

regarding ecclesiology and eschatology. For example, besides an explicit reference to the “covenant of grace” when discussing election in John 15:16 (“ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you”), he also identifies the elect as “believing people, and their elect children” (192), that the church did not begin at Pentecost since it existed during the Old Testament (310), and that Jesus’s kingdom was not physical but spiritual (32). This may cause some pastors outside the Reformed camp to either withhold endorsements to their flock or to do so only with a caveat, so as to prevent potential confusion.

Despite the abundance of profitable insights, there is one doctrinal aberration that is repeated many times throughout the book. McGeown argues that the term “Father” in reference to divinity has two distinct meanings. In the first meaning, it refers to the first person of the Trinity. No problem there. It is the second meaning that is idiosyncratic—at least this reviewer has never encountered such a view before. He argues that sometimes the term “Father” (with reference to divinity) is a reference to the triune God. One could furnish many examples of this throughout his book, but just a few will suffice. In discussing John 14:7–11, and the exchange Jesus had with his disciples about seeing the Father, he states that the “Father is also a reference to the triune God, or to the Godhead without distinction of persons” (37). He then explains that the basis for this is the incarnation of God the Son (39). Elsewhere he writes, “When Jesus lived on earth, he prayed to the triune God, and he obeyed the law of the triune God.... In summary, God is Father, first, as the Father of the Son, in the being of the Trinity; second, as the triune Father of the incarnate Son” (75). This is theologically problematic.

Without question, McGeown has made a worthy contribution to Johannine literature. Yet it is difficult to position it precisely in terms of its primary audience. Because it is an adaptation of sermons to a local congregation, the target audience is for the church. But it is more suitable for mature believers, given its often weighty and theologically dense discussions. Since there is no backmatter, only a brief introduction (5 pages) following the Table of Contents and very few footnotes, scholars may wish for access to his source material, while at the same time finding it profitable in many ways.

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A Theology of Paul and His Letters, by Douglas J. Moo. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2021. xi + 749 pp. \$54.99.

No one in the evangelical world is likely better suited to write a Pauline theology than Doug Moo, who serves as the Kenneth T. Wessner Professor of New Testament at Wheaton College Graduate School.

My proof? He has taught biblical theology and exegesis courses for 46 years, split equally between Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and Wheaton; he has written commentaries on Romans, Galatians, Colossians, and Philemon and hopes to add 1–2 Thessalonians and Philippians to this list in the next few years (he has also completed a soon-to-be-published commentary on Hebrews and has previously written commentaries on James and 2 Peter/Jude); finally, he has written numerous journal articles and essays on Pauline theological themes.

A Theology of Paul and His Letters is the most recent contribution to Zondervan's Biblical Theology of the New Testament series (volumes on John's writings [Andreas Köstenberger], Luke's writings [Darrell Bock], Peter/James/Jude [Peter Davids], and Mark [David Garland] have already been published). Even though Moo took 15 years (!) to write the book, we readers owe him a huge debt of gratitude.

Before considering the book itself, a key to understanding and appreciating it resides in knowing the author's presuppositions. The foundational elements of Moo's presentation include the following: (1) a commitment to the authority of Scripture (xxiv) which results in the belief that Paul's theology is unified with the rest of the Bible (6, 651) and that all thirteen letters ascribed to Paul were written by him (6, 49–51). (2) Paul's theology may have developed as he faced various situations in the churches but it never changed (630) nor did it suffer from contradictions (9). (3) Moo belongs to the "broadly Reformed theological tradition" (29) combined with a "baptist (small 'b') influence" (651), resulting in three differences with typical Reformed thinking: (a) a "preference for believer's baptism over infant baptism"; (b) "the church is constituted by believers only"; and (c) the "Mosaic law does not apply directly to the new covenant people of God" (29). (4) While acknowledging the reality that he writes from a particular theological perspective, Moo seeks to be Word-based: "I have worked hard—yes, even struggled—to let the text have its way, to allow it to take me wherever it was leading" (651).

So how does Moo describe Paul's theology? Biblical theologians would acknowledge that the methodological approaches for studying Paul's theology are as varied and numerous as the number of books that have been written on the subject. But Moo's method is one that should be adopted by all future authors (technically, Moo uses this approach because the editor of the series required it [14]). The book has four sections: Part 1: Introductory Issues (37 pages); Part 2: The Theology of the Letters (304 pages); Part 3: The Theology of Paul (299 pages); and Part 4: Final Matters (2 pages). Nearly 100 pages are appended to this volume, including a 50-page bibliography (in small font) and four indexes (e.g., Scripture, Extrabiblical Literature, Subject, and Author). Parts 2 and 3 comprise the bulk of the book as Moo provides a book-by-book exposition of Paul's letters in Part 2 and then synthesizes the major themes of Paul's theology in Part 3.

A short description of the content of each section should help to give a feel for the book's treatment of Paul's theology. In Part 1, Moo

gives a definition of biblical, and more specifically, Pauline theology, and he also provides the formative influences and conceptual categories of Paul's thinking. In this latter section Moo deals with the question of the center of Paul's theology which, he asserts, is union with Christ (35–39). Part 2 is essentially a 300-page commentary on Paul's letters treated in chronological order, beginning with Galatians on through to 2 Timothy. For each of the thirteen letters Moo deals with introductory matters, analyzes the argument of the letter, and walks the reader through it. These treatments of Paul's epistles provide an invaluable resource for personal Bible study as well as for preaching and teaching. Here the reader will find mention of every significant interpretive and theological issue for each letter; furthermore, all the important resources for further, detailed study are mentioned (e.g., commentaries, dictionary/encyclopedia entries, journal/book essays, etc.). If Moo had only written Part 2, I would still recommend it for purchase and I would consult it *first*, before any other secondary resource in my study of any of Paul's letters. But Part 2 is not even the best portion of the book! That designation belongs to Part 3 where Moo delineates eight major elements of Paul's theology under the organizing concept of realm.

At the *center* of the new realm is the Gospel and the good news it proclaims about Jesus Christ (chap. 17). Chapter 18 explains how the atoning death of Christ is the decisive moment of the *inauguration* of the new realm. Next, a *description of the old realm*, the context out of which people must be rescued, is provided as he describes sin, the law (the New Perspective on Paul and the function of the law for NT believers are treated here), and human nature (chap. 19). Moo next describes the *blessings* of the new realm (chap. 20) which include the new covenant, the Spirit, new creation, salvation, and life, followed by a close look at justification, reconciliation, and transformation. Chapter 21 discusses *entry into* the new realm by considering divine calling and election and its interplay with the human response of faith. Next, Paul describes the *consummation* of the new realm in his writing about the Day of the Lord, the Parousia, the rapture and resurrection, as well as judgment (chap. 22); Moo also explains Paul's understanding of the future for ethnic Israel. Chapter 23, "The *People* of the New Realm," provides discussion of Paul's ecclesiology. And finally, in Chapter 24, *living* in the new realm deals with sanctification and Paul's ethics. Moo's Part 4 is a 2-page conclusion to the book in which he repeats his commitment to the unity of New Testament theology and expresses hope that this study would result in the renewed mind Paul mentions in Romans 12:2.

A Theology of Paul and His Letters contains too many strong points to mention so I must limit myself to five. First, every noteworthy resource related to Paul's theology is included. For example, the key commentaries and articles on Romans are found in the 138 footnotes of *Chapter 9: Romans* (192–243). Or the issues surrounding Paul's treatment of the genders, including the areas of disagreement and the main proponents of each viewpoint (complementarian vs. egalitarian), are

clearly delineated (139–42, 151–52, 325–28, 601–2, 633–35). Second, Moo has the essential aptitude of a skilled exegete—he asks the right questions. This means that he knows the topics important to Paul and provides the main proponents and their lines of argument before giving his own well-reasoned position. One sample: the discussion of justification (469–91) contains nine sub-sections, eighty-five footnotes, and thorough treatment of each of the main positions on this vital doctrine.

Third, when Moo discusses any issue he gives clear indication of the position he takes (with a couple of exceptions [156, 177]). At the same time his interpretive decisions can be arranged on a spectrum from dogmatic (e.g., “To state the obvious: Paul wrote thirteen letters to churches and individuals spread across the eastern Mediterranean over at least fifteen years” [9]) to the highly uncertain (e.g., regarding Ephesians “I tentatively adopt this circular-letter theory” [269]). Fourth, the irenic tone with which Moo writes is refreshing, humble, and encouraging. It is refreshing because the rigid tone some scholars take (all too often) inhibits the fruitful exchange of ideas in coming to valid conclusions. It is humble because Moo’s noteworthy stature among NT theologians, demonstrated by his many published works, could incline him toward all manner of verbal bullying. And it is encouraging because anyone who may disagree with some of Moo’s conclusions does not receive an indictment of condemnation but rather an invitation to further defense and development of differing ideas. Fifth, the reader will be hard-pressed to find a better treatment of the New Perspective on Paul (430–48), the function of the law for new covenant believers (424–30, 614–22), the meaning of justification (469–91), the relation of the indicative and imperative in sanctification (497–506, 606–14, 623–25), the roles of men and women in the church and home (139–42, 151–52, 325–28, 601–2, 633–35), and the events surrounding the second coming of Christ (Moo defends the historic premillennial position, 532–67).

There are few weaknesses in this book, but here are three: (1) In at least two places, Moo gives options to a question but provides no statement regarding his position (with regard to baptism for the dead in 1 Corinthians 15:29 [155–56] and the meaning of “world” in 2 Corinthians 5:19 [177]). (2) While Moo does “slightly prefer” a complementarian interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:11–15 (602), he states that he currently does not endorse every point he made about this text in articles from 1980 and 1981 (325, n. 35 and 602, n. 125). Since he thought it important enough to state his change of mind (twice!), it is reasonable that he tell his readers what the differences are. (3) Moo’s discussion of the land promises given to Abraham that still remain unfulfilled for national Israel (562–65) does not give adequate treatment to dispensational arguments contrary to his opinion (e.g., “The land promise no longer involves a particular territory for Israel” [565]). In saying this I realize my desire for stronger arguments when an author takes a position contrary to my own; nonetheless, the Bible’s promises about national Israel living in the land are clear and difficult to dismiss as easily as Moo has.

To borrow a phrase from Proverbs 31:29, many Pauline theologies have been written, but “you surpass them all.” *A Theology of Paul and His Letters* deserves pride of place among all previous Pauline theologies. Prior to this book I would first consult the theologies by Schreiner, Wright, Ridderbos, and Dunn, and I will continue to do so. However, Moo’s tome will now be first in line, and I cannot recommend it strongly enough to anyone who wants to study and know Paul’s theology.

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What Is Saving Faith? Reflections on Receiving Christ as a Treasure, by John Piper. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2022. 304 pp. \$23.99.

John Piper, famously committed to the priority of the gospel, says, “There are a thousand needs in the world, and none of them compares to the global need for the gospel.” People who realize their own desperate need feel like responding. That felt and real need is the focus of Piper’s newest book. The author is founder and lead teacher of desiringGod.org. He is also former pastor for teaching at Bethlehem Baptist Church and current chancellor of Bethlehem College and Seminary. Piper has written more than fifty other books.

In the book’s first chapter, “The Roots of My Concern,” the author addresses the affective aspect of faith in its historical and theological depth. The second chapter, “Seeing Reality through Six Hundred Lenses,” reflects on the many and diverse ways of looking at our faith including our feelings. As a corrective, the author prescribes nine clarifications. In chapters three and four, “Receiving Christ as Our Supreme Treasure” and “Christ the Believer’s Treasure and Satisfaction,” Piper summons believers to examine their faith for its emotional veracity. In a nutshell, faith feels. The final chapter, “Calling for Faith When Faith is Affectional,” explores Piper’s convictions about the essential nature of feeling our faith as a response to God. From cover to cover, John Piper echoes the dictum for which he is best known: “God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him.”

In our soul care, we often hear people say, “Sometimes I just don’t feel like I’m saved.” These words echo in our mind’s ear along with what we say in response. We may not feel like we handled it well. What is saving faith? Many ask this question, but not all are looking for the same kind of answer. Piper queries, “Does the very nature of saving faith include a treasuring of Christ as supremely valuable—that is, an affectional dimension that may hold the key to why saving faith necessarily severs the root of sin and bears the fruit of glad obedience?” (32). In short, he asks, “Is faith really an experience?” Or is it, as some argue, an act of the will? “Not about affections but about volitions” (12).

What are affections? “Does saving faith include any element of love