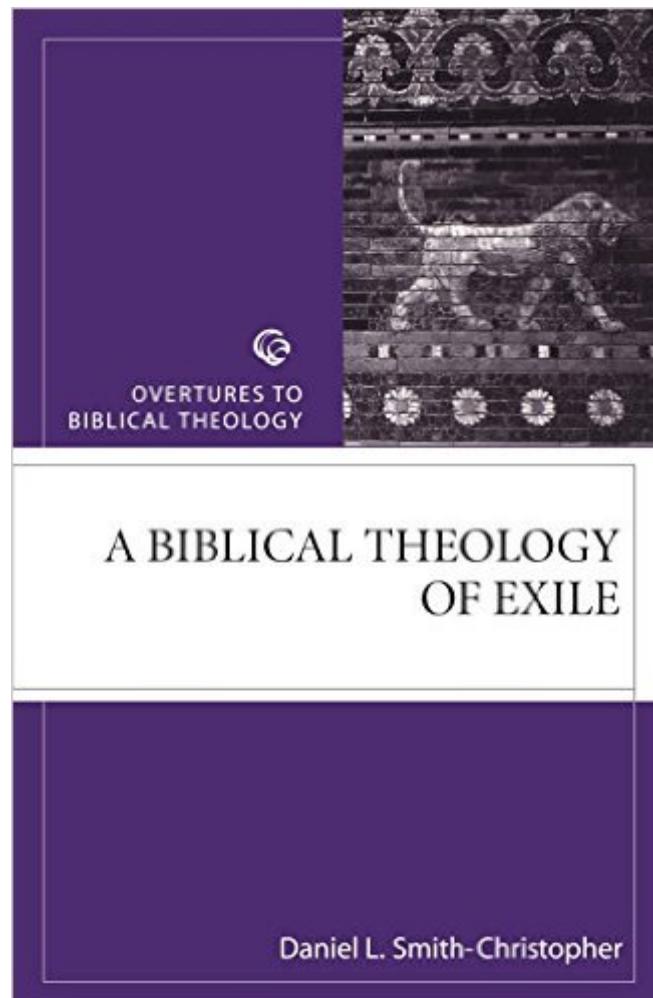


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A Biblical Theology Of Exile (Overtures To Biblical Theology)



Synopsis

The Christian church continues to seek ethical and spiritual models from the period of Israel's monarchy and has avoided the gravity of the Babylonian exile. Against this tradition, the author argues that the period of focus for the canonical construction of biblical thought is precisely the exile. Here the voices of dissent arose and articulated words of truth in the context of failed power.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Building upon his *The Religion of the Landless: The Social Context of the Babylonian Exile* (Meyer Stone, 1989), the author has produced a thoughtful work on a central biblical concept that is both historical and theological. Works on biblical theology are almost compelled to begin with an apology for the method employed. Smith-Christopher does not fail to do so ('Biblical Theology: On Matters of Methodology', 1-26), signalling in his comment upon post-modern metaphysical critiques that he does not intend to allow a hyper-critical or hyper-sceptical critique to claim exclusive legitimacy in the conversation. While attempting to be critical of his own assumptions, Smith-Christopher is persuaded that both history and theology can be carried out with integrity, especially when focussing upon a discrete theme like exile. 'Discrete', however, does not mean 'minuscule', for the author is convinced that one must see the exile of Judah not only as human catastrophe-its actual happening can be defended on historical grounds-but also as an event that engendered significant new social and theological enterprises. Smith-Christopher writes from his own participation in an

historical 'peace church' and finds a promising correlation between the 'stateless existence' that was the destiny of the Jewish exiles and the kinds of church community that is praised by some Christian theologians. As a result, he is eager to question both Constantinian and Wellhausian views of 'exile' as an intrinsically negative socio-religious matrix that lost something essential. Nevertheless, Smith-Christopher is wary of seeing the experience or model of exile through rose-colored glasses, wanting with E. Said not to 'belittle its mutilations'.

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