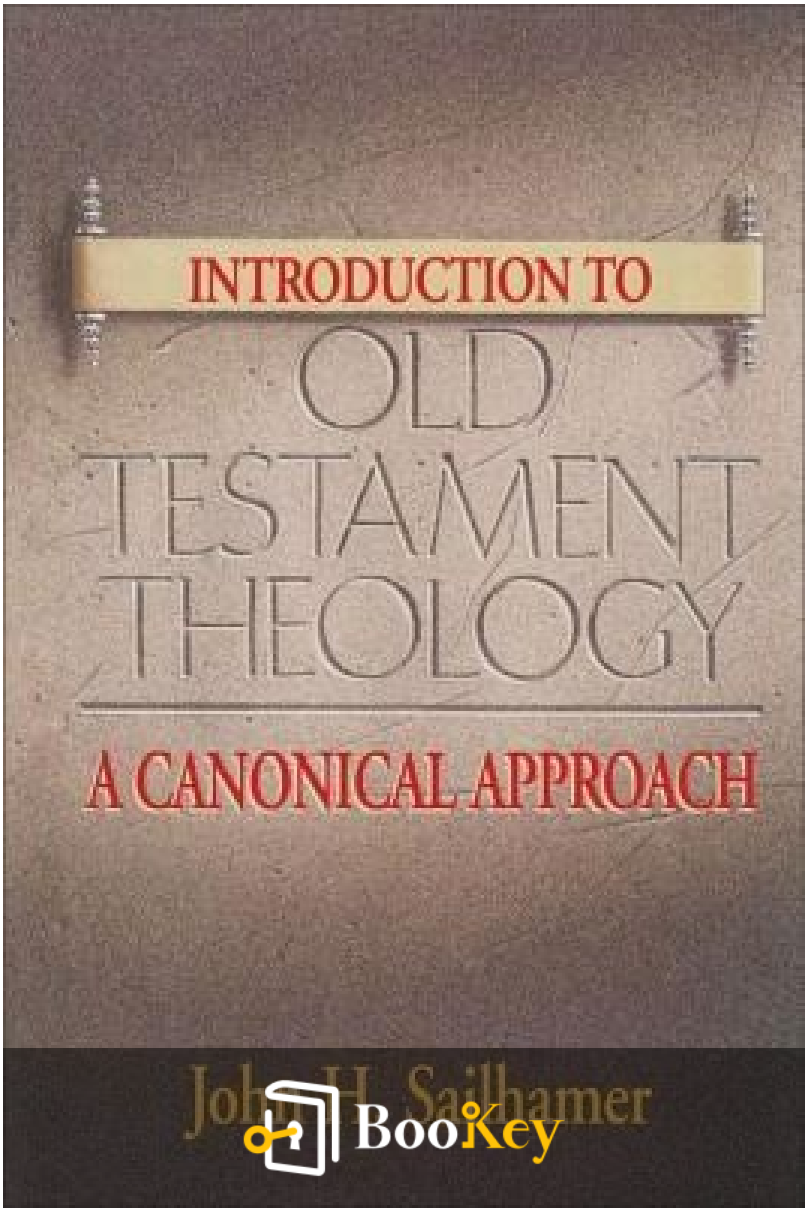
Introduction To Old Testament Theology PDF

John H. Sailhamer



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Introduction To Old Testament Theology

Bridging Diverse Approaches through Canonical Theology.

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About the book

In *Introduction to Old Testament Theology*, John H. Sailhamer presents a cohesive framework for understanding the Old Testament by integrating various interpretive approaches into a unified theological perspective. He introduces his innovative concept of canonical theology, offering readers a fresh lens through which to engage with the complexities and richness of Old Testament texts. Through this exploration, Sailhamer invites readers to appreciate the interconnectedness of biblical revelations and their implications for both faith and understanding.

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About the author

Dr. John H. Sailhamer is an esteemed scholar in the field of Old Testament theology, with a teaching career that began in 1975 and includes his recent position at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary. He served as President of The Evangelical Theological Society in 2000 and is the author of several influential books, such as *An Introduction to Old Testament Theology*, *The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical-Theological Commentary*, and *Genesis: The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, all published by Zondervan. In addition to his books, Dr. Sailhamer has contributed numerous articles and book reviews to various biblical journals, presented scholarly papers, and actively participated in Old Testament translation committees.

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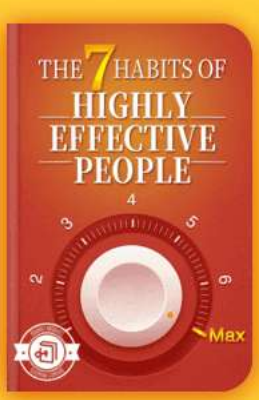
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Chapter 1 Summary : ONE INTRODUCTION



ONE INTRODUCTION

1.1. WHAT IS OLD TESTAMENT THEOLOGY?

Old Testament (OT) theology is the study of theology with the Old Testament as its primary focus. There is diverse understanding regarding its nature, particularly regarding how theology is linked to divine revelation and religion. The distinction between these concepts is crucial for understanding OT theology.

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1.1.1. Theology and Revelation

Theology, linked to divine revelation, is seen as the study of what God has disclosed about Himself or the world. Classical definitions, like that of David Hollaz, refer to theology as "God-given." It aims to accurately restate God’s self-revelation and to claim normative status for its teachings, raising questions about the relationship between Old and New Testament theologies.

1.1.2. Theology and Religion

An alternative view posits theology as the study of human religious beliefs rather than divine revelation. This perspective leads to theology being seen as merely reflecting human responses to God's actions, lacking the normative authority of divine revelation. Consequently, OT theology would recount what biblical authors believed without claiming "Thus says the Lord."

1.1.3. Summary

Understanding the nature of theology is essential, particularly concerning its authority and whether it can rightly claim to

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be normative. This understanding influences the approach to OT theology.

1.1.4. Should Theology Claim to Be Normative?

A central question is whether OT theology is binding and reflective of what God has revealed. The author asserts that the Bible is the Word of God, and thus theology's task is to articulate God's Word to the church, serving as a normative standard despite human limitations.

1.2. DEFINITION OF OLD TESTAMENT THEOLOGY

Old Testament theology is defined as the study and presentation of what is revealed in the Old Testament, implying various considerations.

1.2.1. The Study of the Old Testament

OT theology incorporates the study of the Old Testament and involves theological reflection in several key areas: hermeneutics, translation, exegesis, and introductions. Each stage of biblical study requires theological discernment,

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impacting the development of OT theology.

1.2.2. The Presentation

Presenting OT theology can take several forms, including systematic, historical, central theme-focused, or a non-structured approach that simply recounts the biblical text. The challenge lies in ensuring clarity and coherence when conveying its message.

1.2.3. Divine Revelation

OT theology is concerned with God's will as revealed in the Old Testament, aiming for a normative presentation of God's Word without limiting its relevance to the past.

1.2.4. The Old Testament

The term "Old Testament" presupposes its relationship to the New Testament, suggesting a shared foundation and a unique identity. It emphasizes the distinct covenantal relationship between God and humanity, positioning OT theology against ancient Near Eastern religions through both assimilation and polemic.

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1.2.5. Summary

OT theology encompasses various dimensions and tasks, forming a crucial component for understanding and adhering to the Old Testament's authority. It necessitates a thorough study to appreciate its identity and significance in the broader context of biblical theology.

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Example

Key Point:Understanding the relationship between theology and divine revelation is paramount in Old Testament theology.

Example:Imagine you're diving deep into the Old Testament, uncovering the richness of God's messages. Each story, each law, reveals not just ancient customs but God's ongoing revelation of Himself. This process isn't just academic; it shapes your understanding of who God is and your relationship with Him. As you ponder the psalms or the prophets, you see a tapestry of divine voice and human response, igniting a realization that these scriptures are not mere historical texts, but vital truths meant to guide your faith today, affirming that theology ought to reflect divine revelation and hold normative authority.

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Chapter 2 Summary : TWO METHODOLOGY



Section	Description
METHODOLOGY	Overview of Old Testament (OT) theology methodology.
2.1. Methodology Overview	Focus on clarifying the approach to OT theology to avoid conflicts in understanding.
2.1.1. Analytical Procedure	Discusses various methodologies, categorized by Gerhard Hasel, and utilizes feature analysis to simplify understanding.
2.1.2. Options in Feature Analysis	Outlines binary oppositions in OT theology methodologies, including:
Text vs. Event	Focus on Scripture vs. historical events.
Critical vs. Canon	Critical understanding vs. consideration of canonical text.
Descriptive vs. Confessional	Treating OT like any book vs. special hermeneutic for interpretation.
Diachronic vs. Synchronic	Viewing OT through its parts over time vs. as a cohesive whole.
Underlying Assumptions	Scriptures are the inspired Word of God, acknowledging previous theological efforts and relevance of scholarship.
Historical Context	Notes the evolution of OT theology and seeks to reconcile traditional and modern perspectives amidst historical-critical methods.

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METHODOLOGY

2.1. Methodology Overview

Chapter 2 focuses on the methodology of Old Testament (OT) theology, building on the previous chapter's exploration of its nature. The chapter aims to clarify how to approach OT theology consistently, helping readers avoid conflicts in their understanding.

2.1.1. Analytical Procedure

Various methodologies exist for OT theology, categorized into at least ten distinct groups by Gerhard Hasel. As individuals develop their own approaches, they often combine aspects from different methodologies. A feature analysis, borrowed from linguistics, simplifies understanding by breaking down these complex approaches into smaller components. This analysis identifies how different approaches to theology share or diverge in their inherent assumptions.

2.1.2. Options in Feature Analysis

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The chapter outlines several binary oppositions or choices in OT theology methodologies, emphasizing that these options lead to unique configurations of beliefs. These include:

-

Text vs. Event:

Focus on the text of Scripture vs. historical events.

-

Critical vs. Canon:

A critical understanding of the OT vs. consideration of the canonical text.

-

Descriptive vs. Confessional:

Treating the OT like any book vs. using a special hermeneutic for interpretation.

-

Diachronic vs. Synchronic:

Viewing the OT through its parts over time vs. as a cohesive whole.

Feature analysis serves as a tool to map these components, demonstrating that different combinations can create valid methodologies in OT theology.

Underlying Assumptions

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The author emphasizes that their approach rests on the belief that the Scriptures are the inspired Word of God, acknowledging previous theological efforts and the ongoing relevance of earlier scholarship. The work aims to articulate the various aspects of OT theology to guide readers in developing their own methodologies while remaining open to contributions from both modern and historical perspectives.

Historical Context

The chapter briefly touches on the evolution of OT theology, noting that it has only been a recent focus of specialized study. Earlier reflections on typology and interpretation hold value today and align with the author's view of the inspiration of Scripture, even amid the rise of historical-critical methods that have often disregarded this belief. The author seeks to reconcile these traditions of thought within the framework of modern OT theology.

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Example

Key Point:The importance of understanding differing methodologies in Old Testament theology.

Example:Imagine you are studying the Old Testament for a group Bible study. You realize that understanding different methodologies can help illuminate various interpretations, allowing you to engage in richer discussions with your peers. By analyzing whether to focus on the text of Scripture or the historical events behind it, you'll recognize how these choices shape your comprehension and application of the teachings. This awareness of diverse approaches enables you to appreciate the deeper layers of meaning within the Scripture, fostering a more profound connection to its teachings.

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Chapter 3 Summary : THREE TEXT OR EVENT

Summary of Chapter 3: Text or Event in Old Testament Theology

1. Introduction to Text vs. Event

The chapter explores a central methodological question in Old Testament (OT) theology: whether the focus should be on the text of the OT itself or on the historical events it records as witnesses to God's self-revelation. This question is termed "Text or Event" and is crucial for understanding the nature of divine revelation as presented in the Scriptures.

2. Perspectives on Understanding the OT

- Different scholars have previously categorized biblical interpretation methods based on their focus:
  - Pre-critical: Emphasizes the text itself.
  - Empirical: Concentrates on the historical events described.

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- Idealistic: Focuses on the theological ideas represented in the text.
- The chapter aligns the pre-critical view with modern evangelicalism, which recognizes the OT narratives as historical events that frame the history of both the NT and contemporary faith.

3. Evangelical Views and Confusion

Though evangelical scholars aim for a text-centered approach, many conflates the text's meaning with the actual historical events behind it, rendering a lack of clarity about where divine revelation lies.

4. The Nature of Biblical Texts

- Texts are written entities composed of words that convey meaning and are structured according to linguistic rules.

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Chapter 4 Summary : FOUR CRITICISM OR CANON

4. Criticism or Canon

2.3. Criticism or Canon (+/- Criticism)

Modern biblical scholarship offers multiple perspectives on Scripture, allowing for readings based on tradition or the developmental stages of the texts. This section introduces the concepts of Criticism versus Canon, pondering if Old Testament (OT) theology should rely on the current canonical text or reconstruct earlier versions through various critical methodologies.

2.3.1. Criticism or Canon and the Text (+ Text)

Exploring OT theology through a text-focused lens raises distinct approaches: literature criticism (Approach A) versus a canonical focus (Approach B). Literature criticism involves critical methods that examine the text beyond its final shape,

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resulting in a focus on hypothetical earlier forms.

2.3.1.1. A Critical Approach to the Text (Approach A)

Terminology and Focus: The term "literature-criticism" encompasses various critical methods, including literary criticism, source criticism, form criticism, and tradition criticism, all emphasizing aspects of the text without accepting its final form.

2.3.1.1.1. Literary Criticism

This method seeks unity or disunity within a text to determine its original form, often isolating earlier segments—especially prevalent in the Pentateuch and prophetic literature.

2.3.1.1.2. Source Criticism

Building on literary criticism, this method identifies and reconstructs literary sources behind current texts, often resulting in analyses of Israel’s religion more than direct theological insights.

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2.3.1.1.3. Form Criticism

Focusing on archetypical literary patterns, this approach seeks to reconstruct social institutions and cultural practices reflected in the texts while examining how these forms contribute to biblical theology.

2.3.1.1.4. Tradition Criticism

This method studies earlier oral/written traditions related to God’s acts in history, emphasizing the transformative nature of these traditions over time rather than focusing solely on the current text.

2.3.1.1.5. Phenomenology

This term describes approaches that distance the biblical text from its original meaning, emphasizing its influence on later readers within faith communities, potentially merging historical interpretations with those of successive audiences.

2.3.1.1.6. Summary

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Various literature-critical methods contribute to OT theology from reconstructed texts, differentiating them from direct interpretations of the canonical text.

2.3.1.2. A Canonical Approach to the Text (Approach B)

This perspective prioritizes the final shape of the text, with methods such as canon criticism, composition criticism, redaction criticism, and text linguistics.

2.3.1.2.1. Canon Criticism

Focusing on the text's meaning within the OT canon, this approach emphasizes understanding the canonical writings as they are received.

2.3.1.2.2. Composition Criticism

This method analyzes how biblical authors structured their writings, aiming to discern the overall theological narrative presented within the larger literary context.

2.3.1.2.3. Redaction Criticism

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Distinct from composition criticism, this approach examines the edits and revisions in a text, exploring how the final form reflects its historical context.

2.3.1.2.4. Text Linguistics

This method studies the linguistic features that shape the meaning of biblical texts, focusing on the texts as a whole rather than just their individual elements.

2.3.2. Criticism or Canon and the Event (- Text)

An event-focused OT theology questions whether it should be based on reconstructed historical events through criticism or the events as they are recounted in Scripture.

2.3.2.1. A Critical Approach to the Event (Approach C)

Historians vary in their treatment of the historical information within the OT, with some emphasizing reconstruction of events over textual accuracy.

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2.3.2.1.1. A Radically Critical Approach: Franz Hesse

Hesse advocates for a critical reconstruction of OT history, questioning the historical value of the narratives in favor of empirically verifiable historical events.

2.3.2.1.2. Two Moderately Critical Approaches: Walther Eichrodt and Eduard König

Both theologians emphasize understanding OT religion based on historical events, with Eichrodt focusing on the broader witness of Israel's faith and König asserting that biblical narratives retain historical authenticity, especially during formative events.

2.3.2.2. A Canonical Approach to the Event

Approaches under this category maintain that OT theology should accept historical events as presented in the canonical text.

2.3.2.2.1. Gerhard Maier

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Maier calls for a biblical-historical approach that remains true to the historical narratives within Scripture, treating them as foundational for understanding Israel's history.

2.3.2.2.2. Gustav Friedrich Oehler

Oehler's theology focuses on the religion depicted in the OT, asserting biblical narratives as the authoritative source for understanding historical events.

2.3.2.2.3. Wilhelm Möller

Möller holds that OT narratives provide an accurate picture of historical developments, grounding them in divine revelation.

2.3.2.2.4. Geerhardus Vos

Vos argues that biblical theology should track the development of special revelation through history, equating the narratives with the real events they describe.

2.3.3. Criticism or Canon and the Event (- Text)

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This section examines how various theologians differentiate their understandings of historical events as depicted versus reconstructed events in OT theology.

2.3.4. Summary: Criticism or Canon (+/- Criticism)

Two perspectives emerge: one viewing canonical narratives as accurate historical depictions and another employing critical methods to reconstruct earlier accounts. The decision to prioritize one over the other shapes the understanding of divine revelation in OT theology.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point:The debate between criticism and canon in Old Testament theology raises significant implications for interpretation.

Critical Interpretation:This chapter explores the tension between viewing the biblical text as a definitive canon or as a subject of critical methodology aimed at reconstructing its historical and literary development. Sailhamer suggests an ongoing dialogue in biblical scholarship about whether to anchor theological insights in the established canon or to engage in critical reconstruction. Readers should question this dichotomy, considering that prioritizing one approach may limit the understanding of complex theological narratives and undermine the role of tradition and community in shaping scriptural meaning. Alternative perspectives from sources such as 'The Cambridge Companion to Biblical Interpretation' may provide a broader context for this discussion, suggesting that the integration of critical and canonical approaches could yield richer theological insights.

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Chapter 5 Summary : FIVE DESCRIPTIVE OR CONFESSIONAL

Summary of Chapter 5: Introduction to Old Testament Theology

Descriptive or Confessional Approach in Old Testament Theology

- The discussion delves into the interplay between faith and the study of Old Testament (OT) theology.
- Questions arise regarding the nature of the OT: Is it simply another ancient text, or does it require a unique interpretative lens due to it being considered God's Word?
- Perspectives on interpretation range from purely historical methods to confessional approaches that incorporate personal faith.

Historical Context vs. Theological Method

- Historical methods often view the OT as a historical

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document, necessitating an objective and scientific approach.
- This perspective has defined biblical theology for the last two centuries, ignoring the divine element in Scripture.
- The chapter critiques the prevalent view by examining the roots of biblical theology preceding the 18th century, emphasizing the need for a broader understanding that includes both historical and theological insights.

Historical vs. Confessional Methods

- Historically descriptive approaches claim to identify the OT message purely based on context for its original audience without philosophical or theological preconceptions.
- Confessional approaches assert that reading the OT necessitates faith in its message and potentially involves interpreting it through the New Testament.

Historical Approaches Development

- Early biblical scholarship focused on echoing ecclesiastical traditions, but later shifts in thought (e.g., Pietism, Rationalism) introduced critical frameworks that led to the historical method.
- Johann Philipp Gabler's 1787 lecture laid the groundwork

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for OT theology as a descriptive discipline focused on what the texts signified to original readers.

Challenges of Descriptive Approaches

- The descriptive method faced criticism for potential biases and the assumption of objectivity, which may not account for the interpretive nature of religious texts.
- Issues regarding the historical context of interpretation and the evolution of religious ideas over time complicate attempts to maintain pure objectivity.

Confessional Approaches and their Implications

- Confessional readings emphasize the divine authority of the Scriptures and generally view them through the lens of Christian faith.
- Notable figures, such as Eichrodt and Vriezen, argued for the necessity of faith in understanding the OT, suggesting that addressing its truths involves recognizing a foundational commitment to the biblical message.

Conclusion

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- The chapter concludes by asserting that while both historical and confessional methods have merits, the transformative connotations of faith cannot be disregarded.
- Effective OT theology should balance historical inquiry with a confessional commitment, aiming to uncover both the ancient meanings and their relevance to contemporary faith.

Visual Representation

- The text also includes a tree diagram outlining the different methodologies and their relationships, suggesting a complex interdependence between descriptive and confessional approaches in OT theology.

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Chapter 6 Summary : SIX DIACHRONIC OR SYNCHRONIC

DIACHRONIC OR SYNCHRONIC APPROACHES TO OLD TESTAMENT THEOLOGY

Introduction to the Structural Question

The chapter explores the structural presentation of Old Testament (OT) theology, debating whether the focus should be on understanding the OT as a whole (synchronic) or its individual parts (diachronic). The author emphasizes the distinction between interpreting texts (hermeneutics) and events (history), which influences the approach taken.

Diachronic Presentation of Old Testament Theology

Diachronic refers to the unfolding of the central theological message through time. It can manifest in three forms:
1.

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Temporal Diachronic Presentation

This approach traces the historical development of OT theology, following the chronological sequence of divine revelation. Examples include conservative theologians like Geerhardus Vos, who structured their work around historical periods of revelation, and critical historical approaches like that of Hölscher.

2.

Logical Diachronic Presentation

A logical diachronic approach organizes OT theology based on underlying logical relationships rather than strictly historical sequences. This is exemplified by covenant theology, where the focus is on the logical connections between different covenants, rather than their chronological order.

3.

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Chapter 7 Summary : SEVEN A PROPOSAL FOR A CANONICAL THEOLOGY

Summary of Chapter 7: A Proposal for a Canonical Theology

3.1. A Proposal for a Canonical Theology

This chapter introduces a proposal for understanding Old Testament (OT) theology, aiming to illustrate its multifaceted nature rather than endorse a singular approach. It emphasizes that theology is the scientific explication of God's revelation, as articulated in Scripture, asserting that the Bible is not only a historical record but a contemporary word of God. The chapter defines Old Testament theology as the study and expression of God's revelation within the OT, promoting a canonical theology that respects the authorship and context provided within the biblical text itself.

3.2. Components of an Old Testament Theology

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A text-centered approach focuses on the meaning of Scripture itself rather than the historical events behind it. The chapter delineates the following core components and methodologies relevant to constructing a theology of the OT:

3.2.1. A Text-Centered Approach

This approach prioritizes the biblical text to reveal divine action and meaning, distinguishing between God's saving acts and their scriptural narration. It argues for a clear boundary between interpreting texts and historical events, asserting that meaningful understanding arises from engaging with the text directly.

3.2.1.1. Textuality, Text Theory, and Text Linguistics

The chapter underscores the importance of textuality—understanding how texts function to convey meaning—calling for robust investigation into the biblical text and the communicative situations that surround it.

3.2.1.2. Hermeneutics

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Traditional hermeneutical methods necessary for interpreting biblical texts include linguistic skills and an awareness of literary context, stressing that interpreters must recognize authorial intent grounded in the Scriptures.

3.2.1.3. Language and Translation

Acknowledging that biblical Hebrew is a dead language complicates translation and interpretation, the chapter emphasizes the necessity of thorough knowledge of biblical languages to uncover authentic meaning.

3.2.1.4. Compositional Strategies

This section proposes analyzing literary strategies within biblical texts, identifying ways authors structured their works for theological expression.

3.2.1.5. In-Textuality and Inner-Textuality

In-textual analysis examines how smaller literary units interact and support wider themes, while inner-textuality explores links across the text to create coherence and theological significance.

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3.2.1.6. Inter-Textuality

This concept addresses how biblical texts reference and build upon each other, emphasizing the interconnectedness of Scriptural narratives.

3.2.1.7. Con-Textuality

Con-textuality addresses the impact of a text's position within the canon on its meaning, suggesting that the arrangement of biblical books offers additional interpretative lens.

3.2.1.8. Old Testament Introduction

Engaging with introductory studies relating to authorship, dating, and context enriches the understanding of Scripture and supports its theological implications.

3.2.1.9. Diachronic and Synchronic Approaches

While the chapter advocates a diachronic methodology to appreciate historical dynamics in text formation, it also recognizes that synchronic studies can yield valuable

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insights.

3.2.2. A Canonical Approach

The chapter argues for a canonical theology that values the Scripture's authority, positioning all theological exploration within the established framework of the canon.

3.2.3. A Confessional Approach

Emphasizing that the OT is the Word of God, the chapter advocates for a hermeneutic that respects divine authority and interprets Scripture through the lens of faith and community context.
Each of these components is crucial for forming a cohesive Old Testament theology that respects the text's authority while acknowledging its historical and interpretative background. The ultimate goal is to construct a theology that reflects God's ongoing revelation through the Scriptures.

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Chapter 1 | Quotes From Pages 15-46

1. Catch only what you've thrown yourself, all is mere skill and little gain; but when you're suddenly the catcher of a ball thrown by an eternal partner…catching then becomes a power—not yours, a world's.
2. The task of theology is to state God's Word to the church in a clear and precise manner.
3. If God has spoken in the text of Scripture, then there is no reason to limit that Word to the past.
4. The Old Testament not only stands on its own, but the New Testament stands on its shoulders.

Chapter 2 | Quotes From Pages 49-60

1. Whether consciously or not, anyone who attempts to understand the OT follows a method or plan of

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approach.

2. The goal of this chapter is to provide a set of categories or tools for evaluating approaches to OT theology.
3. The value of a componential analysis approach to developing an OT theology is that it enables us to isolate the various components that go into an OT theology and treat them as individual, interchangeable elements of a complete methodology.
4. Since such is the case with the present work, we wish here to turn briefly to one of its central underlying assumptions. As will be clear in the present work, the determining factor in our approach to OT theology and that assumption which determines its choice of method is the belief that the Scriptures are the inspired Word of God.
5. Not every approach, however, will be equally valid to all concerned.

Chapter 3 | Quotes From Pages 61-164

1. Does an OT theology focus its attention on the scriptural text of the OT itself, or is the text

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primarily a witness to the act of God’s self-revelation in the events recorded by Scripture?

2. Biblical theology is the confessional recital of the redemptive acts of God in a particular history, because history is the chief medium of revelation.
3. One is thus led to focus on a holy history (Heilsgeschichte) behind the text in place of a holy history within Scripture itself.
4. The history of biblical interpretation can be understood by classifying scholars into at least three groups: those who have focused on the text of Scripture as the locus of meaning in biblical narrative (pre-critical); those who focus on external historical events as the locus of meaning (empirical); and those who focus on the 'ideas' embodied by and referenced in the biblical text (idealistic).
5. A text-oriented approach to OT theology would insist that the locus of God’s special revelation is in the Scriptures themselves, that is, in the text.

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6. The task of biblical theology is to allow the fixed reality of the narrative world to shape and inform our understanding of the real world, not the other way around.

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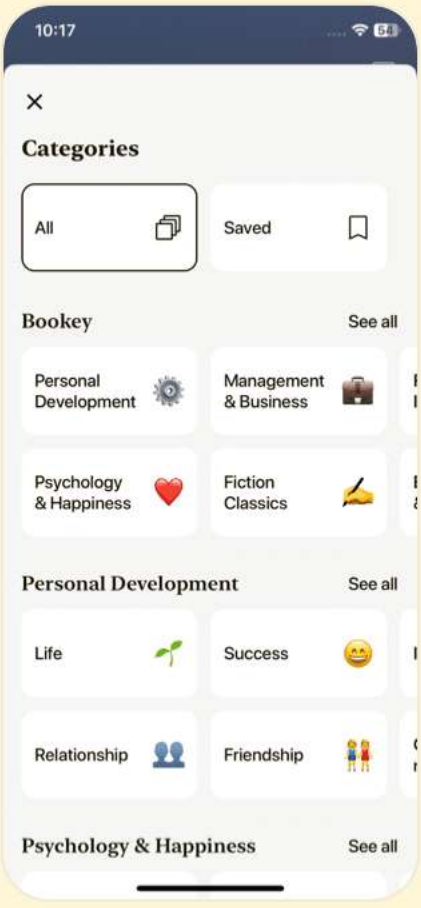
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Chapter 4 | Quotes From Pages 165-201

1. The present question of Criticism or Canon must be discussed in terms of both a focus on the text of Scripture and a focus on the event...
2. ....the use of critical hypotheses, exegesis puts itself at risk. Exegesis and theology are made to rest on literary hypotheses. Hypotheses, however, cannot provide a safe harbor for faith.
3. The theological motivation or strategy of the work is twofold. The Pentateuch first intends to demonstrate the failure of the Sinai covenant and to engender a hope in the coming of a New Covenant.
4. The focus of OT theology is not the events or experiences behind the text, but the canonical text itself.
5. ....the living word of Jahweh coming on and on to Israel for ever.
6. Whatever actually happened to Israel before the time of Christ, it was just that series of historical events that led to and prepared for his coming.

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Chapter 5 | Quotes From Pages 202-356

1. Our understanding of how historical documents are to be interpreted will also play a determining role in how we respond.
2. It is, of course, not true that those who approach the OT scientifically as a historical document necessarily deny that it is God's Word or that we cannot also use it in constructing a normative theology.
3. There are others who insist that the OT is not like other human sources of knowledge.
4. Anselm's dictum: fides quaerens intellectum (faith seeking understanding) is, in our view, the ultimate grounds for a biblical theology.
5. This means that the historical (descriptive) and the theological (confessional) approaches in strict opposition.
6. In biblical revelation, human beings stand before the Word of God; but also, in Scripture, the Word of God stands before us in a human form.
7. The problem at stake is not one of ultimate goals but of

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method.

8. Underlining the diversity of responses, however, is the question of method: Should an OT theology rest on a purely historical basis or is there a need for a special theological method that involves our own personal faith?

9. The issue at stake is not one of ultimate goals but of method.

10. To limit the use of the OT by a strictly historical, scientific method would be to overlook this important feature.

Chapter 6 | Quotes From Pages 357-379

1. The question to which we now turn is a structural one. Specifically, What kind of structure should an OT theology have?

2. The most common diachronic approach to OT theology is that which attempts to trace the historical development, or progression, of the message of the OT.

3. In a logically diachronic approach to OT theology, the important point is that underlying the temporal sequence of

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divine revelation there is often the recognition of a more basic logical one.

4. Not everything in the OT is a natural outgrowth of the earliest, most basic ideas. New material and themes are added to the OT in the course of time.
5. The purpose of structure is to enhance our understanding of the material, not to distort that material.

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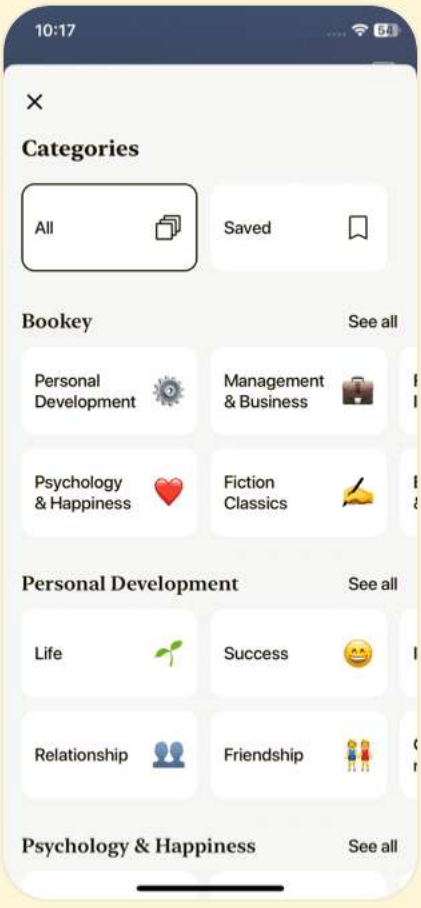
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Chapter 7 | Quotes From Pages 382-502

1. Theology, being to some extent a science, is an attempt to formulate God's revelation into themes and propositions.
2. Thus the task of theology is the restatement of God's self-revelation.
3. If God has spoken in his Word, the Bible, then the task of theology is made considerably more clear.
4. Old Testament theology is the study and presentation of what is revealed in the Old Testament.
5. Since the Bible, as such, is God's Word, the question of its truthfulness is directly linked to the question of its historical accuracy.
6. The question often arises at this point about the meaning of words. Don't we need a knowledge of historical background to understand the meaning of the words of the Bible?
7. The empirical narrative texts of past events are presented as pointers to foreshadow events that lie yet in the future.

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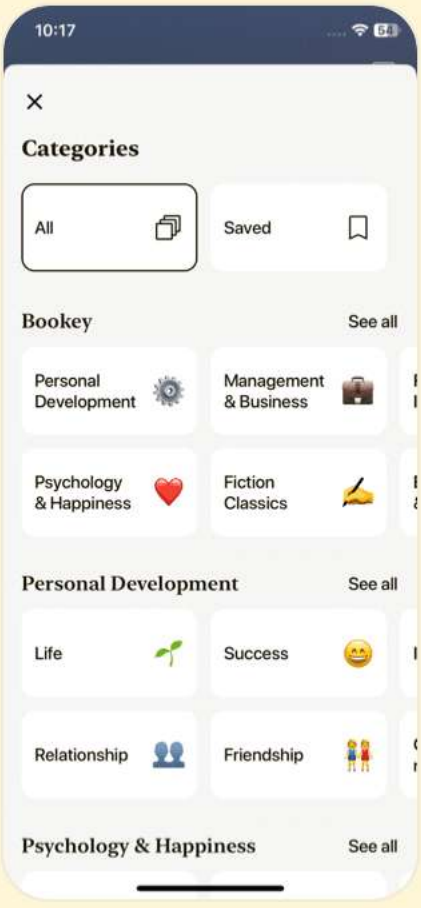
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Introduction To Old Testament Theology Questions

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Chapter 1 | ONE INTRODUCTION| Q&A

1.Question

What is the primary focus of Old Testament theology as defined by Sailhamer?

Answer:Old Testament theology is defined as the study and presentation of what is revealed in the Old Testament, centering on divine revelation rather than merely human religious expressions.

2.Question

How do the concepts of revelation and religion differ in understanding Old Testament theology?

Answer:Revelation refers to the act of God disclosing Himself, thereby giving theology a divine origin; in contrast, religion signifies humanity's responses and beliefs about God, reducing theology to merely human interpretations.

3.Question

Why is the question of normativity significant in Old

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Testament theology?

Answer:Normativity raises profound questions about whether Old Testament theology can claim to speak with divine authority and guide Christian faith and practice today, especially in light of its relationship with New Testament theology.

4.Question

What implications does the designation 'Old Testament' carry in the context of Christian theology?

Answer:The term 'Old Testament' implies a relationship to the 'New Testament', acknowledging that while the Old Testament is foundational, it can only be fully understood in relation to the New Testament, fostering continuity and dialogue between the two.

5.Question

How does Sailhamer propose that Old Testament theology engage with its cultural context of the ancient Near East?

Answer:Sailhamer suggests that Old Testament theology should explore both the assimilation of cultural elements

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from the ancient Near East and the polemical stance the biblical writers took against surrounding religious ideas, highlighting the unique monotheism and moral values of the Old Testament.

6.Question

In what ways does the understanding of the Old Testament as revelation shape its theological significance?

Answer:Viewing the Old Testament as revelation affirms its ongoing relevance and authority in contemporary faith, positioning it as a vital source of divine insight, rather than merely historical or religious artifacts.

7.Question

What challenges arise from labeling the Old Testament as 'Old' in relation to the New Testament?

Answer:Labeling the Old Testament as 'Old' can imply that it is obsolete or less relevant than the New Testament, leading to potential misunderstandings about its value and authority within the Christian faith.

8.Question

What foundational beliefs does Sailhamer express about

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the nature of the Bible in relation to Old Testament theology?

Answer:Sailhamer asserts that the Bible is the Word of God, implying that theology's role is to restate and clarify God's ongoing communication through scripture as it remains relevant today.

Chapter 2 | TWO METHODOLOGY| Q&A

1.Question

What is the primary goal of Chapter 2 in 'Introduction To Old Testament Theology' by John H. Sailhamer?

Answer:The primary goal of Chapter 2 is to explore methodologies for studying Old Testament (OT) theology. It focuses on how to approach the theological message of the OT consistently and transparently.

2.Question

Why is consistency in methodology important when studying OT theology according to Sailhamer?

Answer:Consistency in methodology is crucial because it

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prevents confusion and contradictory interpretations. If one is unaware of conflicting assumptions in their approach, their understanding of Scripture may become inconsistent and misleading.

3.Question

What is Gerhard Hasel's contribution to the study of OT theology as mentioned in the chapter?

Answer:Gerhard Hasel summarized various approaches taken by recent OT theologians into at least ten distinct groups, helping clarify the complex methodologies used in OT theology.

4.Question

What is feature analysis and how is it relevant to understanding OT theology?

Answer:Feature analysis is a method borrowed from linguistics used to break down and analyze the meanings of words into their component parts. In the context of OT theology, it serves to isolate and examine the distinct components that character various methodological

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approaches, making it easier to develop a coherent theology.

5.Question

Can you provide an example of how feature analysis distinguishes between related concepts?

Answer:For example, terms like 'hill,' 'mountain,' and 'peak' can be analyzed through feature analysis to reveal that they share components related to ‘geographical location’ and ‘elevation,' but differ based on the presence or absence of the ‘high’ feature, thereby helping clarify their distinct meanings.

6.Question

What are the four main options or sets of choices in approaching OT theology as outlined in the chapter?

Answer:The four main options are: 1) Text or Event (focusing on Scripture versus historical events), 2) Critical or Canon (based on historical criticism versus the canonical text), 3) Descriptive or Confessional (general reading versus a special interpretative method), and 4) Diachronic or Synchronic (analyzing parts versus viewing the whole).

7.Question

What underlies Sailhamer's approach to OT theology?

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Answer:Sailhamer’s approach is underpinned by the belief that the Scriptures are the inspired Word of God, which influences the choice of methodology and interpretation throughout the study.

8.Question

How does Chapter 2 position the development of OT theology within a historical context?

Answer:The chapter highlights that OT theology has been subject to specialized study primarily for the last two centuries and relates the evolution of this field to earlier theological reflections, particularly concerning the inspiration of Scripture.

9.Question

What is the implication of the view that Scripture is God’s revelation for the study of OT theology?

Answer:The view that Scripture is God’s revelation implies that any methodological approach to OT theology must be grounded in recognizing the divine authorship of the texts, which in turn shapes how scholars interpret and analyze the

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content.

10.Question

Why might previous theological works be valuable according to Sailhamer?

Answer:Previous theological works, despite being from a different context, are valuable because they often shared foundational beliefs about Scripture's inspiration that align with contemporary understandings, offering insights into the unique challenges faced in OT theology.

Chapter 3 | THREE TEXT OR EVENT| Q&A

1.Question

What is the primary focus of Old Testament theology according to John H. Sailhamer?

Answer:The primary focus of Old Testament theology is the text of the Old Testament itself, rather than merely seeing it as a witness to historical events.

2.Question

How did George E. Wright define the role of biblical theology?

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Answer:George E. Wright defined biblical theology as the confessional recital of the redemptive acts of God in a particular history, emphasizing that history is the chief medium of revelation.

3.Question

What are the three groups of scholars in biblical interpretation according to Hans W. Frei?

Answer:Frei categorized scholars into three groups: those focusing on the text of Scripture (pre-critical), those focusing on external historical events (empirical), and those focusing on the ideas in the biblical text (idealistic).

4.Question

Why is it crucial for modern evangelicals to view the Old Testament as inspired text?

Answer:It is crucial because acknowledging Scripture as the inspired Word of God affirms it as the focal point of divine revelation, ensuring that theological study is grounded in the biblical text rather than solely on historical outcomes.

5.Question

What does Sailhamer suggest about the nature of reading

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biblical narratives?

Answer:Sailhamer suggests that readers often perceive themselves as spectators of God's acts in historical events, which can lead to overlooking the textual medium through which those events are conveyed.

6.Question

How should the meaning of historical events in the Old Testament be understood from a text-oriented approach?

Answer:In a text-oriented approach, the meaning of historical events should be understood through the interpretation and narrative of the text, rather than independently or as mere historical facts.

7.Question

What are the consequences of favoring a text-oriented approach to Old Testament theology?

Answer:1. The meaning of Scripture and the author's intent become the focal point.

2. Revelation is accessed primarily through the interpretation in the text.

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3. The distinction between the text's inspiration and its prehistory is emphasized.

8.Question

What did Paul imply when he stated 'All scripture is inspired by God'?

Answer:Paul emphasized that the written text itself is the locus of God's revelation, highlighting the authority and divine nature of Scripture.

9.Question

Can the text of the Old Testament be equated with real historical events according to Sailhamer?

Answer:No, while the text is an accurate portrayal of events, it remains a representation and should not be conflated with the actual events themselves.

10.Question

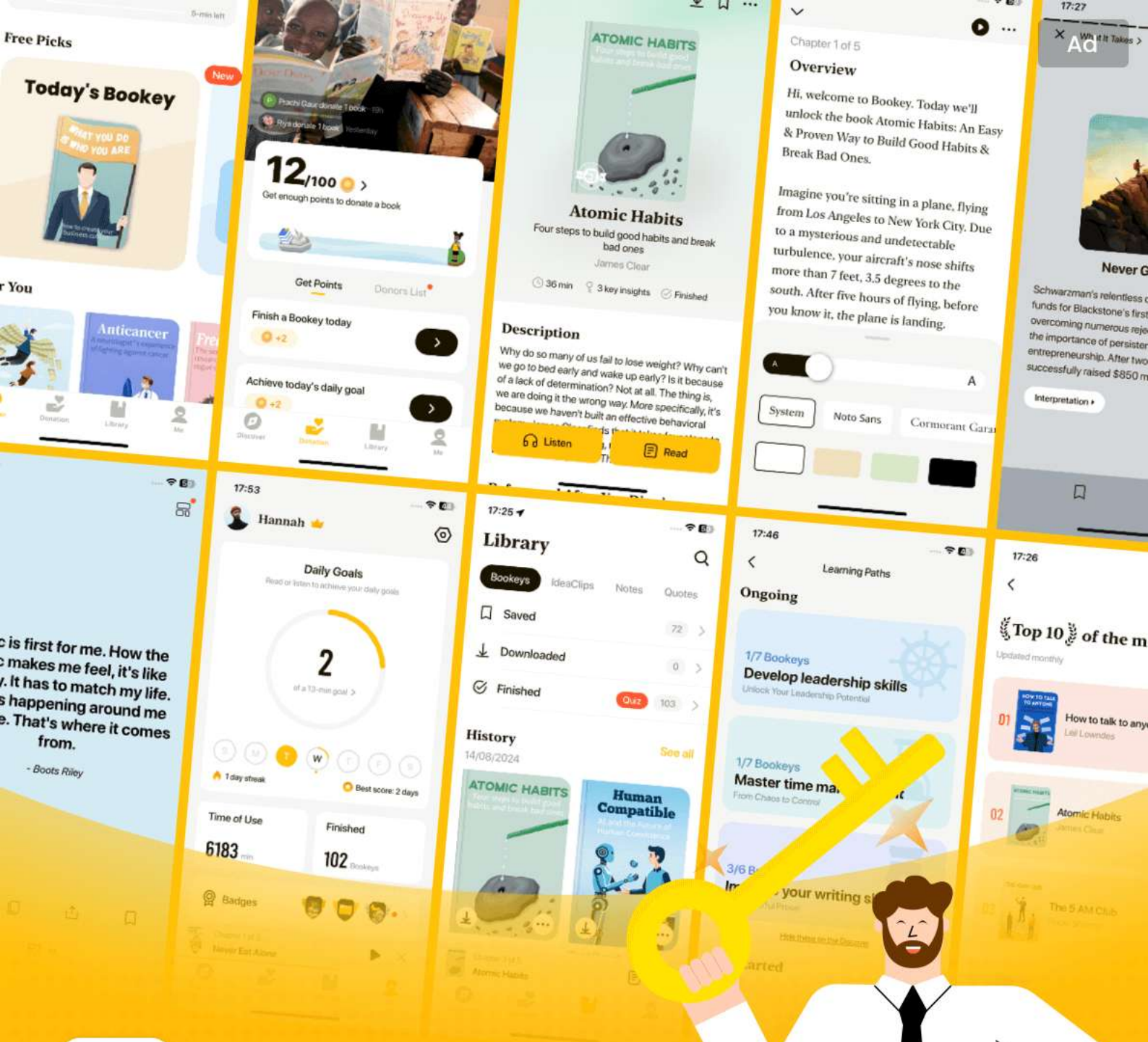
What problem arises when evangelical theologians neglect the textual nature of scripture in favor of historical events?

Answer:This neglect can lead to a biblical theology that prioritizes the events over the text, potentially resulting in

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interpretations that lack fidelity to the author’s intended meaning and scripture's divine inspiration.

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Chapter 4 | FOUR CRITICISM OR CANON| Q&A

1.Question

What is the central question regarding the approach to Old Testament theology as discussed in this chapter?

Answer:The central question is whether Old Testament theology should be constructed from the texts as they exist in their present canonical form (Criticism or Canon) or from earlier forms of these texts based on various critical methodologies.

2.Question

How does biblical criticism differ from a canonical approach to the Old Testament?

Answer:Biblical criticism aims to reconstruct earlier forms of the texts through methods like source criticism, form criticism, and literary criticism, focusing on the text's history. In contrast, a canonical approach emphasizes the significance of the final shaped text as the authoritative source for understanding theology.

3.Question

What does literature-criticism entail in the context of Old

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Testament studies?

Answer:Literature-criticism seeks to describe the literary material of the Old Testament according to its form and content, focusing on elements of the text that may not conform to its final canonical shape. It includes methods like source and form criticism.

4.Question

What is the role of tradition criticism according to the chapter?

Answer:Tradition criticism explores how oral and written traditions about Israel's experience of God evolved over time, tracing these traditions back to their origins and examining how they were transmitted and transformed by different faith communities.

5.Question

How does phenomenology approach the interpretation of Old Testament texts?

Answer:Phenomenology looks at how the meaning of biblical texts has changed over time and how later

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interpretations are influenced by the original meanings, focusing on the community's understanding rather than strictly the original text.

6.Question

Can you summarize the difference between a critical approach to historical events in the Old Testament versus a canonical approach?

Answer:A critical approach evaluates historical events as reconstructed by modern methodologies which may diverge from the biblical text, while a canonical approach accepts the biblical narratives at face value as accurate representations of those events.

7.Question

What implications does the acceptance of the canonical text have for a believer's understanding of God's revelation?

Answer:Accepting the canonical text implies that the believer views these writings as inspired and authoritative, potentially leading to a stronger faith in the narrative's historical events and God's continuous involvement in human history.

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8.Question

Why does the author emphasize the importance of differentiating between text and event in Old Testament theology?

Answer:Differentiating between text and event clarifies how theological understanding is formed, noting that some scholars inadvertently place emphasis on events rather than the text, which can lead to varying interpretations and theological implications.

9.Question

What does the author suggest about the interaction between faith and historical-critical methods?

Answer:The author suggests that while historical-critical methods can provide insights into Israel's history, they must be carefully balanced with the faith-based interpretation of Scripture, preserving the integrity of the canonical text as a source of divine revelation.

10.Question

What is the significance of Geerhard Maier's perspective on biblical theology?

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Answer:Geerhard Maier advocates for a biblical-historical approach, emphasizing that understanding biblical history must align with the narratives presented in Scripture, thus encouraging a more faithful interpretation of biblical events.

Chapter 5 | FIVE DESCRIPTIVE OR CONFESSIONAL| Q&A

1.Question

How should we approach the Bible, particularly the Old Testament, considering its divine and human aspects?

Answer:We should approach the Old Testament as both a theological document and a historical one, recognizing that it contains divine revelation while also being influenced by human experiences and contexts. This dual perspective allows us to examine its meanings and teachings through both faith and historical understanding.

2.Question

Is the Old Testament like any other book from the past?

Answer:While the Old Testament shares historical characteristics with other ancient texts, its status as God's

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Word demands a different approach that acknowledges its theological significance and divine inspiration, setting it apart from purely historical documents.

3.Question

What role does personal faith play in the interpretation of the Old Testament?

Answer:Personal faith shapes the understanding and interpretation of the Old Testament, as it involves recognizing the text as a living word that conveys God's message. Faith allows for an engagement with Scripture that transcends mere academic interest, bringing the believer into a relationship with the text.

4.Question

Can we interpret the Old Testament solely through a historical or objective lens?

Answer:No, interpreting the Old Testament solely through a purely historical or objective lens can overlook its theological richness and the faith commitment it calls forth. A balanced approach acknowledges both historical contexts

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and personal faith.

5.Question

What have been the historical approaches to Old Testament theology, and what are their strengths and weaknesses?

Answer:Historical approaches, such as the descriptive method, offer the strength of allowing the text to be understood in its original context without imposing outside frameworks. However, these approaches can also lead to a disconnect from the text's theological implications and the role of faith in understanding God's revelation.

6.Question

How can a confessional approach enhance our study of the Old Testament?

Answer:A confessional approach emphasizes the Old Testament's authority as God's Word, encouraging readers to see its relevance and significance in light of their faith, thus offering a richer and more meaningful engagement with the text.

7.Question

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What is the importance of understanding the historical backgrounds when interpreting the Old Testament?

Answer:Understanding historical backgrounds is crucial as it provides context for the writings, illuminating the cultural issues, events, and beliefs that influenced the authors, leading to a more accurate interpretation of the text.

8.Question

What challenges do confessional and descriptive approaches present to each other?

Answer:Confessional approaches may risk subjectivity, while descriptive approaches might discount the text's theological dimensions. Striking a balance between these perspectives can enrich the study of the Old Testament.

9.Question

How does the relationship between the Old Testament and New Testament affect interpretive approaches?

Answer:The relationship necessitates that interpreters consider how the New Testament reveals and fulfills Old Testament texts, prompting questions about continuity,

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interpretation, and theological significance.

Chapter 6 | SIX DIACHRONIC OR SYNCHRONIC| Q&A

1.Question

What is the main difference between diachronic and synchronic approaches in Old Testament theology?

Answer:Diachronic approaches focus on the historical development of theological ideas over time, while synchronic approaches emphasize a structured analysis of these ideas as they exist in the text simultaneously. The former traces how themes progress, while the latter organizes them under central themes or concepts.

2.Question

Why is it important to understand the methods of hermeneutics and historical interpretation in Old Testament theology?

Answer:Understanding these methods is crucial because they highlight the difference between analyzing textual meanings and understanding historical events. The approach one takes

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can significantly alter the theological conclusions drawn from the text.

3.Question

How does a diachronic view structure Old Testament theology?

Answer:A diachronic view may follow a temporal sequence, tracing the development of theological themes as they emerge throughout different historical periods of the Old Testament. This includes logical sequences related to the nature of covenants or thematic expansions, such as the growth of the promise theme over time.

4.Question

What is an example of a thematic diachronic approach to Old Testament theology?

Answer:Gerhard Hasel's approach is an example, where he proposes to trace major themes like election, promise, covenant, and wisdom through the Scriptures, establishing a structure that emphasizes their temporal context and thematic connections.

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5.Question

In what way does a synchronic presentation benefit the understanding of Old Testament theology?

Answer:A synchronic presentation allows for a comprehensive arrangement of theological material around central ideas, offering clarity and coherence without forcing all content to align with a single idea. It respects the inherent diversity of the text while helping to highlight key theological elements.

6.Question

How can the structure of Old Testament theology impact its interpretation?

Answer:The structure can determine how the themes are perceived and understood. A diachronic structure might present the unfolding of revelation, fostering an understanding of progression, while a synchronic structure could emphasize the cohesiveness and relationship of themes, potentially providing a more unified message.

7.Question

What does Kaiser’s model of 'epigenetic growth' suggest

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about the development of themes in Old Testament theology?

Answer:Kaiser’s model suggests that while certain themes like the 'promise' develop progressively from early to later texts, new themes can also emerge unexpectedly, similar to how new branches sprout from a tree, enriching the overall theological landscape of the Old Testament.

8.Question

What should determine the organizing idea(s) in a synchronic approach to Old Testament theology?

Answer:The organizing idea(s) should be derived from central themes or concepts found within Scripture, ensuring that the structure remains faithful to the text while also being coherent and systematic.

9.Question

How does the author view the interplay between diachronic and synchronic systems in Old Testament theology?

Answer:The author suggests that both systems have their merits and can be valuable depending on the context of their

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use. Both should aim to illuminate the text, and their appropriateness can vary based on the intended purpose of the theological study.

10.Question

What underlying principle should guide the evaluation of a diachronic versus a synchronic approach in Old Testament theology?

Answer:The evaluation should focus not only on how comprehensively the approach describes the Old Testament's meaning but also on how well it fits the specific context and communication needs for which it is being used.

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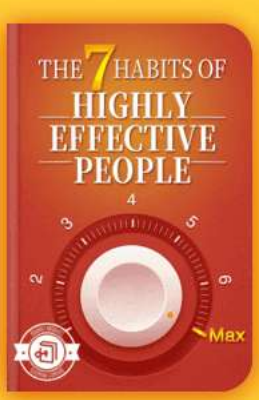
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Chapter 7 | SEVEN A PROPOSAL FOR A CANONICAL THEOLOGY| Q&A

1.Question

What is the primary purpose of Old Testament theology according to Sailhamer?

Answer:The primary purpose of Old Testament theology is to study and present what is revealed in the Old Testament, focusing on the text itself as the means through which God’s revelation is communicated to humanity. It seeks to restate God's self-revelation in a clear and precise manner.

2.Question

How does Sailhamer define 'canonical theology'?

Answer:Canonical theology is defined as an approach to Old Testament theology that focuses on the text of Scripture itself, emphasizing its nature as the authoritative Word of God, rather than merely historical events or reconstructions.

3.Question

What is the significance of a text-centered approach to Old Testament theology?

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Answer:A text-centered approach emphasizes that God's revelation is primarily accessed through the Scriptures, which means interpretation should focus on the meaning derived from the text itself, distinct from historical or idealistic frameworks. It allows for a clearer understanding of God's will as conveyed through Scripture.

4.Question

What role does hermeneutics play in understanding Old Testament texts?

Answer:Hermeneutics is essential for interpreting Old Testament texts correctly as it provides the tools and principles necessary to understand the author's intent. It involves not only linguistic skills but also knowledge of the cultural and literary context to grasp the full meaning embedded in the Scriptures.

5.Question

What does Sailhamer indicate about the relationship between Old Testament narratives and historical events?

Answer:Sailhamer indicates that while historical events are

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important, the narratives in the Old Testament serve as the primary means by which God's acts are understood today. The events gain significance only through their presentation and interpretation in the biblical texts.

6.Question

Why is understanding the authorship and composition of Old Testament texts important for theology?

Answer:Understanding authorship and composition is crucial because it respects the historical context in which the texts were written and helps in accurately interpreting their theological messages. It avoids going beyond what Scripture asserts regarding these aspects.

7.Question

How does the concept of inter-textuality enhance the understanding of Old Testament theology?

Answer:Inter-textuality enhances Old Testament theology by highlighting the connections and relationships between different biblical texts, allowing for a deeper understanding of themes, prophecies, and fulfillment within the canon as

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they build upon and refer to each other.

8.Question

What does Sailhamer say about the effectiveness of biblical narratives?

Answer:Sailhamer states that biblical narratives are designed to represent a 'world' that the reader is invited to engage with. They are not fictional but intended to be seen as the only true account of reality, meaning that readers are called to align their lives with the truths presented in these narratives.

9.Question

How does scholarship view the final stages of the biblical texts according to Sailhamer?

Answer:Scholarship has shifted to recognize the final stages of the biblical texts as significant, highlighting that they contain anticipations of themes found in the New Testament and that the understanding of these texts has theological implications for contemporary faith.

10.Question

In what ways does context influence the meaning of scripture according to Sailhamer?

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Answer:Context influences the meaning of Scripture through its canonical order (con-textuality), where the position of a book within the canon can affect its interpretation and significance, providing insights that align with the overarching narrative and theological themes of the Bible.

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Introduction To Old Testament Theology Quiz and Test

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Chapter 1 | ONE INTRODUCTION| Quiz and Test

1. Old Testament theology is primarily focused on human religious beliefs rather than divine revelation.
2. The study of Old Testament theology requires theological discernment in areas such as hermeneutics and exegesis.
3. The term "Old Testament" has no implications about its relationship with the New Testament.

Chapter 2 | TWO METHODOLOGY| Quiz and Test

1. The chapter emphasizes that there is only one valid approach to Old Testament theology.
2. Feature analysis is a tool used to understand different methodologies of Old Testament theology by breaking them down into components.
3. The author believes that the understanding of Old Testament theology should completely disregard earlier

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theological efforts.

Chapter 3 | THREE TEXT OR EVENT| Quiz and Test

1. The chapter explores whether the focus of Old Testament theology should be on the text itself rather than the historical events it records.
2. The text of the Old Testament does not reflect the author's intention or the communication process between writer and reader.
3. According to the chapter, both the historical events and the written text are essential to understanding divine revelation in Old Testament theology.

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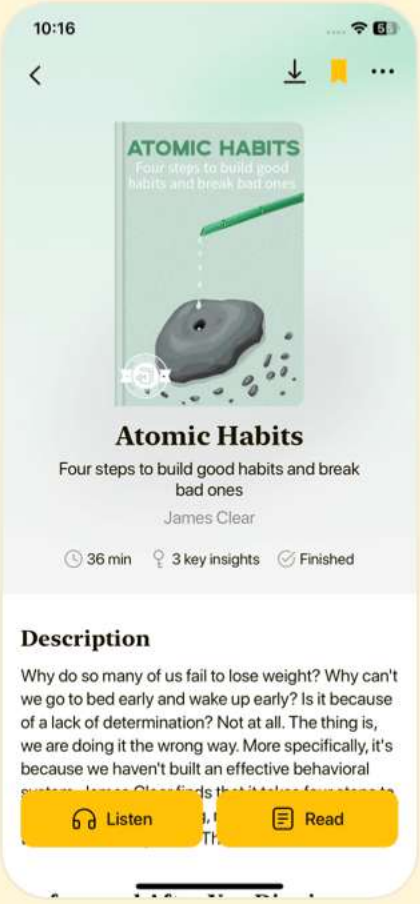
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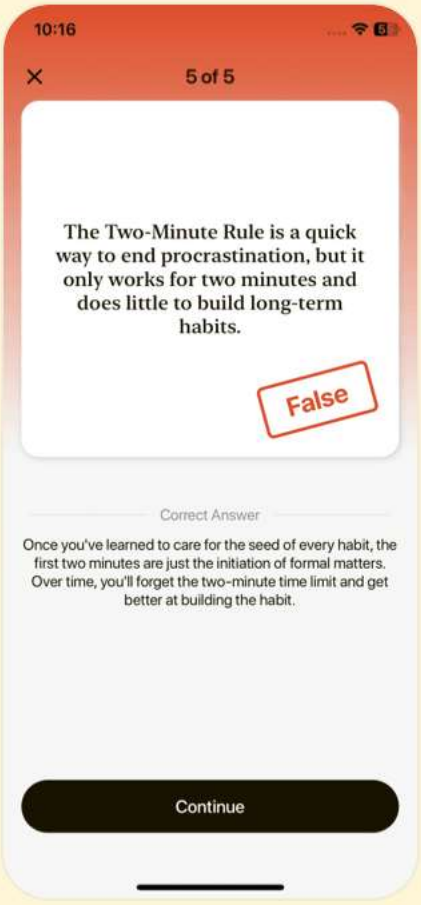
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Chapter 4 | FOUR CRITICISM OR CANON| Quiz and Test

1. Modern biblical scholarship solely relies on the current canonical text without considering earlier versions of the texts.
2. Literature criticism emphasizes critical methods that examine the text beyond its final form.
3. The canonical approach prioritizes the final shape of the text and emphasizes understanding the original context of the writings.

Chapter 5 | FIVE DESCRIPTIVE OR CONFESSIONAL| Quiz and Test

1. The historical method of Old Testament theology has been viewed as purely objective and scientific, without bias.
2. Confessional approaches in Old Testament theology emphasize the necessity of faith in understanding its messages.
3. The chapter concludes that historical and confessional methods should be treated as completely separate

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approaches without any interdependence.

Chapter 6 | SIX DIACHRONIC OR SYNCHRONIC| Quiz and Test

1. A diachronic approach to Old Testament theology focuses on the chronological sequence of divine revelation.
2. Thematic diachronic presentation disregards major themes in favor of a strict historical timeline.
3. A synchronic approach organizes Old Testament theology around important concepts but does not respect the inherent structure of the biblical text.

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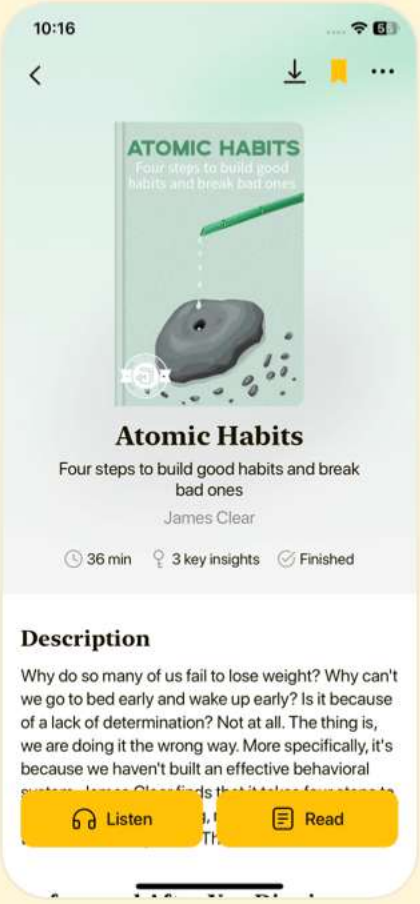
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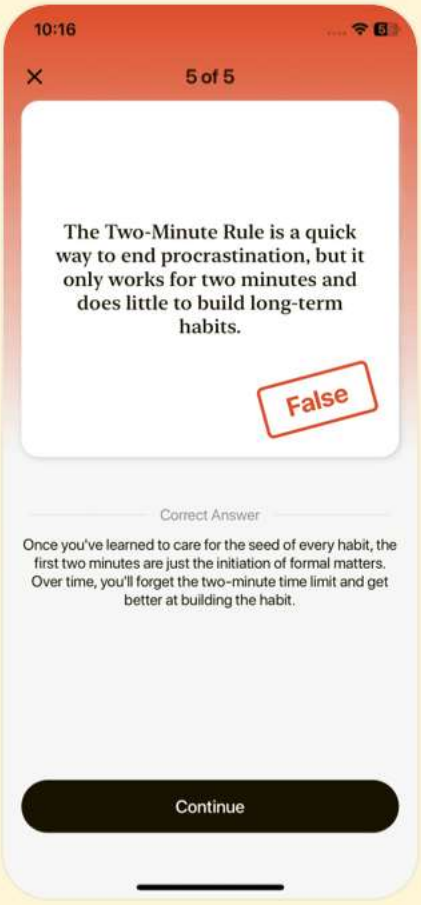
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