblical theology, I think. Most biblical theology looks at a theme within the Scriptures, or looks at a theme that's important in our context, or looks at the various theologies within the Scriptures (for instance, the theology of Jeremiah or Paul). Again, I'm not against that. I wrote a little book on the theology of Isaiah! I was just trying to do something different.