

# Summer Musings

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[ 0 : 00 ] One of those childhood traumas, I would call it, which has buried deep in us all and probably best left alone. I'm sure mine went something like, I went to camp, I took swimming lessons, I hit one of my sisters, was sent to my room.

Yes, those kind of things. In September, it's a time perhaps to remember summer. We had a great summer in Vancouver, didn't we? Already we're remembering it.

And that's what I want to do today. I want to do a bit of summer musing. Over the past few years, I have very much enjoyed and I trust benefited by perusing, reading the books by a scholar named Richard Bauckham.

Whenever I mention his name, people say, Bauckham? Bauckham? It's a weird name, B-A-U-C-K-H-A-M, if that helps you, Bauckham. A New Testament scholar is Mr. Bauckham. He's currently teaching very little of this. I remember he doesn't like pushing his own biography. Currently at Cambridge, he taught, I think, for most of his career at St. Andrews.

[ 1 : 14 ] He is a fellow of the British Academy, a very accomplished scholar. He's written on a broad, broad range of New Testament issues.

This summer, he taught a one-week course at Regent College called Outline for a Biblical Theology. Outline for a Biblical Theology.

So to atone, if you will, for summers in which I spent my time hitting my sisters, etc., I decided to audit this course.

It's good to see a person, isn't it, hear a voice when you've been reading their books. At least I find that delightful. It adds a whole new dimension to their presence in your life.

15 hours, three hours a day, listening to Mr. Bauckham proved, I can tell you, a complete delight. And at the senior citizen's rate, which is now available for folks like me, it was a real bargain.

[ 2 : 19 ] So I just loved the experience. So obviously about this course, then I will muse today with you.

So it's a pleasure to do it, to do this. Before we jump right into my summer musings, we must happily say a word of prayer, shall we?

Lord, with the psalmist, we would be your servants always. So grant us understanding. Teach us your truth.

Your truth in all of its splendor and glory. All of its graciousness. All of its goodness for us. So Lord, be with us as we ponder the things of the gospel today.

Amen. Amen. Outline, getting again right down to it. Outline for a biblical theology prompts an obvious question.

[ 3 : 25 ] I will certainly ask it. What is biblical theology? What is it precisely? Mr. Bauckham gave a good definition of it from another scholar.

Obviously something that he thinks probably couldn't be improved upon. Here it is. Biblical theology. What is it? So says this scholar. That creative theological discipline.

This is worth pondering with some slowness, if you will. That creative theological discipline whereby the church seeks to hear the integrated voice of the whole Bible addressing us today.

That last bit is walloping, it seems to me. The integrated voice of the whole Bible.

Got it? You probably already have done that. I haven't in my life. But there it is. The integrated voice of the whole Bible. And addressing us today.

[ 4 : 34 ] God has given us today in which to live. It is, Mr. Bauckham says, a step on the way to systematic theology. Talk about systematic theology a bit by way of definition.

But for now, a step on the way to systematic theology is biblical theology. It is further, and this is a very important point, it is, says Mr. These are his exact words, in a positive relationship to the

church's doctrinal tradition.

Positive relationship to the church's doctrinal tradition. And then he adds, very, very importantly, it seems to me, even in critique. So when you look at a biblical theology, when you're looking minutely at the Bible and trying to hear its integrated voice of the whole, even when it critiques church tradition, church's traditional doctrine, it does that positively.

It wants to serve the church and our understanding of the faith. The church has to put it mildly, doctrinal traditions. This is a bit of a Protestant point, perhaps.

Doctrinal traditions. I just experienced one this morning at the 7.30 service, the communion service. That would be a form of doctrinal tradition in the form of liturgy.

[ 6 : 05 ] It's not the whole integrated voice of the whole Bible. Couldn't be. Doesn't pretend to be. But it's a doctrinal tradition, a way of approaching Scripture.

These traditions take different forms, that being one of them. We all treasure some form as we hear it mediating the Gospel. So the question becomes, do we, as a happy question, do we allow all of Scripture to critique this form?

Presumably we do. Or better, I would think, a good way to put it would be, do we allow all of Scripture, the canon, as it's usually called, to always engage with, make us wiser about, hopefully, our most loved traditions?

Yes. Obviously we would want that. So there is a bit of a definition of biblical theology to get us going. There is, moving on here, a framework, a structure for doing biblical theology.

The framework, let's note the fact that that's a metaphor, of course. A something is a framework which holds a house together or something together.

[ 7 : 17 ] The framework is, reasonably enough, the big walloping language of our time, but it's good language, I'm sure. However, the framework here would be biblical metanarrative.

We're all getting to know and love metanarratives. The Bible's big story is a better way to put it, perhaps. The Bible has a big story.

There's a framework for doing biblical theology. The Bible, of course, we note, the obvious, is filled with stories. We take this for granted, don't we? From David and Goliath, stories of the patriarchs and their wanderings.

There's the Jesus story, of course. Jesus told stories as well. In scripture, we'll note the Paul story. Paul relates stories, especially about his conversion.

There are lots of stories in the Bible. Biblical theology assumes, or is it, it finds one big story.

[ 8 : 18 ] All of the stories add up to, if you will, one big story. The metanarrative. Wow.

There it is. The big story. The whole Bible tells us that. Just try, in a Bible study, Mr. Bauckham recommends this.

If you're in a Bible study, try saying, let's study the first two chapters of Genesis, and then study the last two books of the book of Revelation. There you'll find indicators that we do have in front of us a big story.

There are echoes, and there are almost like counter-echoes, as you put those chapters together.

Just a passing comment. Comment. All of which, all of which appears, so far so good, I think, all of which appears to be quite straightforward.

At least for Christians. Certainly people outside the Christian community would maybe have trouble seeing the Bible as one big story. They might object to that. But Christians certainly do receive it as one big story.

[ 9 : 23 ] We might pause here and wonder if, in fact, all of this seems just maybe a bit too easy. Does that kind of Bible description really describe the whole Bible as you've experienced it?

Do you always find it easily one big story? The Bible is both a whole, and it is also in many parts, isn't it?

After all, the Bible is, without dispute, quite complex. It's a big book. It's complex enough. There are many books, for instance, in the Bible.

There are different genres, for sure. A lot of Bible disputes and troubles are frequently generated by the fact of not paying a sufficient attention to genre in the Bible.

There are poems in the Bible. In the Bible, there are genealogies. There are apocalyptic books like Daniel in the last book of the Bible. A fellow like Tom Wright thinks the Gospel of Mark may, in fact, be an apocalyptic book.

[10:36] No one knows. You know, Tom Wright believes a lot of things. There are biographies of a sort in the Bible. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John being the four most famous ones.

It is the Bible, both a unity, therefore, again, this is sort of noting the obvious, but it's good to note the obvious at times, isn't it? It is the Bible, a unity, and it is a complexity.

Ah, is it ever. I love the Lord of the Rings. This is me speaking, but I think I captured Mr. Baucom here in short form. So this metaphor is me, not him.

But I love the Lord of the Rings. There are passages in that masterpiece which speak about many things that you come across in life, in your thinking life and in life generally.

Tolkien, in his most delightful prologue to that big book, the prologue to the narrative, a prologue which, if you recall, is in the voice of the narrator.

[11:39] It lures you into thinking that, oh yeah, Middle Earth's a real place. I better get to know a bit about it. But it describes, amongst other things, this is why I refer to this book, it describes the reading habits of hobbits.

Mr. Tolkien has a sense of humor for sure. Quote, they liked to have books filled with things they already knew. Not, set out, set out fair and square with no contradictions.

Yes, there it is. I like that, don't you? A lot of people have such reading habits. They like to have books filled with things they already knew. Set out fair and square with no contradictions.

Yeah, that's what the hobbits would like. They're straightforward, down-to-earth people. They even live in the earth, the hobbits. But if you're in a certain kind of schnurky mood, and I get in them more often than I should, on occasion you think it could be a definition of some forms of systematic theology.

It's all there, fair and square, set out, you know, no contradictions. We got it. I know what's in this book, and that's why I read it all the time. A hobbit. Hmm.

[12:59] Traditions, liturgies, forms of worship, even in forms of worship which repeat themselves, say in music, in Christian art, in our hymnody, these are things we already know.

And we delight in knowing them, and knowing them before we know them again. That's why a liturgy keeps repeating things. Of course, in fairness, things we already know may be so deep, so profound, so mysterious, thank you, Sheila, that we are called to know them better.

So maybe the hobbits have a point there. Let's just read things we already know because we need to get to know them better. When I thought through that point about Tolkien, I thought about maybe a painting.

I look at a painting, and I know it. But I might spend my life looking at that painting all the time. I get to know it better and better. I know it, but I need to know it better.

There you go. But here, and this is a Richard Baucom point for sure, and he thinks it's worth much attention. The Bible's big story, and I'm just repeating myself here, but just underlining, if you will, the Bible comes to us as a complex unity.

[14:20] Biblical theology constantly pays attention to this, maybe by necessity, a lot more than the systematic theologian pays attention. There's a pressure on the systematic theologian to get it systematized.

But the biblical theologian is much more likely to say, she or he, oh, there's complexity here.

There's resistance here. The Bible sometimes pushes back at your thinking.

It presents as it presents the Bible in multiple versions. Sometimes he goes as far as to say, I'm not sure I quite get his point here.

He says sometimes the Bible is fragment. He will go so far as to say sometimes the Bible comes to you as disorder. It's a bit more controversial there, but he would defend that.

There is in the Bible non-narrative material. Ecclesiastes we've been paying attention to this summer. It's delightful.

[15:27] Job, Proverbs. How do these books further than big story? They kind of stop the big story. They kind of interrupt it. They kind of, in point, Ecclesiastes, in fact, seems to say, oh, life isn't a big story.

Life is a fragment. So how does that fit into the big story? There's complexity in the midst of the unity. The Bible's big story, you know that Genesis 1 stuff, the Adam and Eve stuff, to a new heavens and a new earth, again, underlining a simple point, needing to be underlined, Mr. Baucom thinks, it is a complex unity.

It sets forth, in more general terms, if you like them, sometimes they're helpful, it sets forth the universal and the particular.

Yes. Some, perhaps all systematic presentations of our faith, at least have a tendency to mask or forget, at times, the complexity.

But when we go back to Scripture itself, trying to do, quote, a biblical theology, trying to hear the integrated voice of the whole, we find the unity is deeply defined by the complexity.

[16:49] This is the way God wants to speak to us. Mr. Baucom, by the way, if you guessed, is an Orthodox believer. He believes, he thinks we're listening to God's word here.

We look at the form of Scripture, we're listening to God, his way of speaking. Ah, there. I found Mr. Baucom quite alive to the uncanniness of the Bible.

Certainly, he's very much alive to what he considers to be, not a new point, but it's not often emphasized, perhaps. He's very much alive to what he would think is the uncanniness of Jesus. His strangeness. Perhaps his otherness. His mystery. Not a new thought again, exactly this, but Mr. Baucom thinks that our Lord's use of the language Son of Man as a way of self-referencing is to be taken very seriously.

Jesus, Mr. Baucom believes, is being self-consciously riddling in using this language. He's trying to be mysterious in the use of this language.

[18:12] You know, who do you think I am? That's mystery. The man says that to you. Think your name. Whatever you do in the world.

The way we use the identify people. Jesus pushed the question on people. Who do you think I am? Are the canonical Gospels riddling?

Are they meant to be seen as riddling? Not set out fair and square, something we already know.

That will hinder understanding, Mr. Baucom thinks.

No, no. They're very, very difficult in their own way. So, multiple versions, observation made earlier, is very apt here. Very and most apt when we think about Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

Each, each, of course, a true picture of Jesus. The church tradition receives that for sure. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are each a true picture of Jesus.

[19:19] Mr. Baucom pushes the question, is each of them true if isolated from the others? Are harmonies of the Gospels a true picture of Jesus?

There were people, and even in the early church, who were bothered by the fourness of the Gospel presentation of Jesus, and so they produced harmonies.

You still find them sometimes in Bibles, don't you? As if the four Gospels are a bit of a problem. So somebody comes along and says, I'll produce a harmony so to straighten out the problems if there are problems.

Again, are harmonies of the Gospels a true picture of Jesus? Is the Jesus of, for instance, historical reconstruction a true or a just true enough picture of Jesus?

This is the kind of question that Mr. Baucom would pose to his colleague Tom Wright. When we do historical reconstruction of Jesus using the methods of modern historiography, okay, we get a picture of Jesus.

[20:34] Is it true? How do we know it's true? How can historical reconstruction, to go to one of Mr. Baucom's bottom lines, how does historical reconstruction recognize the divine?

Is it sort of a, does it stand in for the work of the Spirit? Speaking of mystery, let me give you his own voice. This is the way he can write Mr. Baucom on this point.

This is his voice. This is from a book he wrote on, some essays he wrote on John's Gospel. by presenting us with four portrayals that are not harmonized already for us.

This speaks again to the complexity issue of Scripture here. The texts keep us seeking the Jesus to whom all four portrayals are reliable, but not exhaustive witnesses.

At that point he said, that's why the Spirit did this, you see. If one had been enough, that would have been enough. Well, seeking the real Jesus, he's echoing a book title by an American scholar about the real Jesus.

[22:03] Seeking the real Jesus to whom all four Gospels point us, we cannot rest content with a literary character in any of the texts, but must seek the living Jesus who transcends his literary portrayals.

Mr. Baucom is seeking to penetrate, I've never heard anybody do it better, the big question, why four Gospels? He does it as a believer, why Spirit have you given us four Gospels?

There's reason. You can't turn Jesus into a little capturement of a cage, in your Mart cage, your John cage, because each speaks to the other.

They're separate portrayals. He jumps into deep issues, Mr. Bauckham. Summarizing here, the Bible contains the universal and the particular, a unity and a complexity.

Again, a narrative but given along with non-narrative material is in the Bible. One voice, if you will, in many voices.

[ 23 : 27 ] Skill summarizing here, and this is why I so love this New Testament scholar. He pushes us into what I would call a philosophical thinking, into philosophical conclusions, or at least a philosophical mode about the Bible.

Here's Mr. Bauckham sort of musing about, well, where does all this talk about unity and complexity lead? from both its content and its form, we must remember Mr.

Bauckham, this is one of his conclusions, obviously, the Bible is not a narrative of human mastery. God is speaking to us in the form he gives us, the scripture, to remind us that, again, Mr.

Bauckham, as he reads it, the Bible is not a narrative of human mastery. It is not, therefore, a rational explanation of everything.

Do you think that's true about the Bible? Mr. Bauckham asks us to ponder this as a believer and as sophisticated and New Testament scholars you can meet in our world right now in the early 21st century.

[ 24 : 53 ] He thinks the Bible is telling us that it's not a rational explanation of everything. It may be read as such for people who have no sense of mystery. It's a Bible which, the Bible is a book that challenges attempts at human mastery.

this is again why I like this man because he's willing to ponder this. Remember, the Bible is a book which speaks to us that definition that he obviously likes from another scholar.

We want to listen to the whole integrated voice of the Bible for us today. God knows we are today people. He doesn't speak to us as if we're medieval monks or church fathers or puritans or 19th century liberals.

We're who we are in the early 21st century with all the dynamics of our kind of culture, our kind of world. Since the Enlightenment, Mr.

Bauckham emphasizes this, meta-narratives have come into the world which are meta-narratives of human mastery.

[ 26 : 07 ] That's what they are. Humans in the modern epic wish to master the world. Men like gods.

Or as Immanuel Kant, the great voice of the Enlightenment, we've grown up now. We've taken over the world. At last. We're shedding superstition.

We're shedding hierarchy. we're shedding theology. We're shedding churches. We're getting rid of all that. Man has grown up.

Man is now enlightened. We can take charge of the world. We are a narrative of mastery. That's what the modern world has become.

The modern world proposes big stories which explain everything. thing. I heard a physicist say that not long ago.

[ 27 : 05 ] You hear often from physicists these days. We now understand the universe. And if there are many universes, we're zeroing in on understanding them.

I heard a guy on the CBC not long ago, a physicist, he said point blank, the religious people ask how do you get from nothing to something. I can tell you how we got from nothing to something, said the physicist.

These guys are serious. There's no mystery anymore. We're explaining everything. When the church has engaged itself with the enlightenment, we've often taken upon ourselves their presuppositions.

Since they think they're going to explain everything, let's turn the Bible into a book that explains everything. That's a big mistake, Mr. Barcom thinks. The church falls into errors by taking on many of the things our conversation partners believe.

The Bible is not a big story that explains everything. This may be controversial, but some obvious examples of it. Sometimes Christians in the past have looked to the Bible to explain astronomy.

[ 28 : 23 ] The Bible doesn't really tell us much about astronomy. Darwin versus Genesis. The Bible must explain the origins of the world. Well, not much of it does.

Jim Houston thinks the Bible has a number of cosmologies in it, if I'm saying. There isn't just one cosmology in the Bible. The Bible may not say a thing to us about human origins. It tells us the mystery of God, the creator. But we can't turn it into a book that explains everything. We do that on occasion and we fall into endless snares, endless mistakes. A footnote here. I'm doing summer musings. I'm sure you had good experiences in the summer too, learned good things. But in listening to Mr. Bach, I'm just listening to such a man with such a mind. It was just so interesting. On this subject of the Bible explaining everything, obviously, he wanted to emphasize this, and I don't think this is disputed anywhere, the Bible refuses to give us an answer about say the origins of evil. [ 29 : 34 ] The Bible just doesn't tell us. A metaphysical, final, serious answer. Where did evil come from? Why is it a possibility?

Mr. Bauckham holds the belief, and I think this is very much a belief which counters the majority view. I stand with the majority view on this. Myself, it's not very important where I stand. Mr. Bauckham believes that God could give us an explanation of evil's origins. He says he believes that. But he believes that our God does not give us the explanation because we would receive the explanation as a justification. He thinks our God wants us just to hate evil. That's enough for us. He could give us the reason. It would be conceptually available to us even in our fallen state. [ 30 : 39 ] But Mr. Bauckham holds the view that God doesn't do that for that reason. The explanation would be heard as justification. On this view of things, generally again, the Bible's incompleteness is according to heaven's wisdom.

And a part of a biblical theology, Mr. Bauckham believes, would be the recognition of that. The Bible is a glory, a wonder, but it speaks to us even of what it refuses to speak about. It is a book of incompleteness. If you will, it waits for its completion by the one who gave it to us. It does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. The mystery of Jesus is not yet within our grasp, but when he appears, then we shall see him as he is. As yet we don't. We see through a glass darkly. There it is. So just from here on now, I want to touch down on just major themes of what a biblical theology would include, broadly speaking, according to Mr.

[ 32 : 07 ] Bauckham, because I see it's 9.40, now I want a good time for a response. I'm sure you, I want to hear your response, your good thoughts about this, as people who love the Bible and love to think about, again, in both whole and in part.

Here are some, just racing through now, some issues which a biblical theology would address. Again, by way of background, Mr. Bauckham would always emphasize that the Bible narrativizes reality.

Isn't that interesting? The Bible narrativizes reality. Story is really central to how God speaks to us, in other words. But it has this trans- historical dimension.

You can't get into the Bible story and think that it's a complete story. It itself witnesses that one who is beyond this story is going to give it its final meaning. To look again at an outline for biblical theology is, I think, just a reminder of the fabulous riches of the Bible.

[ 33 : 16 ] There's just so much to ponder in doing a biblical theology. The Bible, of course, speaks to, Mr. Bauckham has written much about this throughout all of his writings, the Bible speaks to the identity of God, something that he loves to think about.

God has identified himself. God has an identity. Again, God speaks to the world by way of narrative. He gives a narrative identity. Obvious examples. I am the God. I am your God who brought you out of Egypt.

There's my identity. That's a narrative identity. You want to know who I am? I'm the guy who got the juice, excuse my language. I'm the God who got the Jews out of Egypt. That's my identity.

I did that. There's a narrative identity. He is this God, the one who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. Who is God?

[ 34 : 19 ] The God who did those two things, amongst other things. That's how we identify God. Bible is a book. Biblical theology recognizes that the Bible speaks to the identity of God.

This identity is constant. God constantly tells you that he's faithful, that he is a God of steadfast love.

Therefore, his identity is always an identification with, Mr. Bauckham emphasized that, my people, and I will be their God.

He is the father of orphans. He's the protector of widows. He is a God with other people. Isn't that wonderful? He is the God and father of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

He's a God with others. That's how he identifies himself. Won't go into this, it's so obvious. The God of a biblical theology is a God of names.

[ 35 : 25 ] God reveals his name on occasion in the Bible. You all know, I won't go into it today, a sidebar issue. I found this rather strange and moving.

The Jews wouldn't name God, would they? They backed off from naming him. They called him Lord as a sort of stand-in for his name.

Mr. Bauckham just said in passing, I don't say God's name either. He just said no. Our God should not be named, certainly not casually. There's a sense of awe there in mystery.

Don't be casual in the way, I hear this to myself, in the way I speak of God. He is a God of unique and transcendent identity.

Unique and transcendent. Yes. Transcendent. Mr. Bauckham says, but not remote.

[ 36 : 30 ] Isn't that beautiful? No. He is the high and lofty one who inhabits eternity. But you know the rest of that. But he dwells with those who are of a humble spirit.

High, remote. High and mysterious, but not remote. He draws near to the humble, our God. God.

Hmm. The New Testament presents a Jesus included.

Included. This is our theme last week. The New Testament presents a Jesus included in the unique divine identity.

Therefore, Jesus is both in and with the divine identity. identity. This is why the church in its traditions started to see trinity in God's revelation of himself.

Quite rightly. The Bible shows us Jesus in the divine identity, but somehow with the divine identity.

[ 37 : 36 ] The spirit likewise is in the divine identity, but also with it. God is both identity and also otherness in his own mystery.

Hence, God is a society of love. There is only one of these. That's why we're monotheists. But that one is three in love, giving, receiving, and in a bond of fellowship, Father, Son, Spirit.

Hence, God is revealed in a biblical theology as one God in the infinite mystery of this triunity. The Bible does speak of this.

The Bible does not contradict the church's trinitarian mystery. The Bible says, yes, go there. That's what it speaks of, doesn't it?

Keep carrying right along before we get to question time. A biblical theology, remember this is outlined for a biblical theology. What would it have to include? What a topic.

[ 38 : 44 ] How do you go about hearing the integrated voice of the whole Bible? Well, a biblical theology must look long at kingdom. Why? Because Jesus talks about kingdom so much, especially in the synoptic gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke.

The kingdom is at hand. I thought about this this morning twice. Twice the communion service tells me, pray the Lord's prayer. Thy kingdom come. I'm echoing Jesus in Nazareth, echoing Jesus in Galilee, who announced that the kingdom's coming and the church keeps on saying it.

Yes, God, bring in your kingdom. The kingdom is the great announcement of the synoptics. One definition here, just in passing, there are many variations on this.

It's not Mr. Bauckham's own. It's from another school. I don't know if I can pronounce his name. It's K-E-C-K. Somebody kek. The kingdom is defined as the rectifying, I bet you said this to someone over breakfast this morning.

The kingdom is, and quote this if someone asks, what is the kingdom that you Christians are always talking about? Well, the kingdom is the rectifying power of the impinging future.

[ 40 : 03 ] But think about that. It's true, and that's powerful. I love that. The rectifying power, making things right, of the impinging future.

The kingdom is at hand. It impinges. Mr. Bauckham is deeply interested in John's gospel. He writes as good as I've ever read on John's gospel.

He's amazing. He has a commentary on this. I was speaking to someone earlier today about this.

He has a commentary in the words, a big technical commentary on John in the works. He believes

that, again, I don't think this is a new idea, but he certainly holds the belief that John's eternal life idiom, John's language of eternal life, he believes that's the exact equivalent of the synoptics kingdom language.

John takes the language, the kingdom, and turns it into eternal life. The kingdom is eternal life in John. That's a literary comment, by the way.

It doesn't speak to that, did Jesus go around talking like the Jesus of John's gospel? I think he did. I think Mr. Bauckham thinks he did. But the synoptics have a, Jesus could be in a different kind of mode.

[ 41 : 22 ] Sometimes he told lots of parables. Sometimes I think he dropped the parable method of teaching and went into another method. There's a lot of things to ponder about John's gospel.

It's a unique presence in the scriptures in its own way. Kingdom language has to be in a biblical theology. Again, the integrated voice of the whole Bible.

Isn't that a challenge? How many themes you'd have to get into a biblical theology? The church listens to the scriptures as they speak of, and here are many things, a biblical theology has to speak to.

The church listens to the scriptures as they speak of cross, of resurrection, of justification, of the Holy Spirit, and of course, the church.

The Bible has a lot to say about the church. Just a few notes here. The cross. Mr. Bauckham will tell you that's usually a Pauline emphasis, the cross.

[ 42 : 32 ] In Paul's mind, he thinks almost for sure, that's why whenever Paul says the word cross, it's as if Paul is poking you and saying, Jesus died as a criminal. It's not beautiful.

I wear one. It's jeweled. Well, maybe that's a good development of it all. But cross meant in the first century, criminal, lawless one, crucify.

we can't have you in the world anymore. You are a criminal, a so vicious a criminal that we've got to get rid of you. Cross meant criminal.

Resurrection simply reveals the infinite resources of God, Mr. Bauckham would emphasize. That's not a new thought, but it's a good thought.

God has infinite resources to deal with your life. He raised Jesus up out of death. Biblical theology must go there. The cross is a sacrifice, which Mr.

[ 43 : 36 ] Bauckham would remind you is a cultic metaphor from the ancient world. It means admission to holy presence.

That's a blessing, isn't it? That's a good word to hear. Pagans thought that if you did a sacrifice, you would change God's mind, some small g, be God's mind.

The Bible knows nothing of this. God provides the sacrifice. He's decided he wants you in his presence, even when you're a sinner. He wants to bring you back.

God wants to bring his whole creation back to him. God loves his creation. He loves people. He's bringing them back. Motifs, images, surround the death of Jesus, there's a multitude of them.

Ransom, victory, reconciliation, judgment and acquittal, revelation. This is a Johannine truth for sure.

[ 44 : 39 ] It is a revelation of God's glory in Jesus. It is a witness to God as far as dying for him. That's what our Lord did. the death of Jesus incorporates all of these motifs and images.

Something to talk about maybe when we get to talking very soon now that Mr. Bauckham asserts and is strong on this, the New Testament has no theory of atonement.

There isn't one. It's just not in the Bible. You can't find it there. The church finds it in her systematic theology and her thinking about the mystery of the gospel, but that's what it should do.

The Bible is another kind of book. It's incomplete, waiting for beyond its page to know more.

Anyway, that's a Mr.

Bauckham assertion. Biblical theology, of course, must address creation. He likes to put these two together, Mr. Bauckham, in a biblical theology. Creation and eschatology.

[ 45 : 41 ] The start, the finish. There are, he emphasizes this, I've never heard this quite emphasize this so much, but there are six creation narratives in the Bible, not just one.

Genesis, no, there are six. Run through them, Genesis 1, Genesis 2, Proverbs 8, Job 38, Psalm 104, and the first five verses of John's gospel, the prologue.

Six creation stories in the Bible. Biblical theology sort of reminds you of these things. When you open your eyes and see it, there are six creation stories in the Bible.

Mr. Bauckham is very interested in a passing thought here, animals. He reminds you that there's two chapters in the book of Job where God talks to Job about animals.

He takes animals very seriously. On day six, animals and humans were created. He thinks that God's telling us something there. There's another story there, I could go on about that.

[ 46 : 46 ] I don't want to take up all the time. It is good, he says, to notice just in passing that Genesis one contains both fiat creation and secondary creation.

That is, God likes to say, earth, bring forth. So he gives to other things the power to create. Day six, God created animals and humans.

He brings life out of secondary means, fiat and secondary creation. On day six, again, humans and animals are together.

What do you make of this? I don't know what to make of it. Mr. Bauckham loves to emphasize, humans are not divine. They think they are, but they're not.

He can run through the history of exegesis of humans in God's image, from the fathers to the middle ages. He's a master of this. You get to the renaissance, he's convinced, and everything goes wrong.

[ 47 : 45 ] The medievals had a profound understanding of being in God's image, he believes. The fathers did. At the renaissance, this may be how we got to the enlightenment, man becomes somewhat strutting.

Oh, I'm in God's image. I can remake his creation. I can build another creation on top of God's creation. And Mr. Bauckham, I think, as a green, would say, we've done it.

Look what we've done. We're choking to death. We're killing ourselves. God speaks to the world through allowing sin to have its consequences.

That's what God's wrath is, Mr. Bauckham believes. It's just allowing sin to work itself out. God is speaking to the world in our time. Look what you're doing to the creation.

image of God, Mr. Bauckham, tell me that he's in air sometime in the conversation time. Mr. Bauckham says, image of God simply disappears in the rest of the Old Testament.

[ 48 : 51 ] That's an interesting thing to note. Do a close biblical, where does the image of God language go? Do you find it in Isaiah? Do you find it in any of the prophets? Do you find it in the Pentateuch after Genesis?

Do you find it in the wisdom literature? It just goes away. I don't know. What do you make of that? It shows up again surrounding the mystery of Jesus.

Paul picks up image language, doesn't he? Finally, eschatology. The event, he calls it, that brings to light the full and final truth of all history, all events, all people.

There's an understanding of judgment, Mr. Bauckham believes scripture is telling us. Eschatology is the event that brings to light the full and final truth of all history, all events, all people.

You can see that a biblical theology, seeking to hear the integrated voice of the Bible, is a strange, difficult, maybe it's an impossible, but a necessary task.

[ 50 : 02 ] The church goes on reading scripture. It is not the church's only task, but it is essential, isn't it? We go on looking back to the sources.

This is where we come from. I must finish. I want to hear lots of response. What kind of benefit, I might ask, I ask myself, is there in this kind of broad inquiry about all of scripture?

nature. I've come to believe that the benefit is, in fact, immense. It can't be overstated. A scholar named Stephen Williams has recently written, not recently, he's written a major study of Friedrich Nietzsche, the shadow of the Antichrist, the book is called.

A focal point, Mr. Nietzsche, surely is, Friedrich Nietzsche, the philosopher, a focal point for aggressive modern unbelief and atheism.

Increasingly, I think our culture is a kind of Nietzsche culture. He'd appreciate our attitude towards the weak. You know, we need to get rid of the weak. We need to be strong.

[ 51 : 12 ] Man needs to be violent. We're good when we're violent. We're creative when we're violent. Get rid of the unborn. Get rid of the elderly. Get rid of them. Be strong. Our culture is following his dictates.

way ahead of his time. He is us. Yes, with disarming simplicity, he, Mr. Williams, states the framework for the presentation of our faith in the modern world.

I think he'd say to a man like Friedrich Nietzsche, and this is how disarming and simple this is, and I think this echoes a Bauckham kind of theme.

There are documents, writes Mr. Williams, testifying, that Jesus walked the earth. Mr. Bauckham has spent his life studying them. Documents testifying that Jesus walked the earth and was believed in as the Messiah of Israel on the grounds of his resurrection from the dead. All themes of biblical theology. Christians, he means here at the church, all of us as individuals can never do this. The church as a whole, the people of God, inspired by the spirit, can do anything for our God as he enables us.

[ 52 : 28 ] Christians, the church must explain why they believe that testimony. Mr. Bauckham, amongst others, has spent his life doing that. Why should we believe that testimony?

And I treasure Mr. Williams for this sentence. And they must with equal insistence keep asking how a disbelieving account of the emergence of this testimony is credible.

Ask the world, finally, how did these documents come about? This witness, it is so unique, it is so powerful, it is spread around the world.

What is a credible account for these documents if you don't believe their witness? So far, there isn't one. I don't think there is one. The New Testament is a miracle.

miracle. The Bible in its own way is a miracle. It deserves our close attention. I find, and I experienced it again this summer, my summer musings closed.

[ 53 : 32 ] The New Testament is a strangely powerful book. If you'll put aside your presuppositions that you know it all, your little lazy hobbit reading habits, and let it speak to you in all of its unity and complexity, it is a powerful presence because it echoes, it faithfully brings into our presence the strange and mystery, the strangeness and the mystery of Jesus.

I really felt it again this summer. who is this man?

What is the presence that brought about these four gospels, Paul's epistles, these strange little documents that are so powerful and so mysterious?

Who then is this? Really worth your attention, really worth the church's attention. Amen. Let me say a closing prayer before our conversation.

Lord, we thank you for the mystery of Jesus, greater than any thoughts we can ever have, greater than any book can capture, but humble enough to give us a true witness that we may believe intelligently and humbly and as we wait for his returning glory to show us the truth of all things.

[ 55 : 08 ] And Lord, we help us to remain faithful to the task of looking to you as our Savior. Amen. Good, sir.

When you were talking at the very beginning you mentioned about some bishop, and which bishop was referring to this? Oh, it was referring to a generic bishop, you know, they're known for their vanity and their ...

That's all, sorry John, I should have ... I'm being very unfair to bishops. We Anglicans get to talk that way. Good sir, yes.

What apasiacal background is Orkham come from? Did you tell us... Yes, yes, he's at Church of England. Okay. Cambridge educated. Does he have a denomination?

I mean, inside Church of England, does he have a... Yeah, in an essay I just happened to come across two weeks ago, I was happy to zip through it, an essay about himself. He was asked to write for a volume of scholars writing about why you believe.

[ 56 : 30 ] And he, yes, he talks about, he'll gladly call himself an evangelical. He's not afraid of that word, although, my goodness, he's...

He came... He was mostly shaped in his early years by a liberal Anglican background, but he moved towards... He said he just found a high doctrine of Scripture always made sense to him. I'm a bit hesitant in that he was a prodigy. This is the word... He talks about when he was a very young boy, pre-teens. He enjoyed reading critical literature about the Bible.

And he kind of knew even then that he was going to write about it. He said, I knew I was going to be a writer. I've mentioned to a few people recently, he's one of the few people, he says about himself, excuse me for going on, he says he can never remember a time when he didn't love God.

He says he always loved God. But he has... I think he... I think he is... I think it's going too far. I think he represents where the Orthodox Christian Church will go in that he has a full...

[ 57 : 45 ] He's integrated historical critical ways without granting them an inappropriate authority into his Christian orthodoxy.

He's a very... So he's... He loves the Church's... I'm repeating myself. He loves the Church's traditions but allows the Bible to critique them. And he would challenge most Christians, you'd be

surprised how rarely we in fact do that.

So... Yeah, he's an interesting fellow. He's very... He can be very controversial on certain issues but, you know, he's just very, very...

I'm impressed with him. Anyway, please, questions. I don't want to babble on here. Yes, yes.

I just thought... At St. John's a few years ago we had a small group Bible study. I think it was a biblical overview or something to that effect.

[ 58 : 53 ] And I think I also took a course at reading biblical overview. And I thought it was one of the most valuable things I've done in Bible study to really reinforce the whole story of you can say, the metanarrative of the Bible and the whole Gospel and all of that.

And even just that one phrase, I am your God and you are my people. If we could just dwell on that and think about... and take that in. That's so transformative, I think, a phrase for us to be aware of that, what that really means.

Yes, certainly. A biblical theology, zero... That's one of its themes. How do we know what the word God means according to the Bible? We'll often bring in, I think, from other places an understanding what divinity must be like.

And that begins to impact our understanding of what the word God means. And that it's not the theory of everything, but it's very, very alive and relevant to everything in our situation.

Yes. Yeah, Mr. Bauckham would think, friends, the Bible has much to teach us, say, about the environmental movement. He says, we've just been blind to it.

[ 60 : 16 ] We have to look again intensely at what Scripture says about creation, about animals, about who, about what our place in the world is.

We bloat our place in the world. So... Good sir. Thank you very much, Connie. This may be a rather picky detail.

That's okay. Yeah. I wondered if you could comment on his perception of Yogan Mothman's statement about God and creation. It seems to be that that's a perspective that is rarely raised in a conservative context.

context. Hmm. Yeah, he is a student of Mothman, isn't he? This term. But I'd rather hear your comment on it. I mean... Aren't you a geographer?

I was looking for advice on the next... Oh! No, I just wanted to do the... Well, in the course, he didn't.

[ 61 : 25 ] He stayed... The point, I guess, of biblical theology is, in a sense, to pause and bracket theology for a while and say, what exactly does the Bible say?

Let's look carefully at it. See exactly what it says. Often we're quite surprised at what it says or what it doesn't say. What we're reading into it.

Often. Or have we really taken seriously God's concern as he talks to Job about... Job, have you thought about animals much and your relationship to them?

Mr. Bockham goes as far as to say we simply don't know what kind of relationship animals have with God. We'd better be careful.

We thought, oh, animals don't... don't have souls. They're not important. He would think, where does Scripture tell us this? And the Scriptures go out of their way to talk about wild animals and domesticated animals.

[ 62 : 35 ] So anyway, on that topic he's very thoughtful. I'm not answering your question. I wish I knew... I've read Theology of Hope by Moltmann but I feel inadequate to relate Mr. Bockham to Moltmann.

Please, please. The Noatic Covenant. Yes, yes. And what he... Yes, yes, yes. I feel like that's a question. But, yes, generally, on green issues, boy, he's very serious.

He thinks... Because Scripture is. And we just don't see it. Phil, Phil. Do it. Harvey, given his emphasis on the integrated big story of the Bible, I'm wondering if he pays sufficient attention to the idea of progressive revelation, particularly the Old Testament.

The argument is as follows. Given all that we are responsible for knowing about the character, the personhood, and the love of God, the message of God, the future, the afterlife, given all that, isn't it the case that we actually are responsible for knowing far more than any good person at the end of the Old Testament times?

And therefore, we have to regard the Old Testament as a very gradual unfolding of something of the character of God that only...

[ 64 : 06 ] There is a pale representation of what we actually know through the Old Testament revelation, the New Testament revelation. I'm saying that we have to distinguish, surely, between the authoritative unfolding of the New Testament and the understanding of the Old Testament.

To gloss over that seems to me to be unbelievable. What do you think? I don't... Thank you. I don't think he glosses over that, not that you were making that charge. He would say that Christians underestimate...

I know he'd say... There are a couple of people in this room who took the course, I know, so they're going to tell me, boy, are you wrong on this point at some point. He would... I think he'd say Christians don't take themselves, seriously enough, the open-ended nature of the Bible.

That's why we turn it into a book that explains everything. But the Bible's telling us in many different ways it's not going to explain everything to us. Certainly not judgment, I think. Mr. Bauckham...

To be... On a controversial point, Mr. Bauckham, as I understand him, takes the view that the Bible teaches both that there is judgment and there's the possibility of eternal loss and there's also, the Bible seems to teach, universalism.

[ 65 : 28 ] Everyone is going to... God will not allow unbelief to separate any of his creatures from him. That God is too good for that. He won't allow it.

That's what Mr. Bauckham virtually believes, I think. So what... So he says, well, what do you do with this? He says, let it stand. Yes, there's judgment.

There's hell. And God is going to bring the whole creation back to himself in joyous salvation. Let them both stand, he says.

And let God work that out in the judgment. He seems to think that the Bible perhaps teaches both. He calls himself a mildly hopeful universalist. He thinks that's what scripture teaches.

But, he knows that, oh, there's judgment passages there that are not to be overlooked. So he...

[ 66 : 26 ] That's what you do when you're... See, the systematic theologian maybe decides to come down on that issue and decide for you. Fair and square. You know.

But Mr. Bauckham said, well, there's where the Bible complexifies things. So, is... So, I imagine you're going to... Yes, maybe...

Maybe we... Have not seen the limitations of the Old Testament as we should, but we don't see the limitations of the New Testament as we should, perhaps.

But again, maybe I don't want to misrepresent him there. Isn't something like Matthew's Gospel just such a challenge to us there?

I would find that Jesus saying to his disciples, obey what the Pharisees teach. They have inherited Moses' authority. So, we get this and the honoring of the temple by Jesus, sending people to the temple after he heals them.

[ 67 : 34 ] The refusal of Paul to be disrespectful of the high priest. There's a real honoring of Israel and the mystery of God's working in her...

in that story. But then there's the overthrowing of it. Phil, I'm babbling on here. There are people who can address that much better than I do. Thank you. But thanks...

There's lots of God conceding things in the Old Testament to Israel. And our Lord speaks to that explicitly, doesn't he?

So, he'll say... He'll say, yes, there's an out clause on this divorce issue, but it was because of the hardness of your hearts that God gave you that.

And then he goes to the big story. In the beginning, it was male and female and there's no room for divorce at all. So, Jesus seems to say there was a concession made for Israel.

[ 68 : 36 ] But I think Paul makes concessions in the New Testament too to accommodate the hardness of human hearts. He has Timothy circumcised and things like that.

But I'm rambling here about things I don't know anything about. Good, sir. I'm not a metanarrative with all the answers.

Good, sir. Well, I meant to use this. I was going to write all the key words there. Gee, I'm sorry. I was going to write unity, complexity, you know, all those fancy...

Sorry, good, sir. I'm interrupting. I want to thank you for bringing to Learner's Exchange a concern for the whole Bible. And that's something that's very close to my heart.

It leads me to think of two things at St. John's. One is our home group, which in the last year spent a considerable amount of time with Daniel and wondered what it had gotten itself into.

[ 69 : 47 ] And the sermon series on Samuel, which was a year or two ago. These are sort of, I would say, intermediate, unfamiliar parts of the Bible, not distant, unfamiliar parts.

If I were to choose a distant, unfamiliar part, which I have never heard dealt with in any of my years of church going, it's the Psalm of Solomon.

I would invite, I would then invite you to consider coming back for part two and focusing specifically on the parts of the Bible that the hobbits do not read.

Yeah. May I, may I say both yes and I'll, I might delegate that.

Well, I mean, sorry, sorry, somebody, yeah, sorry, yes, sir. Matthew. Matthew. Matthew. And I have the responsibility of leading a lunchtime group.

[ 71 : 08 ] Wow, yes. For the whole of this year. And it seems to me that that's a book that does the connecting of the metanarrative in a remarkable way.

Both through an unorthodox genealogy and through the explicit way in which it talks about the importance of the law and the problems and illustrates so completely the connection.

So that I would have thought the metanarrative might be the first few chapters of Genesis. I would probably go as far as the eight chapters. But then to stop at this point of the integral connection between the Old Testament and the New that Matthew, more than any of the other gospel writers makes.

Would you comment on that? Yeah, well, I don't know if I can comment on it. I just, I find Mr. Bockham is the first person, again, of such stature, I've read so much, he writes so much about Matthew, Mark, Luke, John.

[ 72 : 34 ] What are we to make of this for fullness? So what's the weakness of saying that they have distinctive emphases, but the first of them makes quite sure that we recognize the connection between the Old Testament and the New, which is not explicit.

to the same sense. In the other three times. Yeah, so, well, in traditional historical critical terms, I mean, it's a standard sort of thing, is that Matthew's in conversation with the synagogue.

You'd often hear that kind of comment, that it's very Jewish, Matthew's gospel, that you can almost hear the voice of a Christian who believes in Jesus, saying to inquiring Jews, the Nicodemuses of the post-resurrection time, listen, Jesus fulfills all the story of Israel.

That's, we can see that in everything we, we've, everything that we've grasped about Jesus, he's, he is Israel in her fulfillment.

it. So Matthew has that motif. It seems to be, it's in the other gospels, but Matthew sort of puts it in bold print, if you will.

[ 74 : 02 ] So that's one answer, it depends on, you can try and discern who the first reader hears of this kind of gospel presentation, who they are. one of his generalizations, and I think this speaks to the four gospels, Jesus is never less than historical, but he is more than historical.

And the gospels, he thinks, are telling his stuff. So you got that? Boy, that's, oh, do, do, do.

Because they're singing the last hymn. We all know how noisy it's going to get. Harvey, thank you for this. Thanks, sir. We're all going away with big words, right? And I'm glad you mentioned it.

I think it has been missing from the early experience of many people I know who see Adam and Eve, and then the flood, and then Moses and the baby in the basket, and it's a bunch of beads with no string holding them together.

So the metanarrative is really very important for us to see, know, and understand. Thank you. And one last word next week, no foreigners be staying.

[ 75 : 26 ] And the week after, Colleen, who is going to talk about beauty, the theology of beauty. Oh, wow.

Yes. So please come back, and after Christmas, we'll have Paula, who was the intended speaker for next week. Thank you, Harvey.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Kirk.