

Appreciation, Agreement, and a Few Minor Quibbles: A Response to G. K. Beale



JAMES M. HAMILTON
*Associate Professor of Biblical
Theology
The Southern Baptist Theological
Seminary
Louisville, KY 40280
jhamilton@sbts.edu*

G. K. Beale is a balsam tree. Balsam is a fragrant aroma of the tree that produces it, and from these trees comes an oleoresin that has medicinal value: balm. G. K. Beale is a balsam tree planted by streams of living water, bearing fruit in season and out, leading people to the balm of Gilead. In my initial experience of theological education, I was taught that the authors of the NT make illegitimate appeals to the OT in ways that should not be imitated. The two tall scholarly trees that God used to point me to the Emmaus road, the path one travels to understand that the authors of the NT rightly understood the OT, were Drs. Thomas R. Schreiner¹ and G. K. Beale.² Beale's book, *The Temple and the Church's*

¹ Thomas R. Schreiner, *Paul, Apostle of God's Glory in Christ: A Pauline Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001); Thomas R. Schreiner, *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008); Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude* (NAC; Nashville, TN: Broadman and Holman, 2003); Thomas R. Schreiner, *Galatians* (ZECNT; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, forthcoming); Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans* (BECNT; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1998).

² G. K. Beale, "Did Jesus and His Followers Preach the Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts? An Examination of the Presuppositions of Jesus' and the Apostles' Exegetical Method," in *The Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts? Essays on the Use of the Old Testament in the New* (ed. G. K. Beale; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1994), 387–404; G. K. Beale, *The Use of Daniel in Jewish*

Mission, is a paradigm shifting, seminal work;³ his book, *The Erosion of Inerrancy in Evangelicalism*, is a faithful diagnosis from a loving physician;⁴ and his forthcoming *New Testament Biblical Theology* will stand with the titans of the genre.⁵

I am deeply grateful for the writings of G. K. Beale and for the opportunity to offer this response. Professor Beale requested that this response to the two lectures he gave at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary be done in light of his forthcoming *New Testament Biblical Theology*, so I make no apology for the fact that some of my comments will result as much from my reading of that book as from his lectures. I will begin with words of appreciation for the important and courageous work Beale has done and is doing, summarize aspects of the deep resonance I feel when I read Beale, and conclude with some complaints and minor objections.

I. IMPORTANT AND COURAGEOUS WORK

Paul wrote to Titus that overseers must hold firmly to the trustworthy word as taught, give instruction in sound teaching, and be able to refute those who contradict it (Titus 1:7, 9). Beale's scholarly work is important and courageous because he is doing precisely these things. Beale is holding firmly to the trustworthy word as he takes pains to understand the Bible. Unlike some scholars who become impatient with the Scriptures and declare that the Bible is strange, Beale seeks the contours of the biblical authors' perspective. It takes patience and work to understand the broad-angle rationale for the statements made by prophets such as Hosea and Daniel. One must understand the Torah that formed the mind of the prophets and the use of foundational Mosaic texts elsewhere in both the Prophets and the Writings. Beale is willing to forge through the shallows into depths of understanding. Whether dealing with

Apocalyptic Literature and in the Revelation of St. John (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1984); G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson, eds., *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2007); G. K. Beale, *We Become What We Worship: A Biblical Theology of Idolatry* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2008).

³ G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004).

⁴ G. K. Beale, *The Erosion of Inerrancy in Evangelicalism: Responding to New Challenges to Biblical Authority* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008).

⁵ G. K. Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology: The Transformation of the Old Testament in the New* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2011).

the use NT authors make of the OT or recent challenges to inerrancy, Beale patiently shows the way to real understanding. On the surface some things appear contradictory or erroneous, but the conclusion that the NT misuses the OT or that the Bible is in error would be rashly drawn from a failure to recognize what the texts mean to communicate.

Of necessity, this kind of work must be detailed at points. It also requires courage because contending for the inerrancy of the Scriptures and the validity of the NT's interpretations of the OT will always partake of the reproach of the cross. Beale's willingness to shoulder this reproach, to be regarded by the worldly-minded in academia as a fool for Christ's sake, shows that he understands that there are more important things than one's standing in the eyes of worldly scholars.

G. K. Beale seeks to do biblical theology. That is, he is attempting to understand the presuppositions and perspectives from which the biblical authors write. This leads him to the view that later biblical authors rightly understand the earlier biblical texts they quote, and it also leads him into controversial disputes about inerrancy. Beale admirably enters the fray on these issues, understanding that those who receive the teaching of Jesus will receive the teaching of those who follow Jesus, while those who reject Jesus will also reject his followers.

II. BASIC AND WIDESPREAD AGREEMENT

One of the challenges for me in writing this response is the fact that my agreement with Beale is so massive and widespread. This is so much the case that the objections I do have may seem trivial, even nitpicky. In this section I want to highlight my agreement with Beale in terms of both methodology and interpretive conclusions. At points as I discuss our common methodology I will note places where we differ on interpretive conclusions, but the discussion here is nevertheless intended to highlight what I perceive as a deep level of agreement in the conclusions we have reached and the way we got to them.

Perhaps the biggest thing on which Beale and I are in agreement is our understanding of what is central and ultimate. I have argued that God's glory in salvation through judgment is the center of biblical theology.⁶ Compare this with what Beale writes:⁷

⁶ James M. Hamilton Jr., *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010); James M. Hamilton, "The Glory of God in Salvation Through Judgment: The Centre of Biblical Theology?" *Tyndale Bulletin* 57 (2006): 57–84.

we can state the overriding storyline idea of New Testament theology, especially in Paul and the Apocalypse but also in the Gospels and the rest of the New Testament. The storyline is this: Christ's life, and especially death and resurrection through the Spirit launched the end-time new creation reign, propelling worldwide mission, resulting in blessing and judgment, all for God's glory.⁸

This is essentially what I argue in *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology*, though I pursue it through the whole Bible not just the NT. Beale's statement includes many details that the catch-phrase in my book's title is meant to summarize.

I want to draw attention to three related statements Beale makes, quoting and commenting on them. Beale writes,

But these scholars did not attempt to explain in programmatic fashion how inaugurated eschatology relates to and sheds light on the major theological doctrines of the New Testament. Nor did they see that the controlling conception of eschatology was the kingdom of the new creation.⁹

Three comments: First, at points Beale stresses the uniqueness of his work almost to the detriment of others who have not done what he is now doing,¹⁰ but there are a variety of valid approaches. One author's neglect is another's opportunity. Second, I wonder whether the new creation is not one among several ways of speaking of the glorious eschatological restoration. Does it deserve to be seen as controlling? Third, and most importantly for my purposes here, note the way that Beale sees inaugurated eschatology "shedding light" on other themes and the new

⁷ Beale emailed PDF's of the Midwestern lectures to me prior to their being formatted for the journal, so the page numbers I reference here reflect the pre-publication version. [I.e., They do not correlated to the pagination given here.]

⁸ G. K. Beale, "The Inaugurated Eschatological Indicative and Imperative in Relation to Christian Living and Preaching," (paper presented during the annual Sizemore Lectures of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, MO, 2 November 2010), 9.

⁹ Ibid., 10–11.

¹⁰ See his comments on Dumbrell's "weaknesses," acknowledging, however, that Dumbrell did not set out to do these things (ibid., 28).

creation as the “controlling conception” of eschatology. I draw attention to this because this is how I, too, see the center of biblical theology functioning. The display of God’s glory is most poignant in the ways he makes known his justice and his mercy (cf. Exod 33:18–19; 34:6–7),¹¹ and this theme should be regarded as central precisely because it “informs, organizes, and is exposit by all the other themes in the Bible,”¹² because “all the Bible’s themes flow from, exposit, and feed back into the center of biblical theology.”¹³ Note how similar Beale’s statement is to mine on the methodological level. Beale writes:

I am trying to establish the centrality of new creation in a much more exegetical and theologically trenchant manner. My thesis is that the major theological ideas of the New Testament flow out of the storyline that Christ’s life, and especially death and resurrection through the Spirit launched the end-time new creation reign, propelling worldwide mission and resulting in blessing and judgment for God’s glory.¹⁴

We are both pursuing what is central and ultimate by seeking to identify the source from which major themes *flow*, and we are both identifying the ultimate goal as salvation/blessing and judgment for God’s glory. We both seek to be exegetically and theologically trenchant, though in slightly different ways. I pursue this by moving book by book through the whole canon, while Beale pursues it by focusing in on the use of the OT in the NT.

We differ slightly in our responses to objections to the possibility of there being one definitive center of biblical theology. On this point, Beale writes,

Doubtless, some will conclude that to reduce the centre of the New Testament down to the hub of the new creation reign is to add to the already too many reductionistic New Testament theologies previously proposed, and that we must be content with a multiperspectival approach. It is important to recall that I am not contending that this is the “centre” of the New Testament

¹¹ Hamilton, *God’s Glory in Salvation through Judgment*, 63.

¹² *Ibid.*, 48.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 53.

¹⁴ Beale, “Eschatological Indicative and Imperative,” 11.

but that it is the penultimate part of the storyline leading to mission, blessing, judgment and, finally, divine glory.¹⁵

Beale has thus nuanced his earlier contention that the new creation was the central penultimate center of biblical theology,¹⁶ with God's glory being ultimate.¹⁷ So perhaps Beale would now quibble with me (as I will with him) by noting that whereas I am contending for the *center* of biblical theology, he is now discussing the penultimate goal of the *storyline*. Since we are both talking about the controlling aspects of the storyline and its termination points, I think we are basically saying the same thing. There are two things in his statement that seem to move him from speaking of the center to speaking of the storyline. First, he notes that there are already too many "reductionistic" centers, and second, he nods to those who have advocated the multiperspectival approach. I maintain that the biblical authors speak of God's glory when they make ultimate statements to explain the way things are (e.g., Rom 11:33–36), when they appeal to what most concerns God,¹⁸ and when they depict how all things will resolve,¹⁹ thus it is broad enough to avoid the charge of reductionism, even as it is central to every perspective represented in the writings of the Bible. Moreover, by narrowing in on the glory of God *in salvation through judgment*, I seek to avoid the complaint that my proposed center is too broad to be useful.²⁰ I remain convinced that the glory of God in salvation through judgment is the center of biblical theology.

Moving to Beale's second lecture, my main response is to voice a hearty "Amen." Anyone who has contemplated the way John, for

¹⁵ Ibid., 12–13.

¹⁶ G. K. Beale, "The New Testament and New Creation," in *Biblical Theology: Retrospect and Prospect* (ed. Scott J. Hafemann; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2002), 159: "the kingdom of the new creation is a plausible and defensible center for NT theology."

¹⁷ See G. K. Beale, "The Eschatological Conception of New Testament Theology," in *Eschatology in the Bible and Theology: Evangelical Essays at the Dawn of a New Millennium* (ed. Kent E. Brower and Mark W. Elliott; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997), 51–52; which I quote in Hamilton, *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment*, 558.

¹⁸ Cf. the appendix (§7) to chapter 4, table 4.9, "Old Testament Prayers Appealing to God's Concern for His Own Glory," in Hamilton, *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment*, 352–53.

¹⁹ See, e.g., the appendix (§5) to chapter 6, table 6.7, "Doxologies in the New Testament," in *ibid.*, 538–39.

²⁰ See the discussion in *ibid.*, 37–59 esp. 51–56.

example, in the book of Revelation brings the future to bear on the present for Christian living will agree with Beale when he writes of his forthcoming book: “The thrust of the book is to show that eschatology was not a mere doctrine of futurology for Jesus and his followers but was a present reality, which shaped their thinking about every facet of the Christian faith.”²¹ In his second lecture Beale insightfully applies the concept of the messianic woes to the institution of elders in the churches.²² Beale brings out a hugely significant ramification of this: it means that Paul’s instructions in the Pastorals, including his comments about women not teaching men in 1 Tim 2:9–15, cannot be viewed as local, ad hoc instructions.²³ The danger of false teaching is not limited to Ephesus but is a constant reality throughout the time of the church, the time of affliction and tribulation, the time of the messianic woes. Elders are given to “shepherd the church through the messianic woes to glory.”²⁴

III. COMPLAINTS AND MINOR OBJECTIONS

John Gardner has written, “Where lumps and infelicities occur in fiction, the sensitive reader shrinks away a little, as we do when an interesting conversationalist picks his nose.”²⁵ As unpleasant as it is to point out lumps and infelicities (it would be easier to act as if they had not happened), discussions such as the present one are the place to note them. I have my own bad habits,

²¹ G. K. Beale, “The Inaugurated End-Time Tribulation and Its Bearing on the Church Office of Elder and on Christian Living in General,” (paper presented during the annual Sizemore Lectures of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, MO, 3 November 2010), 1. See further G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (NIGTC; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999); and for my own attempt to exposit Revelation, see James M. Hamilton Jr., *Revelation: The Spirit Speaks to the Churches* (Preaching the Word; Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012).

²² On the messianic woes, see Hamilton, *God’s Glory in Salvation through Judgment*, 492–94, esp. 493, which is a table listing texts that deal with “The Messianic Woes in the Old and New Testaments.” Beale writes: “I will contend that the origin of the creation of the office of elder is likely related, at least in part, to the inaugurated latter-day tribulation” (“The Inaugurated End-Time Tribulation and Its Bearing on the Church Office of Elder and on Christian Living in General,” 1).

²³ *Ibid.*, 20–21.

²⁴ Cf. the subtitle of the discussion of 1 Pet 4:12–5:14 in Hamilton, *God’s Glory in Salvation through Judgment*, 527–28.

²⁵ John Gardner, *The Art of Fiction: Notes on Craft for Young Writers* (New York, NY: Random House, 1984), 99.

and I would rather a friend address them than an enemy assure me they do not exist (cf. Prov 27:5–6).

My biggest objection to what Beale has written is not prompted by a point of interpretation or methodology but by his insistence on the uniqueness of what he is doing. Beale seeks to distinguish his forthcoming *New Testament Biblical Theology* from “the usual New Testament theologies” on nine enumerated points:

1. It “addresses more directly the theological storyline of the Old Testament.”
2. “The main facets of the Old Testament narrative story are then traced into and throughout the New Testament.”
3. It “attempts to elaborate on the main plotline categories of thought through surveying the places in the New Testament where that thought is expressed. Such a survey occurs through studying the use of key words and concepts relevant to the major category of focus. Also, discussion of each category will occur through exegetical analysis of crucial passages and of Old Testament quotations, allusions, and sometimes of discernible Old Testament themes. Such concentrated studies like this, especially of the New Testament’s use of the Old, are not characteristic features of most New Testament theologies.”
4. “In contrast with other New Testament theologies is that it is concerned with how important components of the Old Testament storyline are understood and developed in Judaism.”
5. “This approach to New Testament biblical theology will focus more on the unity of the New Testament than its diversity.”
6. “It is not usual to find a concise definition of what is a classic New Testament theology. On the other hand, my working definition of New Testament biblical theology is the following, in dependence on Geerhardus Vos’s definition of a whole Bible biblical theology: ‘Biblical Theology, rightly defined, is nothing else than the exhibition of the organic progress of supernatural revelation in its historic continuity and multiformity.’ ”
7. “The scheme of this book is generally closer to a couple of works that also style themselves as New Testament biblical theologies”
8. “As alluded to briefly above, another distinction between several New Testament theologies in comparison with the

scheme of the present project is that they conduct their discussions generally corpus by corpus.”

9. “In light of the above so far, I would categorize my biblical-theological approach to be canonical, genetic-progressive (or organically developmental, as a flower develops from a seed and bud), exegetical, and intertextual. This approach could be summarized as a “biblical-theological-oriented exegesis.” My different methodology from such New Testament theologies as Stuhlmacher’s, Ladd’s, Guthrie’s, Marshall’s, Thielman’s, and Schreiner’s, among others, does not indicate a weakness on their part but only the different nature of the projects.”²⁶

It may be that Beale’s book incorporates *more of* the things that he enumerates here than other New Testament theologies, but the difference is one of degree not kind. For Beale to insist that his book is of a “different nature” than other NT theologies strikes me as being akin to the man who insisted that his method of *ambulating* was to be distinguished from the mere *walking* done by other bipedal humans. Told that *ambulating* is just another word for *walking*, the man then explains that unlike others he moves from left foot to right foot, swings the opposite arm, rolls from heel to toe, and brings it all together in a way that can only be described as *ambulating* not *walking*.

My point is that New Testament theology is a subset of *biblical theology*, and adding the word *biblical* to the title and then laying out the ways one seeks to combine existing approaches and bring in unique emphases to contribute to the discipline does not mean that one is doing something different from what everyone else writing in the field has done. It is natural for an author to point out the unique emphases of his work, but consider the claim on the Baker webpage for Beale’s forthcoming book: “This comprehensive exposition is the first major New Testament *biblical* theology to appear in English in fifty years.”²⁷ I grant that Beale probably did not write this statement, but it is not a huge step from the way that he distinguishes his work from that of Ladd, Marshall, Thielmann, and Schreiner, who have all produced recent New Testament theologies. Anyone who thinks that Beale’s book is so

²⁶ Beale, *A New Testament Biblical Theology*, forthcoming.

²⁷ Baker Publishing Group Website, n.p. [cited 29 March 2011]. Online: <http://www.bakerpublishinggroup.com/ME2/dirmod.asp?sid=0477683E4046471488BD7BAC8DCFB004&nm=&type=PubCom&mod=PubComProductCatalog&mid=BF1316AF9E334B7BA1C33CB61CF48A4E&tier=3&id=DD845AA3B3994EFBA8BB3B414367C62D>.

different from these as to warrant the claim that it is the first of its kind to appear for fifty years should read some poetry and fiction, plays and essays, biography and political commentary. These forays into the world outside the limited field of New Testament theology would enable the recognition that these books on New Testament theology—Beale's included—are all doing basically the same thing in very similar ways. So I do not want to minimize the real contribution Beale's book makes, but again, the difference between his book and other NT theologies is one of degree and emphasis not kind. Perhaps Schreiner's work is closest in terms of outlook, method, and conclusions,²⁸ but Thielman's perspective is not that different,²⁹ and N. T. Wright is at least moving in a similar stream.³⁰

Before turning to a token interpretive disagreement, I want to register a stylistic complaint. Beale is prolix. It's as though he is exclaiming, "Why should I say in three words what I can expand to ten?! In the "Introduction" to "the little book," E. B. White epitomizes Professor Strunk: "'Omit needless words!'" cries the author on page 23, and into that imperative Will Strunk really put his heart and soul."³¹ Imagine the pleasure Strunk would take eliminating words from Beale's oeuvre. To take one example, consider the title of his second lecture, "The Inaugurated End-Time Tribulation and Its Bearing on the Church Office of Elder and on Christian Living in General." Edwardsian in its fullness, but would not "Elders and the End-Times" have been sufficient? I love the ideas that Beale communicates, but I wonder whether he hopes to be paid on the Dickensian wage (critics of Charles Dickens complain that his books are so long because he was paid a penny a word).

Lest this response be all commendation and superficial nitpicking, let me address one interpretive matter on which I would differ with Beale. There are others,³² but this one will suffice. Discussing the son of man in

²⁸ Schreiner, *New Testament Theology*.

²⁹ Frank Thielman, *Theology of the New Testament: A Canonical and Synthetic Approach* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005).

³⁰ N. T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (vol. 1, Christian Origins and the Question of God; Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1992); N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (vol. 2, Christian Origins and the Question of God; Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1996); N. T. Wright, *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (vol. 3, Christian Origins and the Question of God; Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2003).

³¹ William Strunk and E. B. White, *The Elements of Style* (3rd ed.; New York, NY: Macmillan, 1979), xiii.

³² Okay, I'll mention one here. Beale writes, "Not taking seriously enough the resurrection language applied to the Christian's present experience to

Dan 7, Beale relates a typical dialogue between himself and a student, beginning with the student's answer to Beale's question about how Dan 7:15–28 interprets the son of man in 7:1–14:

“The ‘son of man’ is the saints of Israel.” Of course, the question then arises, “What do we make of Jesus’ claim in the gospels that he is ‘the son of man’ ”? My answer is that, while the interpretative section does identify the “son of man” with the saints of Israel, there are indications both in the vision itself and in the following explanation that the ‘son of man’ is also an individual messianic-like figure.”³³

Beale then offers his take on Dan 7:27, “Then the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of *all* the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom *will be* an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him” (NASB):

A few commentators identify “his kingdom” and “him” at the conclusion of the verse to be an individual “son of man” from vv. 13–14. But, first of all, this presupposes that the figure of vv. 13–14 is only an individual. While this is possible, especially in the light of the above-discussed indications of such an individual in Daniel 7, the last part of v. 27 is, at least, ambiguous. The more likely identification is either that “his” and “him” refers to the directly preceding antecedent “the Highest One” or, plausibly, the singular pronoun is a corporate reference to the closely preceding “saints” of v. 27a (as the ESV, e.g., takes it). Thus, the “kingdom” at the end of v. 27 either refers to the kingdom of “the Highest One” or of “the saints.”³⁴

designate real eschatological resurrection existence, albeit on the spiritual level, has unintentionally eviscerated the ethical power of church teaching and preaching, since Christians need to know that they have resurrection power to please and obey God!” (Beale, “Eschatological Indicative and Imperative,” 15). Perhaps Beale would agree that human sinfulness is so pervasive and complex that it is a serious oversimplification to suggest that lacking nuance on the empowering force of inaugurated eschatology *eviscerates* the ethical power of the church's teaching.

³³ Beale, “The Inaugurated End-Time Tribulation and Its Bearing on the Church Office of Elder and on Christian Living in General,” 5.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 6.

I agree with Beale that corporate personality is a relevant consideration here, whereby the people are represented by the king, who embodies the nation in himself.³⁵ What I want to observe is the way that intertextual factors increase the likelihood that the son of man in 7:13–14 is an individual, Davidic figure who receives the kingdom, *his* kingdom, in 7:27.

In Dan 7:1–8 the beasts have taken over. These beasts represent the rulers of empires (7:17), and their rule will be ended when the son of man comes. Daniel's vision is of a scene whose imagery reaches all the way back to Genesis 1:26–28, where the one in the image and likeness of God was given dominion over the beasts. This is undone when the beast deceives the woman and the man sins in Gen 3. God promises Abraham, however, that blessing will overcome cursing,³⁶ and the promises will be realized through the seed of the woman.³⁷ David arises as king, and in Ps 8 he interprets his Adamic role (cf. Ps 8, superscription). He is the "son of man" (8:4) who has received dominion (8:6) over the beasts named in Gen 1:28 (8:7–8). Though weak like a babe, God has ordained strength in weakness (8:2), and David understands that it is God's purpose to cause his name to be majestic in all the earth (8:1, 9). Given the promise to David that the throne of his seed would be established forever (2 Sam 7:12–13; Ps 89:4), when Daniel sees a son of man arise (Dan 7:13; cf. Ps 8:4) who receives everlasting dominion and a kingdom that will not be destroyed or pass away (Dan 7:14; cf. 2 Sam 7:13)—and in this kingdom the dominion is taken away from the usurping beasts (Dan 7:12) and restored to the rightful ruler, the son of man (7:13–14)—how can we not see the son of man as the one who will triumph over the beasts, crushing the serpent's head, bringing to fulfillment the blessing of Abraham and the promise to David? How can "his . . . everlasting kingdom" and the obedience rendered to "him" (Dan 7:27; cf. Ps 72:8–11, 17, 19) not be exactly what God promised to David in 2 Sam 7, to Abraham in Gen 12, and to the serpent in Gen 3:14–15?

³⁵ Ibid., 5–6. See further H. Wheeler Robinson, *Corporate Personality in Ancient Israel* (Rev. ed.; Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1980).

³⁶ See further James M. Hamilton Jr., "The Seed of the Woman and the Blessing of Abraham," *Tyndale Bulletin* 58 (2007): 253–73.

³⁷ See James M. Hamilton Jr., "The Skull Crushing Seed of the Woman: Inner-Biblical Interpretation of Genesis 3:15," *The Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* 10.2 (2006): 30–54.

IV. CONCLUSION

I am so grateful for the stimulating work of G. K. Beale. Complaints and objections registered, anyone interested in biblical theology should read his work. Anyone interested in the use of the Old Testament in the New must digest Beale's contention that the Apostles are not preaching the right doctrine from the wrong text,³⁸ and his discussion of intertextuality in *We Become What We Worship*³⁹ is a significant contribution to the work of Hays in *The Conversion of the Imagination*.⁴⁰ While at points complexity and detail are certainly necessary, we should also guard those starting into this field against the mistaken conclusion that understanding the Bible is far too complicated and difficult for ordinary Christians. Describing the whole process of ambulating might make someone think walking is too complicated and difficult for the ordinary human. But he can just take a step and start walking. The same goes for understanding the Bible: the best thing to do is start reading and keep doing that, meditating on it day and night (cf. Ps 1). Congratulations and gratitude to G. K. Beale for these lectures and the forthcoming *New Testament Biblical Theology*.

³⁸ Beale, "The Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts."

³⁹ Beale, *We Become What We Worship*, 22–32.

⁴⁰ Richard B. Hays, *The Conversion of the Imagination: Paul as Interpreter of Israel's Scripture* (Grand Rapids, MI; Eerdmans, 2005) esp. 34–45.