

THEOLOGY OF THE HEBREW BIBLE,
VOLUME 1: METHODOLOGICAL STUDIES

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THEOLOGY OF THE HEBREW BIBLE,
VOLUME 1: METHODOLOGICAL STUDIES

Edited by
Marvin A. Sweeney

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Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	Freedman, D. N., ed. <i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> . 6 vols. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1992.
AFLR	<i>Aersbok för föreningen lärare i religionskunskap</i>
AnBib	Analecta Biblica
ANEP	Pritchard, J. B., ed. <i>The Ancient Near East in Pictures</i> . 3rd ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969.
ANET	Pritchard, J. B., ed. <i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament</i> . 3rd ed. Princeton: Princeton University, 1969.
ATANT	Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments
ATD	Das Alte Testament Deutsch
AYB	Anchor Yale Bible
b.	Babylonian Talmud
B. Bat.	Bava Batra
Bar	Baruch
BBRSup	Bulletin for Biblical Research, Supplements
BEATAJ	Beiträge zur Erforschung des Alten Testaments und Antiken Judentum
Ber.	Berakhot
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologiarum Lovansien-sium
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
<i>BibInt</i>	<i>Biblical Interpretation</i>
<i>BSac</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
BThSt	Biblich-Theologischer Studien
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testa-ment

BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBQ	<i>The Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CCAR	<i>Central Conference of American Rabbis</i>
ContC	Continental Commentaries
CSHJ	Chicago Studies in the History of Judaism
CTS	Contextual Theology Series
<i>Doctr. chr.</i>	<i>De doctrina christiana</i>
EBR	Klauck, H.-J., et al., eds. <i>The Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception</i> . Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009–.
<i>EncJud</i>	Roth, Cecil, ed. <i>Encyclopedia Judaica</i> . Jerusalem: Keter and MacMillan, 1971–1972.
1 Esd	1 Esdras
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
FOTL	Forms of the Old Testament Literature
GAT	Grundrisse zum Alten Testament
HBT	<i>Horizons in Biblical Theology</i>
HS	<i>Hebrew Studies</i>
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
HUCA	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
IBC	Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JCSHS	Jewish and Christian Heritage Series
JPS	Jewish Publication Society
JPSBC	JPS Bible Commentary
JR	<i>Journal of Religion</i>
JSNT	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
JSOT	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
JSQ	<i>Jewish Studies Quarterly</i>
JTI	<i>Journal of Theological Interpretation</i>
KST	Kohlhammer Studienbücher Theologie

LBT	Library of Biblical Theology
LHBOTS	Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
LXX	Septuagint
m.	Mishnah
Meg.	Megillah
<i>MJ</i>	<i>Modern Judaism</i>
MT	Masoretic Text
NAC	New American Commentary
NCBC	New Cambridge Bible Commentary
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
<i>NN</i>	<i>Nations and Nationalism</i>
NSKAT	Neuer Stuttgarter Kommentar, Altes Testament
OBT	Overtures to Biblical Theology
<i>OLR</i>	<i>Oxford Literary Review</i>
OOTT	Overtures to an Old Testament Theology
OTL	Old Testament Library
OtSt	Oudtestamentische Studiën
Pes.	Pesah
<i>Presb</i>	<i>Presbyterion</i>
<i>Proof</i>	<i>Prooftexts: A Journal of Jewish Literary History</i>
<i>PRSt</i>	<i>Perspectives in Religious Studies</i>
PTMS	Pittsburgh Theological Monograph Series
Qidd.	Qiddušin
QTS	Queering Theology Series
<i>RBL</i>	<i>Review of Biblical Literature</i>
RD	Religions and Discourse
Šabb.	Šabbat
SAC	Studies in Antiquity and Christianity
San.	Sanhedrin
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLSymS	Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series
<i>SEÅ</i>	<i>Svensk exegetic Årsbok</i>
Sipre Deut.	Sipre Deuteronomy
<i>SJOT</i>	<i>Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament</i>
<i>SJT</i>	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
<i>SRA</i>	<i>Svensk religionsgustoris aersskrift</i>
StBibLit	Studies in Biblical Literature (Lang)
StThT	Studia Theologica—Teresianum
t.	Tosefta

Ta'an.	Ta'anit
TDOT	Botterweck, G. Johannes, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, eds. <i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i> . Translated by John T. Willis et al. 15 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974–2006.
TE	<i>Topics in Education</i>
ThSt	Theologische Studiën
TLZ	<i>Theologische Literaturzeitung</i>
Tob	Tobit
TSAJ	Texte und Studien zum Antiken Judentum
UBL	Ugaritische-biblische Literatur
VT	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
y.	Jerusalem Talmud
Yad.	Yadayim
ZABR	<i>Zeitschrift für altorientalische und biblische Rechtsgeschichte</i>
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>

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Introduction

Marvin A. Sweeney

The Society of Biblical Literature Section on Theology of the Hebrew Scriptures was established to foster scholarly discussion by Jews and Christians concerning the theological interpretation of the Hebrew Bible, known as the Tanak in Judaism and the Old Testament in Christianity. The need for such discussion was evident in the early years following World War II. Prior to the war, biblical theology was almost exclusively a Christian theological enterprise that was intended to relate biblical interpretation to the concerns of dogmatic and later systematic theology. Jews were not well represented in modern critical scholarship prior to the war, and the overarching viewpoint among Christian scholars during the eighteenth through the early twentieth century was that Jews, who were largely responsible for the redaction of biblical texts, had fundamentally misunderstood the theological insights of early “Israelite” literature, such as the J source of the Pentateuch or the original oracles of the Prophets, and had corrupted the meaning of the text by attempting to introduce alleged Jewish concerns for legalism, ritual, and parochial national identity into a text that originally was intended to address the entire world with its notions of universal salvation, moral order, and conceptualization of G-d.

But the experience of World Wars I and II raised fundamental questions concerning the notions of universal salvation, ethics, and spirituality associated with G-d during the period of the Enlightenment as theologians began to recognize that supposedly rational human societies had failed miserably as ideals such as National Socialism, fascism, communism, and Japanese imperialism played key roles in bringing about worldwide war that saw the deaths of some seventeen million people in World War I and sixty million people in World War II, including the deliberate genocidal murder of some six million Jews as well as millions of Gypsies, gays and lesbians, Slavic groups, and persons deemed mentally or physically defi-

cient. Despite noteworthy efforts by Christian theologians such as Paul Tillich, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and Karl Barth, the Christian churches were largely silent during the Shoah, in part for fear of retaliation by the Nazi-controlled or influenced governments of Germany and its allies, and in part due to the belief that Jews had sinned in rejecting Jesus and participating in his crucifixion and therefore deserved punishment.

Walther Eichrodt's Old Testament theology, originally published in 1933–1939, offered an understanding of the covenant between G-d and human beings that asserted Judaism as a "torso-like" appearance in the covenantal history; Gerhard von Rad's 1955–1958 theology of the Old Testament completely ignored Judaism in asserting that the Old Testament proclaimed salvation history for humankind as the theological core of the Old Testament. Neither scholar treated the book of Esther, which takes seriously the question of what happens when a government deliberately attempts to murder its Jewish population, and instead denied the theological character of the book, insofar as G-d is never mentioned in it, or decried Jewish violence against gentiles at the end of the book. When the modern state of Israel was created in the aftermath of the Shoah, in part to ensure that Jews would never find themselves without a homeland again, many scholars rejected the Jewish state as antithetical to divine and biblical intentions.

But as Jewish scholars such as Richard Rubenstein, Emil Fackenheim, Eliezer Berkovitz, Abraham Joshua Heschel, and Elie Wiesel began to write about the theological and moral problems posed by the experience of the Shoah, Christian scholars such as Paul Tillich, Clark Williamson, and even Pope John XXIII began to recognize the need to rethink Christianity and its relationship with Judaism in the aftermath of the Shoah. As historical scholars engaged in textual analysis and archaeology as means to understand the historical character of ancient Israel and Judah, theological scholars began to reexamine the theological viewpoints of biblical literature on Israel's formation, history, and destruction in efforts to understand better the nature of G-d's covenant with Israel and the recognition that it might point to the ongoing life of Israel, the Jewish people, and Judaism beyond the time of Jesus and the New Testament. Although Christianity did not bring about the Shoah, its anti-Jewish statements, particularly the charge that Jews were responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus, had actually constituted a major basis for Nazi views of Jews and their efforts to exterminate them.

The result was a rapprochement between Judaism and Christianity, particularly in the field of biblical theology, as Jewish and Christian

scholars began to examine the interrelationships between the two traditions and their reading of biblical texts. Jewish scholars such as Jon D. Levenson, Michael Fishbane, Tikva Frymer-Kensky, Isaac Kalimi, Benjamin Sommer, Tamar Kamionkowski, the present writer, and many others began to enter the field of biblical theology—even when they had reservations about its Christian character. Christian scholars such as Rolf Rendtorff, John J. Collins, Katherine Pfisterer Darr, Kathleen O'Connor, Walter Brueggemann, Leo Perdue, Wonil Kim, and many others began to engage in dialogue with Jewish biblical scholars in their efforts to understand better the theological perspectives of the Bible.

One outcome of the intensive efforts to study the historical and theological dimensions of the Hebrew Bible throughout the latter twentieth and the early twenty-first century was the recognition that the earlier assertions of objective historical research and critical theological analysis could not be sustained. Biblical historical works such as the Pentateuch, the Deuteronomistic History, and the Chronicler's History each has its own set of theological and historiographical principles that underlie and define its literary presentations of ancient Israelite and Judean history and thought. Furthermore, historical and theological study of the Hebrew Bible is heavily dependent upon the preexisting perspectives of the scholars undertaking the research. As historical research began to decline, ideologically and theologically based perspectives such as feminist and gendered interpretation of the Bible, African and African American interpretation of the Bible, Latino/a readings of the Bible, Asian and Asian American perspectives, and others began to emerge in the field together with strong reactions against the Bible for its relationships to modern Zionism, that is, the movement to establish a Jewish homeland in the land of Israel, its propensity for blaming the victims of oppression for sins that would then explain their victimization, and a parochial perspective that upholds Israelite and Judean interests over those of other nations.

The result has been an influx of studies in the field that have raised questions about contemporary biblical theology. Does the Hebrew Bible belong exclusively to the Jewish people and to Judaism, or does it also address other nations, ethnic groups, and religious traditions? Is the same Bible read in Christianity and in Judaism, or does it appear in a multiplicity of forms that must be considered in the larger context of biblical theological interpretation? Do Jews and Christians read the Bible the same way, or are there distinctively Jewish and Christian perspectives that must be considered in the theological reading of the Bible? Questions such as

these underlie the work of the Society of Biblical Literature Theology of the Hebrew Scriptures Section and the papers that appear in this volume.

Many of the papers published here were presented in the various panels and sessions of the Theology of the Hebrew Scriptures Section during the course of the 2013, 2014, 2015, and 2016 Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meetings in Baltimore, San Diego, Atlanta, and San Antonio. Others were submitted or solicited from scholars who have had past relationships with the Theology of the Hebrew Scriptures Section or who have an ongoing interest in the work of the section.

“Disputed Issues of Biblical Theology,” by Georg Fischer, SJ, was originally presented as part of the Theology of the Hebrew Scriptures panel discussion on “What Is Biblical Theology?” at the 2013 Annual Society of Biblical Literature Meeting in Baltimore. Fischer notes the recent renaissance in biblical theology and turns first to the question of the necessity of biblical theology. He understands the term to refer to speaking about G-d but well recognizes the issue of canonical differentiation in the various traditions that employ the Bible as sacred Scripture. A full picture of G-d accounts for both divine love and divine violence. He discusses seven disputed issues, such as the question of where to begin, what to search for, how to approach it, how far the study should extend, the role of faith, whether biblical theology is descriptive or also critical, and whether there is a core to biblical theologies. He offers a rich discussion that maintains throughout the centrality of YHWH in biblical theology.

My own paper, “What Is Biblical Theology? With an Example on Divine Absence and the Song of Songs,” was originally presented as two separate papers in the 2013 Theology of the Hebrew Scriptures panel discussion on “What Is Biblical Theology?” in Baltimore and in the 2015 Theology of the Hebrew Scriptures panel discussion on “Divine Hiddenness in the Hebrew Bible” in Atlanta. I played a major role in developing these panels as current cochair (2013–2018) of the Theology of the Hebrew Scriptures Section. The first part of the paper notes the changes that have taken place in the field since World War II and argues for the need to consider canonical context in defining what Bible is read in the various traditions of Judaism and Christianity. It studies the differences in the formal structures of the Jewish Tanak and the Christian Old Testament. It argues that the Tanak is based in a cycle that articulates the ideals of Jewish life and relationship with G-d in the Torah, the disruption of that ideal in the Prophets, and the attempts to reconstitute that ideal in the Writings; the Old Testament, on the other hand, displays a linear presentation that

ultimately points to the New Testament and begins with treatment of the early history of the world and Israel in the Pentateuch, the later history of Israel in the historical books, theological and philosophical issues in the poetic and wisdom books, and a view of the future in the prophetic books. A similar structure appears in the New Testament, which points to the second coming of Christ. It also discusses the dialogical dimensions of the Bible to argue that there is no center to the Bible and that its constituent books are often in disagreement, in some cases positing that G-d is sometimes absent, impotent, or unjust. The second part of this paper examines the issue of divine absence in the Song of Songs, arguing that human beings must also be recognized as partners with G-d in bringing about creation and sanctification in the world.

“Biblical Theology in Context(s): Jewish, Christian, and Critical Approaches to the Theology of the Hebrew Bible,” by Julia M. O’Brien, was originally presented as part of the 2014 Theology of the Hebrew Scriptures panel discussion in San Diego. O’Brien, the former cochair of Theology of the Hebrew Scriptures (2011–2016), admits that the title for the sessions leaves her unsettled, despite her role in formulating the title, as none of the three labels offered—Jewish, Christian, and critical—accurately describes her own understanding of biblical theology. She maintains that theological exegesis in Christianity is flawed because it presumes commonality among Christian theologians that does not exist and in practice privileges only a few voices in the discussion. Such practice leaves her unsatisfied calling biblical theology Christian. She is also uncomfortable with the description of biblical theology as critical, insofar as such a term presumes an objectivity in method and viewpoint that does not exist in the field. She rightly notes that the label Jewish is not hers to choose, as she is not a Jewish biblical theologian, despite having been trained in part by Jewish scholars and engaging the work of Jewish scholars in her publications and in dialogue. Despite the problems she observes, she endorses the task of doing biblical theology in context, as it leads to better understanding of the issues of justice and fairness, trauma, and identity in the world.

“Hebrew Bible Theology: A Jewish Descriptive Approach,” by Dalit Rom-Shiloni, a former Theology of the Hebrew Scriptures steering committee member (2011–2016), was presented at the 2014 Theology of the Hebrew Scriptures panel discussion on “Biblical Theology in Context: Jewish, Christian, and Critical Approaches to the Theology of the Hebrew Bible” in San Diego. Her paper was published under the same title in the *Journal of Religion* 96 (2016): 165–84, and it is republished here with

permission. Rom-Shiloni represents the voice of a Jewish, Israeli, nonreligious scholar in reading the Hebrew Bible. She first discusses the proper borders of the literary corpus that constitutes the Hebrew Bible and the question of dialogical method for reading that literature. She raises questions as to whether the Hebrew Bible should be read as a self-contained literary and theological work and whether or not from a Jewish standpoint the Bible should be put into dialogue with later postbiblical Jewish literature. In the end, she recognizes the diachronic distinctions between the Bible and later Jewish literature while calling for dialogue between them. She then turns to the question of non-Christian terminology for the field of biblical theology, particularly in relation to the problems posed by Christian supersessionism. She examines problematic terminology, such as anthropomorphism, which often overlooks the metaphorical character of the portrayal of G-d for many Christian scholars. In the end, she calls for a descriptive theological approach—that is, what the text meant for the Israelite and Judean writers—that must be examined and put into dialogue with the constructive theological approaches advocated by so many Jewish and Christian scholars.

“Beyond Dialogue: Toward a Dialectical Model of Theology of the Hebrew Scripture/Old Testament,” by Wonil Kim, former cochair of Theology of the Hebrew Scriptures, examines the ethnocentric, xenophobic, and militaristic character of the biblical narratives of Israelite origins in an effort to develop a clear and responsible method for biblical theology. He further notes the problems posed by the plurality of theologies that appear within the Hebrew Bible. Kim proposes a dialogical model for biblical theology in an effort to put this plurality of theologies into dialogue with each other and avoid the problems posed by a purely descriptive biblical theology that would pass over the problems acknowledged above. Kim’s dialogical and dialectical model presupposes the role of the reader who enters into a dialogue with the text as well and raises questions concerning the assertions of the biblical narratives, that is, to what extent the reader says no to the models presented in Scripture as a basis for learning from the problems prompted by the perspectives of the biblical literature itself. Such a model entails that we modern readers are active participants in the act of reading and that we have the capacity both to say no to the Bible and to offer an alternative model based on what we have learned from reading the biblical texts. Although Kim’s model does not self-consciously engage in questions of Jewish or Christian readings of the Bible, it does raise questions for contemporary readers of all—or no—traditions.

Andrea L. Weiss's "Making a Place for Metaphor in Biblical Theology" was one of the presentations for the 2013 Theology of the Hebrew Scriptures panel on "What Is Biblical Theology?" at the Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting in Baltimore. Weiss provides a brief review of the emergence of biblical theology among Jewish scholars by first noting the initial resistance to the field and then surveying a number of key publications by Jewish scholars engaged in the field. She follows Collins, who argues that biblical theology should involve the critical evaluation of biblical speech about G-d, and turns to the study of metaphor about G-d as a central element in the field. In the past, scholars such as Brueggemann have employed rhetoric to conceive metaphors concerning G-d in nominal form, but Weiss argues that interpreters must pay closer attention to linguistic and metaphor theory to provide the necessary full range of metaphor that biblical speech concerning G-d requires. Her study of texts from Deuteronomy, Jeremiah, and Hosea demonstrates that no single metaphor properly encapsulates the character of G-d, but each text includes multiple metaphors or metaphor clusters that provide a wide range of metaphorical portrayals of G-d that can begin to demonstrate the wide range necessary to prevent the portrayal of G-d to become just another form of idolatry.

"A Theology of Creation—Critical and Christian," by Jacqueline E. Lapsley, originally appeared as part of the 2014 Theology of the Hebrew Scriptures panel on "Biblical Theology in Context: Jewish, Christian, and Critical Approaches to the Theology of the Hebrew Bible" at the Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting in San Diego. Lapsley rejects a common understanding that biblical theology is a Christian theological field that attempts to trace the progressive history of G-d's self-revelation to humanity culminating in Jesus Christ as unrecognizable to her and many contemporary colleagues. Recognizing that all approaches, including critical approaches, are confessional to some degree, she asks whether biblical theology should be descriptive or constructive and recognizes that biblical theology must be able to account for the diversity of the texts in the Bible rather than attempting to reduce discussion to a single or a few sets of themes. She proposes a creational theology that is fundamentally concerned with the question of human dignity as one example of the multifaceted approaches that biblical theology requires. The key aspect of her proposal is the focus on the responsibility that human beings have for the world of creation that human capabilities and partnership with G-d entails. Ironically for a Christian scholar, Lapsley's proposal is consistent with Jewish views on the task of the human being within creation.

David Frankel's "Toward a Constructive Jewish Biblical Theology of the Land" first appeared as a panel presentation for the 2014 Theology of the Hebrew Scriptures panel in San Diego on "Biblical Theology in Context: Jewish, Christian, and Critical Approaches to the Theology of the Hebrew Bible." Frankel points to the foundational work of Martin Buber, who in his concern to demonstrate the relevance of the Bible for modern human beings as well as for Israel as a nation, viewed the Bible as a fundamentally unified work that expressed a form of religious humanism as a basis for Buber's theopolitical version of Zionism and his teachings about G-d, humanity, Israel, and human society more generally. Most contemporary Israeli scholars would reject Buber's approach, arguing instead that the Bible presents a wide variety of positions on a multitude of topics, making it difficult to establish a biblical basis for any major issue in modern Israeli society. In proposing a new basis for Jewish biblical theology in Israel, Frankel points to the fundamentally exegetical character of Jewish thought, insofar as all of Jewish tradition traces its roots back to the interpretation of biblical texts. He cites Deut 29:14 to assert that biblical texts are addressed both to those of the past who are no longer with us and to those of the present who are with us today. He employs his approach to address the issue of the ultranationalist religious right in Israel, who assert that Jewish sovereignty over the entire land is a cardinal element of Jewish faith in what is perceived to be a messianic era. Insofar as he finds such a position morally disturbing and politically dangerous, Frankel calls for a return to Buber's religious humanism to construct a new Jewish biblical theology of the land that takes into consideration pragmatic and dispassionate thinking, G-d's absolute freedom, Maimonides's demotion of messianism, the importance of prioritizing religious values, the claim that there is no need for territorial completeness, and the recognition that the land is not innately holy. In Frankel's view, such a nonmessianic Jewish biblical theology of the land will do much to promote accommodation and justice in the land of Israel.

"Characterizing Chiasmic Contradiction: Literary Structure, Divine Repentance, and Dialogical Biblical Theology in 1 Samuel 15:10–35," by Benjamin J. M. Johnson, was first presented in the 2016 Theology of the Hebrew Scriptures San Antonio session of open papers devoted to "Theological Interpretation of Selected Biblical Texts." Johnson's paper draws on the dialogical reading strategies of Mikhail Bakhtin and others in an effort to demonstrate their importance for reading a text such as 1 Sam 15:10–35, which portrays YHWH's repentant and unrepentant nature in relation

to the rejection of Saul as king of Israel. Whereas the literary frame of the passage asserts YHWH's repentance over Saul, Samuel's statements in the core of the passage maintain that the divine YHWH should not repent. Johnson surveys past attempts to address the issue through harmonizing readings, source-critical readings, narrative-critical approaches, and paradoxical approaches. Johnson's own approach to the paradox employs a chiasmic reading of 1 Sam 15:10–35 to demonstrate a dialogical reading of the text. Although the outer limits of the text assert YHWH's repentance at choosing Saul, Samuel's denial of YHWH's need to repent serves as the turning point within the chiasmic structure of this text. The text thereby creates deliberate tension concerning YHWH's character that prompts readers to engage the question of the nature of YHWH as a deity who remains unpredictable and yet faithful and trustworthy.

"Ashamed before the Presence of God," by Soo J. Kim, current cochair of the Theology of the Hebrew Scriptures Section (2017–2022), was originally presented as part of the 2013 Baltimore Theological Perspectives on the Book of Ezekiel session on Ezekiel 40–48 and Its Relationship to Pentateuchal Legal Texts and Conceptions. Kim challenges prior assertions by Baruch Schwartz that the restoration of Israel in Ezek 40–48 entailed a damaged reputation for YHWH and no repentance from Israel. She poses a number of crucial questions: Is this pessimistic view really the end of the exilic community story and the goal of the writing? What would be the first step in bringing the exiles home if they are victims who refuse to confess their guilt? Which party should initiate reconciliation if the guilty party refuses to do so? What role does shame play in the restoration? Finally, what is Ezekiel's conceptualization of exile? She carefully defines the literary audience and implied audience of Ezek 43:10–11, which urges its audience to be humiliated and ashamed before G-d. Her detailed analysis of each passage points to its key concerns: Ezek 43:10–11 calls for the people to feel shame for their past so they might acquire the knowledge necessary for a more advanced relationship with G-d in the course of the restoration envisioned in Ezek 40–48. By reaching such a deep knowledge of G-d and of self, the people lay the foundations to maintain the relationship forever.

Altogether these essays address various aspects of the question: What is biblical theology?