

## INTRODUCTION

One does not have to read very far in the Old Testament to discover that war and warfare are frequently recurring motifs. Whether spiritualized,<sup>1</sup> extolled in poetry,<sup>2</sup> or reported in sparse narration,<sup>3</sup> war is everywhere. One aspect of the ancient Israelite approach to war in the Bible is found in the word *herem* (from the Hebrew root **הרם** meaning “to place under a ‘ban’ or ‘devote to destruction’”),<sup>4</sup> a word that often calls for the complete annihilation of an enemy, and as one scholar put it, “forbids emotions of mercy.”<sup>5</sup> This practice assaults modern sensibilities with regard to right and wrong actions in times of war and thus has proven to be a hermeneutical dilemma. How can such passages inform modern readers when they learn that the armies of Israel “completely destroyed” their enemy (often including women, children, and livestock in the annihilation), not only with impunity, but with divine direction and blessing? For example:

<sup>1</sup> Samuel said to Saul, . . . <sup>2</sup> “This is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘I will punish the Amalekites for what they did to Israel when they waylaid them as they came up from Egypt. <sup>3</sup> Now go, attack the Amalekites and totally destroy<sup>6</sup> everything that belongs to them. Do not spare them; put to death men and women, children and infants, cattle and sheep, camels and donkeys.’” (1 Sam 15:1–3)<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> “Spiritualized,” “spiritualizing” and “spiritualization” appear in the writings of the prominent evangelical Old Testament scholars reviewed in this study (e.g., Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *The Old Testament in Contemporary Preaching* [Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1973], 13; Peter C. Craigie, *The Problem of War in the Old Testament* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978], 10; Tremper Longman, III, “Psalm 98: A Divine Warrior Victory Song, *JETS* 27 [1984]: 269). The word is thus used intentionally here. Note: *The New International Version* is used throughout this study unless otherwise noted. I have chosen this version because it is frequently preferred by evangelicals.

<sup>2</sup> Your right hand, O LORD, was majestic in power.

Your right hand, O LORD, shattered the enemy.

In the greatness of your majesty you threw down those who opposed you.

You unleashed your burning anger; it consumed them like fire. (Exod 15:6–7)

<sup>3</sup> For example: “When Sihon and all his army came out to meet us in battle at Jahaz, the LORD our God delivered him over to us and we struck him down together with his sons and his whole army” (Deut 2:32–33); or “They devoted the city to the LORD and destroyed with the sword every living thing in it—men and women, young and old, cattle, sheep and donkeys” (Josh 6:21).

<sup>4</sup> *Herem* will be discussed at length in Chapter 1.

<sup>5</sup> Susan Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible: A Study in the Ethics of Violence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 28.

<sup>6</sup> עָתָה לְךָ יְהוָה אֶת־עַמְלֵק וְהַחֲרַמְתָּם אֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־לָוֹ (1 Sam 15:3<sup>a</sup>).

<sup>7</sup> For a complete list of every appearance of *herem* in the Hebrew Bible including the verse in which it is found and the NIV translation, see Appendix B. Appendix A lists six different English translations of every appearance of *herem* in Deuteronomy. The translations include: King James Version (1611, 1769); New International Version (1984); New American Standard Bible (1995); New Revised Standard Version (1989); New Jerusalem Bible (1985); Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures. Jewish Publication Society (1985).

At polar opposites to the *herem* passages, however, are other passages about the proper treatment of human beings, including special care for the weak and the helpless (especially women and children<sup>8</sup>), attention to the unique needs of foreigners,<sup>9</sup> or the humane treatment of an enemy. In juxtaposition to these passages, *herem* is indeed a disquieting biblical concept. Readers pause in disbelief at these shocking passages. Can this be a part of the Bible? How can the armies of the Lord do such things? Did God really command total annihilation, or did Israel perhaps mishear him? Moreover, what guiding moral light may be derived from stories of intentional carnage?

Many scholars have devoted substantial attention to the issues raised by *herem* (see “Previous Scholarly Work” below).<sup>10</sup> This dissertation will examine the work of three prominent 20<sup>th</sup> century evangelical Old Testament scholars, Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., Peter C. Craigie, and Tremper Longman, III, who have written about warfare in the Hebrew Bible and *herem*.

The church historian, Mark A. Noll, mentions both Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. and Peter C. Craigie in his book, *Between Faith and Criticism*. While demonstrating that the discipline of New Testament Theology is well represented by many productive modern evangelical scholars working in a variety of academic contexts, Noll observes that the discipline of modern evangelical Old Testament scholarship fares differently. “Only a few evangelicals working in the Old Testament have reached the levels of [New Testament] scholars.”<sup>11</sup> When reviewing the accomplishments of the few prominent evangelical Old Testament scholars, Noll mentions only two by name: Peter C. Craigie and Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. Speaking of Kaiser, Noll wrote, “Walter Kaiser has prodded evangelicals to think systematically about the Old Testament and has himself produced in several books a serious effort to construct both theology and ethics from the Old Testament around the theme of promise.”<sup>12</sup> With regard to Craigie, Noll maintains that before his death he “lead the way for his Old Testament peers with outstanding individual studies (such as on war in the Old Testament) and with several first-rate commentaries.”<sup>13</sup>

The scholars chosen for review in this study are recognized and acknowledged by both the evangelical and non-evangelical communities as respected biblical authorities. They have published extensively on diverse topics (cf. the Bibliography) and are widely read. They have written biblical commentaries and daily devotionals, scholarly articles on salient biblical issues and books on homiletics and “biblical living.”

This dissertation is an exercise in the history of biblical interpretation examining how these Old Testament scholars read and interpret the Bible within both the academy and their

---

<sup>8</sup> Exod 22:22; Deut 10:18; Ps 10:14–18; 68:5; 146:9.

<sup>9</sup> Exod 22:21; Lev 19:33–34; Deut 10:17–19; 24:19; Ezek 47:22–23; cf. James 1:7.

<sup>10</sup> As evidence of an ongoing interest in warfare, violence, and *herem* in the Hebrew Bible, John J. Collins’ “Presidential Address” to the 2002 Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature in Toronto was titled, “The Zeal of Phinehas: The Bible and the Legitimation of Violence” (forthcoming in *JBL* and available online at: <http://www.sbl-site.org/>).

<sup>11</sup> Mark A. Noll, *Between Faith and Criticism: Evangelicals, Scholarship, and the Bible in America*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 1998), 136.

<sup>12</sup> Noll, *Between Faith and Criticism*, 137.

<sup>13</sup> Noll, *Between Faith and Criticism*, 136. In this context Noll also mentions that “competent work” by other evangelical scholars who self-consciously interact with modern biblical criticism but are not mentioned in his book may be found in the volumes of “Word, New International Old Testament, and Tyndale commentary series” (137). If Noll were to prepare another edition of his work, Tremper Longman would surely be included in the list.

confessional communities. It comes at a unique moment in that history. One hundred years ago evangelical scholars were few and far between, and an extended review of their work (especially on a topic like *herem*) would be impossible. In reaction to the new historical-critical approaches to the Bible and the liberal-conservative controversy that took place from 1870–1920 in America, evangelicals either withdrew from the debate in order to focus on revivalism and community development, or they began to speak and write on topics such as, biblical infallibility, inspiration, and the authority of the Bible, in an attempt to express what they believed to be the essence of true Christianity.<sup>14</sup> Over time the controversy subsided and many evangelicals have become active members of national scholarly associations (e.g., the Society of Biblical Literature, or the American Academy of Religion) and contributors to religious studies journals or multi-volume commentary series. Grant R. Osborne writes that evangelicals are “not only members of academic societies but also chaired major seminars within them.”<sup>15</sup> In “The Opening of the Evangelical Mind,” Alan Wolfe observes that a number of prominent American colleges and universities (including Baylor University, Pepperdine University, Valparaiso University, Notre Dame University, etc.) have added high-profile evangelical scholars to their faculty. He writes that “evangelical scholars are writing the books, publishing the journals, teaching the students, and sustaining the networks necessary to establish a presence in American academic life.”<sup>16</sup> Thus it appears that evangelicals are well-represented in the academy. Nevertheless, a byproduct of the research for this dissertation has been the unintentional discovery that when it comes to sustained scholarly dialogue with regard to *herem*, an evangelical voice is wanting and their opinions overlooked in the works of other non-evangelical scholars.<sup>17</sup> Of this apparent disregard for learned evangelical scholarship, Mark Noll has written:

Those of us who call ourselves “evangelical scholars” are accustomed to suspicion from the church and incredulity from the academy. Modern scholarship, many in the churches believe, has proven itself implacably hostile to faith. Evangelical Christianity, many in the academy believe, holds to presuppositions that have no legitimate place in learned

---

<sup>14</sup> Grant R. Osborne, “Evangelical Biblical Interpretation,” *Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation*, John H. Hayes, ed., (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999), 357–58. See also, Noll, *Between Faith and Criticism*, 11-31.

<sup>15</sup> Osborne, “Evangelical Biblical Interpretation,” 360.

<sup>16</sup> Alan Wolfe, “The Opening of the Evangelical Mind,” *Atlantic Monthly* (October 2000), *The Atlantic Online* (Cited 15 March, 2003): 6. Online: <http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/2000/10/wolfe.htm>. Wolfe is the Director of the Boisi Center for Religion and American Public Life at Boston College. For an evangelical reaction to Wolfe’s article, cf., Mark Noll’s, “Minding the Evangelical Mind,” *First Things* 109 (2001): 14–17.

<sup>17</sup> For example: the writings of Kaiser, Craigie, and Longman on warfare and *herem* is ignored in the work of Philip Stern, *The Biblical Herem: A Window on Israel’s Religious Experience*, (Atlanta: Scholar’s Press, 1991); Gerd Lüdemann, *The Unholy in Holy Scripture: The Dark Side of the Bible*, John Bowden, trans., (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996); and Thomas B. Dozeman, *God at War: Power in the Exodus Tradition* (New York: Oxford, 1996). The work of Craigie on warfare and *herem* receives consideration by the following scholars in their research, but Kaiser and Longman are overlooked: see Harold Wayne Ballard, Jr., *The Divine Warrior in the Psalms* (North Richland Hills, TX: Bibal Press, 1999); Charles Sherlock, *The God Who Fights: The War Tradition in Holy Scripture* (Lewiston, NY: Rutherford House, 1993); Sa-Moon Kang, *Divine War in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East* (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1989); T. R. Hobbs, *A Time for War: A Study of Warfare in the Old Testament* (Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, 1989); and Millard C. Lind, *Yahweh is a Warrior: The Theology of Warfare in Ancient Israel* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1980). Although Susan Niditch gives Kaiser and Craigie minimal attention in her work, *War in the Hebrew Bible: A Study in the Ethics of Violence* (1993), this is not unusual. Since her primary objective is not to review previous scholarship, it would be unusual for her to direct attention to any one scholar.

discourse. Perhaps more commonly, we evangelical scholars find ourselves in the even more depressing situation where no one pays us notice at all.<sup>18</sup>

Hence the need for this project—to locate the work of these three evangelical scholars vis-à-vis the work of others in the ongoing discussion of *herem*.

This dissertation will seek to determine how Kaiser, Craigie, and Longman interpret a problematic biblical military convention to an evangelical audience that accepts the Bible as an infallible document that is authoritative for Christian life and practice. Based on an extensive review of their writings and personal interviews with Kaiser and Longman,<sup>19</sup> it will commence with a short study of *herem* itself, and continue with a brief biographical sketch of each scholar followed by a review their interpretations of *herem*. Finally, it will compare and contrast their work in an attempt to discover unifying themes, divergent motifs, strategies for dealing with *herem*, or unique proposals for the ongoing discussion of *herem*. Although clearly sharing a common interpretative tradition,<sup>20</sup> this study will demonstrate that each scholar represents a distinct way of negotiating the simultaneous demands of historical criticism and contemporary evangelical theology. Moreover, it will demonstrate that there is no monolithic evangelical approach to interpreting this problematic military convention, but rather, the works of Kaiser, Craigie, and Longman indicate that there is a multiplicity of approaches to resolving perplexing biblical passages within evangelical Old Testament scholarship.

## Evangelicals and “Evangelicalism”

Before beginning the study of Kaiser, Craigie, and Longman, it is necessary to define what is meant by “evangelical” and “evangelicalism.” Evangelicalism has become a major religious force around the world, and the United States is no exception. Millard Erickson writes that in eastern Europe, evangelicalism is virtually the only expression of Christianity other than Catholicism (e.g., Poland) or Eastern Orthodoxy (e.g., the former Soviet Union).<sup>21</sup> Likewise in Great Britain, evangelicalism is equally strong and has a long and respected history.<sup>22</sup> These

---

<sup>18</sup> Noll, “Minding the Evangelical Mind,” 14.

<sup>19</sup> This author would like to acknowledge Dr. Kaiser and Dr. Longman who graciously agreed to be interviewed for this dissertation. Moreover, after the interviews, they remained in touch with me via email offering further clarification when necessary. It should be noted that I have also interviewed Rebecca Idestrom who has written repeatedly on Peter Craigie. I am grateful for these opportunities.

<sup>20</sup> On this matter the writings of Gerald Bray, *Biblical Interpretation: Past & Present*, Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996, 539, and Osborne, “Evangelical Biblical Interpretation,” 357, are informative.

<sup>21</sup> Millard J. Erickson, “Evangelicalism: USA,” *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Modern Christian Thought*, Alister E. McGrath, ed., (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 188.

<sup>22</sup> See Mark A. Noll, “An Alternative: Great Britain: 1860–1937,” *Between Faith and Criticism: Evangelicals, Scholarship, and the Bible in America*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 1984), 62–90; D. W. Bebbington, “Evangelicalism: Britain,” *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Modern Christian Thought*, Alister E. McGrath, ed., (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 184–87; D. W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: 1730s–1980s* (London: Unwin Human, 1989); Hylson-Smith, Kenneth, *Evangelicals in the Church of England: 1737–1984*, (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988); Rebecca G. S. Idestrom, “Peter C. Craigie and the Old Testament,” Master’s Thesis (Wycliffe College, Toronto School of Theology, University of Toronto, 1990), 101–105; and Alister McGrath, *Evangelicalism & the Future of Christianity* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995), 44–51. For a

expressions of evangelicalism have attracted considerable scholarly inquiry.<sup>23</sup> The reason is simple—the term “evangelical,” in Mark Noll’s words, “is a plastic one.”<sup>24</sup> It is easy to see evangelicalism operative in the church, but it is amorphous and difficult to define. Even the nomenclature, “evangelical” or “evangelicalism” invites debate. For example, Mark Noll is uncomfortable with the term “evangelicalism” itself. In *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, he writes,

“Evangelicalism” is not, and never has been an “ism” like other Christian isms—for example, Catholicism, Orthodoxy, Presbyterianism, Anglicanism, or even Pentecostalism. . . . Rather, “evangelicalism” has always been made up of shifting movements, temporary alliances, and the lengthened shadows of individuals. All discussions of evangelicalism, therefore, are always both descriptions of the way things really are as well as efforts within our own minds to provide some order for a multifaceted, complex set of impulses and organizations.<sup>25</sup>

Evangelicalism is not a religious denomination. Rather, it is as much a theological school of thought as it is a historical movement. There are “Anglican evangelicals,” “Lutheran evangelicals,” “Presbyterian evangelicals,” “Methodist evangelicals,” “Catholic evangelicals,” and more.<sup>26</sup> Obviously then, no one, overarching definition is sufficient for such a massive entity.

The term “evangelical” is derived from the Greek word, εὐαγγέλιον, and refers to the “good news” of the Gospels. Modern use of the word dates to the sixteenth century when it was used to refer to Catholic writers who wanted to follow biblical beliefs and directives that they perceived were being ignored by the late Medieval church. In the early 1520s the terms *évangélique* and *evangelisch* began to appear in the polemical writings of the early Reformation.<sup>27</sup> Modern evangelicalism, like its precursor in the Reformation, often is expressed as a type of grassroots movement working for renewal or reform within previously established denominations. In this sense Alister McGrath refers to modern evangelicalism as a “transdenominational trend” in theology that “is not confined to any one denomination, nor is it a

---

cross-continental of evangelical Christianity, see Manuel A. Vasquez’s review of recent books on the topic, “Tracking Global Evangelical Christianity” *AAR* 71 (2003): 157–173.

<sup>23</sup> Several prominent scholars of evangelicalism include: Bruce Leon Shelley, *Evangelicalism in America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967); Donald G. Bloesch, *The Evangelical Renaissance* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973); David F. Wells and John D. Woodbridge, eds., *The Evangelicals: What they Believe, Who They Are, Where They are Changing* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1975); George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism, 1870–1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980); Bernard L. Ramm, *The Evangelical Heritage: A Study in Historical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981); George M. Marsden, “The Evangelical Denomination,” *Evangelicalism and Modern America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984); James Davison Hunter, *Evangelicalism: The Coming Generation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); Douglas A. Sweeney, “The Essential Evangelicalism Dialectic: The Historiography of the Early Neo-Evangelical Movement and the Observer-Participant Dilemma,” *Church History* 60 (March, 1991): 70–84; Donald W. Dayton and Robert K. Johnston, eds., *The Variety of American Evangelicalism* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991).

<sup>24</sup> Noll, *Between Faith and Criticism*, 1, cf. also 5.

<sup>25</sup> Mark A. Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 8.

<sup>26</sup> Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., (Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 121.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.* In this regard, cf. Alister McGrath, *Evangelicalism & the Future of Christianity*, 23–24.

denomination in its own right.”<sup>28</sup> He maintains that despite such diversity, evangelicalism centers on six assumptions:<sup>29</sup>

- (1) The supreme authority of Scripture as a source of knowledge of God and a guide to Christian living.
- (2) The majesty of Jesus Christ, both as incarnate God and Lord and as the savior of sinful humanity.
- (3) The lordship of the Holy Spirit.
- (4) The need for personal conversion.
- (5) The priority of evangelism for both individual Christians and the church as a whole.
- (6) The importance of Christian community for spiritual nourishment, fellowship and growth.

All other matters of interest are considered to be tangential, and within evangelicalism there is a substantial degree of interpretative pluralism.<sup>30</sup>

Despite the variety of expression, evangelicalism has on occasion developed full denominational expressions (e.g., the Southern Baptist Convention).<sup>31</sup> This is not the norm, however, as the history of the evangelical movement attests. It has always been marked by multiple shifts in group allegiance, leadership, institutions, goals, etc. Institutions that at one time might represent one perspective might at another time embrace an entirely different perspective.<sup>32</sup> Thus the nature of this vibrant movement is amorphous.<sup>33</sup>

Although the terms “evangelical” and “fundamentalist” are easily conflated,<sup>34</sup> evangelicalism is not fundamentalism and evangelical scholars are not fundamentalists.<sup>35</sup> This dissertation will demonstrate that there can be great diversity within evangelical hermeneutics (see Conclusion).<sup>36</sup>

In his “Evangelical Interpretation of Scripture,” Grant R. Osborne makes this observation:

---

<sup>28</sup> Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, 121.

<sup>29</sup> Alister McGrath, *Evangelicalism & the Future of Christianity*, 55–56. Following the list, McGrath offers an extensive discussion of each point (56–87). For similar lists, cf.: *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, 121; Noll, *Between Faith and Criticism*, 2, 85; D. W. Bebbington, “Evangelicalism: Britain” *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Modern Christian Thought*, Alister E. McGrath, ed., (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 184; Osborne, “Evangelical Biblical Interpretation,” 359; and Richard J. Mouw, “Evangelical Civility and the Academic Calling,” *Should God Get Tenure: Essays on Religion and Higher Education*, David W. Gill, ed., (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 118.

<sup>30</sup> For an intriguing view of pluralism in the lives of evangelical women, see Lori G. Beaman, *Shared Beliefs, Different Lives: Women’s Identities in Evangelical Context* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 1999). See also my review: Lori G. Beaman, *Shared Beliefs, Different Lives: Women’s Identities in Evangelical Context*. *Journal of Religion and Society* 2 (2000), Online: <http://moses.creighton.edu/JRS/2000/2000-r22.html>.

<sup>31</sup> George A. Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 4.

<sup>32</sup> Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, 8.

<sup>33</sup> Reflecting the diverse nature of evangelicalism, Vasquez describes it as “polysemous,” “multifarious” (158), and “variegated” (172).

<sup>34</sup> In this regard see Mark Noll, “The Evangelical Mind in America,” 195; and Alan Wolfe, 4–5.

<sup>35</sup> For a discussion of the distinctions between fundamentalists and evangelicals see Nancy T. Ammerman, “North American Protestant Fundamentalism,” *Fundamentalisms Observed*, Vol. 1, *The Fundamentalism Project*, Martin E. Marty, and R. Scott Abbleby, eds., (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 2–4.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 137.

It is commonly believed among nonevangelicals that fundamentalism-evangelicalism is a uniform tradition, characterized by a rigid, atomistic, and static view of Scripture. Some have gone so far as to caricature the movement as a “nineteenth-century heresy” which has no roots in the Church before that time. For this reason it is important to realize that wide diversity exists within the camp and to understand the historical reasons why this should be so.<sup>37</sup>

Although fundamentalism and evangelicalism roughly meant the same thing during the first half of the twentieth century in America, in 1941 the two traditions followed different trajectories. Fundamentalism had developed what Alister McGrath calls a “countercultural movement.”<sup>38</sup> He explains,

Whereas most nineteenth-century forms of American evangelicalism were culturally centrist, committed to engaging with culture in order to transform it through the gospel, the fundamentalism reaction against “modernity” carried with it, as part of its religious package, a separatist attitude to culture. Certain central doctrines (most notably the absolute, literal authority of Scripture and the premillennial return of Christ) were treated as barriers, intended as much to alienate secular culture as to give fundamentalists a sense of identity and purpose.<sup>39</sup>

In 1941, strict separatist fundamentalists formed the American Council of Christian Churches which was explicitly opposed to all forms of ecumenicism, especially the National Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches. Its founder and primary spokesman, Carl McIntyre, was vehemently opposed to Catholicism, the “social gospel” of New Deal socialism, all forms of communism, and anything that might undermine his conception of America and American Christianity.<sup>40</sup>

In October of the same year, the National Association of Evangelicals was formed by those who wanted an alternative to the isolating separatism of McIntyre. Seven characteristics distinguished this nascent evangelicalism from earlier fundamentalism. They include:<sup>41</sup>

- (1) A commitment to ongoing dialogue with the world of scholarship.
- (2) A rejection of radical separation (i.e., a refusal to interact with anyone not following the fundamentalist creed).
- (3) Openness on non-cardinal issues, including various modes of baptism, Calvinism or Arminianism, differing eschatological persuasions, etc.

---

<sup>37</sup> Grant R. Osborne, “Evangelical Interpretation of Scripture: The Background to Contemporary Evangelical Exposition,” *The Bible in the Churches: How Various Christians Interpret the Scriptures* (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 1994): 129.

<sup>38</sup> Alister McGrath, *Evangelicalism and the Future of Christianity* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995), 29.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> Mark A. Noll, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 101–02.

<sup>41</sup> Osborne, “Evangelical Interpretation of Scripture,” 135; see also, “Evangelical Biblical Interpretation,” 359.

- (4) Cooperative evangelism, e.g., the involvement of mainline denomination pastors in Billy Graham crusades (a major expression of the “new evangelicalism”<sup>42</sup>).
- (5) More eclectic education, as seen in the formation of Fuller Seminary in 1947.
- (6) Non-aligned political expression, involving the refusal to demand flag-waving conservatism.
- (7) Social concern, as seen in the emergence of missionary organizations, like World Vision, that focus on relief and care for the poor.

Commenting on the divide between fundamentalism and evangelicalism, Nancy T. Ammerman writes in the University of Chicago’s, *Fundamentalisms Observed* series,<sup>43</sup>

As orthodox [Christians] began to organize for survival in a world dominated by the non-orthodox, two significantly different strategies emerged. Seeking a broad cultural base for their gospel, one group saw benefits in learning to get along with outsiders. They did not wish to adopt the outsiders’ ways, but they wanted to be respected. They began, especially after World War II, to take the name “evangelical” for themselves. . . . The other group insisted that getting along was no virtue and that active opposition to liberalism, secularism, and communism was to be pursued. This group retained the name “fundamentalist.”

It is the former group, the evangelicals, that is the focus of this dissertation.<sup>44</sup>

Perhaps the most important distinctive feature of evangelicalism for an examination of selected evangelical Old Testament scholarship on *herem* is its stance on the Bible. In the context of such variety in evangelicalism, one point is never compromised: *the Bible is the word of God*. In Alister McGrath’s words, “evangelicalism recognizes only one normative historical source—the gospel of Jesus Christ, as this is proclaimed in the New Testament and anticipated in the Old.”<sup>45</sup> Thus, the Bible stands above any tradition, institution, personal experience, or personal

---

<sup>42</sup> Noll, “The Evangelical Mind in America,” 204; see also, McGrath, *Evangelicalism and the Future of Christianity*, 36.

<sup>43</sup> Ammerman, 4. McGrath pursues a different explanation of the roots of evangelicalism in *Evangelicalism and the Future of Christianity*. Rather than perceiving evangelicalism as an offshoot of fundamentalism, he understands it as a return to the convictions of the mainstream of the Reformation. The mentality of the radical Reformation was separatist, affirming the need to leave godless societies and form communities of covenant believers. In many ways this mentality is similar to the convictions of fundamentalists. (He likens the radical Reformation and fundamentalists with H. Richard Niebuhr’s “Christ Against Culture,” see Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*.) Evangelicals, on the other hand, seem to be pursue a life of cultural engagement and thus follow Luther’s vision more closely in trying to enact renewal from *within* the church—the majority culture of Luther’s day (36–39).

<sup>44</sup> At this point in his book, McGrath interjects, “Some writers have persisted in applying the outdated and totally inappropriate label *fundamentalism* to evangelicalism, with polemical intentions that parallel those of some fanatical right-wing politicians who brand anything that hints of social concern as “communist.” . . . The use of the term *fundamentalist* in this context is tired, outdated, and must now be deemed to be politically incorrect. . . . [The] clear distinction between “fundamentalists” and “conservative evangelical Christians” is to be welcomed, as representing a somewhat overdue recognition by the academy that evangelicalism represents a distinctive, viable and *intellectually respectable* Christian option in its own right (42–43).

<sup>45</sup> Alister McGrath, *Evangelicalism & the Future of Christianity*, 23.



intuition.<sup>46</sup> For all evangelicals the Bible is utterly reliable for “matters of faith and practice.” Mark Noll was correct when he wrote that for evangelicals, “where the Bible speaks, God speaks.”<sup>47</sup> When evangelicals read the Bible they hear the words of God, and this is precisely the problem when reading the *herem* texts of the Old Testament. Can directives to annihilate entire cities, men, women, children, and even cattle be real? They sound so un-biblical. It makes one stutter, back-peddle, and re-read the passage, only to wonder if God was really directing genocide. How do evangelicals read such disturbing stories? This dissertation will examine the work of Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., Peter C. Craigie, and Tremper Longman, III for an answer.

## Previous Scholarly Work

Several scholars have provided thorough reviews of the history of modern study of warfare in ancient Israel.<sup>48</sup> Their work goes beyond the confines of *herem* in particular to include military personnel, weaponry, similarities and differences between ancient Israelite warfare and nearby countries, and the like.<sup>49</sup> It is unnecessary to repeat their work here. Rather, a brief review of selected writers will provide a framework upon which to build the study of *herem* in modern evangelical scholarship.

In his “Introduction” to the English translation of Gerhard von Rad’s (1901–71) *Holy War in Ancient Israel* (1951), Ben C. Ollenburger notes that modern interest in the wars of ancient Israel and in *herem* began over a century ago with the publication of Julius Wellhausen’s *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel* (1885).<sup>50</sup> Wellhausen (1844–1918) suggested that for the people of Israel war was not something tangential to its religious or cultural experience. Rather, it was the epicenter of this ancient culture. He claimed that:

---

<sup>46</sup> McGrath ties this evangelical position to what he calls, the “formal principle of the Reformation,” frequently summarized by the phrase *sola Scriptura*. By this he means that only those beliefs and practices that have direct biblical support can be considered as binding on Christians (*Evangelicalism & the Future of Christianity*, 59).

<sup>47</sup> Noll, *Between Faith and Criticism*, 6.

<sup>48</sup> Substantive reviews of the history of modern study of warfare in ancient Israel include: Susan Niditch, *War in the Hebrew Bible: A Study in the Ethics of Violence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 4–10; Charles Sherlock, *The God Who Fights: The War Tradition in Holy Scripture* (Lewiston, NY: Rutherford House, 1993), 1–10; T. R. Hobbs, *A Time for War: A Study of Warfare in the Old Testament* (Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, 1989), 9–26; and Sa-Moon Kang, *Divine War in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East* (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1989), 1–7. Special mention should be given to Ben C. Ollenburger’s “Introduction” to the English edition of von Rad’s *Holy War in Ancient Israel*. Here Ollenburger provides an extensive review of the salient authors’ views on “holy war” and warfare in ancient Israel with special regard for their “reading” of von Rad. The English version of von Rad’s book also offers a 31 page annotated bibliography of virtually every influential book and journal article on warfare in ancient Israel (see Judith E. Sanderson, “War, Peace, and Justice in the Hebrew Bible: A Representative Bibliography” (*Holy War in Ancient Israel*, 165–66). It goes without saying that this work is indebted to those scholars who have “made straight in the wilderness a highway” for others to follow.

<sup>49</sup> Susan Niditch offers a particularly helpful categorization of previous scholarly work. She maintains that earlier work may be classified as follows: 1) scholars who are interested in historical reconstruction of the biblical text (e.g., Kang); 2) those who are interested in weaponry, military composition, tactics, etc. (e.g., Hobbs, Yadin); 3) those concerned about warfare and worship in ancient Israel (e.g., von Rad, Toombs, Miller, and Kang); and others considering ancient Near Eastern military parallels to the Bible (Weippert, Schwally, Malamet, Schmid, and Kang). A striking lacuna in all of this work, according to Niditch, is the neglect of an ongoing discussion of *herem* (7–8).

<sup>50</sup> Ollenburger, 3.

It was most especially in the graver moments of history [i.e., war] that Israel awoke to full consciousness of itself and of Jehovah. Now, at that time and for centuries afterwards, the high-water marks of history were indicated by the wars it recorded. The name “Israel” means “El does battle,” and Jehovah was the warrior El, after whom the nation styled itself. The camp was, so to speak, at once the cradle in which the nation was nursed and the smithy in which it was welded into unity; it was also the primitive sanctuary. There Israel was, and there was Jehovah.<sup>51</sup>

For Wellhausen, then, war was the incubator of nascent biblical Israel. Thus began more than a century of learned inquiry into the military exploits of the people of the Bible.

Shortly after Wellhausen’s work, Friedrich Schwally published *Der heilige Krieg im alten Israel* (1901). This was the first systematic review of the topic. Schwally agreed with Wellhausen that the nation of Israel had its provenance in war. Since Israel had entered a covenant with God, this incipient relationship had to be defended and on occasion, this would require war. Thus for Schwally, the God of the covenant was a warrior God, and when war was undertaken to defend the covenant it was nothing other than a holy war, or in his words, “a continuous, highly expanded sacrifice.”<sup>52</sup> Because of the work of Schwally and the subsequent writings of von Rad, Ollenburger writes that “‘holy war’ has become part of the scholarly lexicon.”<sup>53</sup>

Wellhausen and Schwally set the stage for von Rad (*Holy War in Ancient Israel*, 1951) who, like them, stressed the religious and cultic aspects of warfare in ancient Israel. Following Schwally, von Rad maintained that ancient Israelite war was a sacred act, a “holy war.” (He equates *herem* with “holy war.”) As such, it is part of an important early religious institution of Israel, and was practiced during the period of the Judges in order to defend the amphictyony.<sup>54</sup> Since von Rad’s theories presuppose the amphictyony, he does not see the practice of holy war extending back into the period before the Judges.<sup>55</sup> For him, there is simply too little reliable information on worship in ancient Israel prior to the tribal confederacy. Without a cultus, holy war simply could not exist because it is an extension of the cult. The biblical references to holy war in Deuteronomy or Joshua, according to von Rad, were probably composed much later and inserted into the narratives of pre-amphictyonic Israel.<sup>56</sup>

Rudolf Smend was the first to call into question the cultic connections of Israelite warfare argued by Wellhausen, Schwally, and von Rad. In *Jahwekrieg und Stammebund (Yahweh War and Tribal Confederation: Reflections upon Israel’s Earliest History*, first published in 1963)

---

<sup>51</sup> Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel* (Glouster, MA: Peter Smith, 1983), 434. Von Rad cites this quotation in *Holy War in Ancient Israel*, and translates the last line of the passage as: “the armed camp, the cradle of the nation, was also its most ancient holy of holies. There was Israel and there was Yahweh” (51). See also Thomas B. Dozeman, *God at War: Power in the Exodus Tradition* (New York: Oxford, 1996), 3.

<sup>52</sup> Friedrich Schwally, *Der heilige Krieg im alten Israel* (Leipzig: Deiterich, 1901), 59.

<sup>53</sup> Ollenburger, 6. It should be added that Max Weber (*Ancient Judaism* 1921, ET 1952) and Johannes Pedersen (*Israel: Its Life and Culture* 1940, 1963) both built upon and nuanced Schwally’s work. Pedersen called ancient Israel, “one great host of warriors” (2).

<sup>54</sup> The “amphictyony” is one means of explaining the tribal organization of ancient Israel. Based on early Greek communal leagues, it understands Israel to be a loosely associated confederation of twelve tribes organized around the cult of YHWH who was worshipped at a central shrine (first Shechem, then Shiloh).

<sup>55</sup> Von Rad, *Holy War*, 56.

<sup>56</sup> Von Rad discusses this process in chapter 3, “Holy War in the Post-Solomonic Novella,” 74–93.

Smend determined that, despite the ritual features accompanying warfare, the wars of early Israel were not a cultic expression, or some type of worship. Rather, they were simply expressions of political or military aspirations. Thus it was inaccurate to talk of “holy war” per se; rather, “Yahweh war” was more appropriate.<sup>57</sup>

Manfred Weippert continued Smend’s critique of the holy war thesis in his study of holy war in ancient Israel and Assyria (1972). On the basis of Mari, Hittite, and neo-Assyrian cultic activities in war, he maintains that there is no textual basis for maintaining a distinction between holy war on the one hand, and regular or profane war in these cultures on the other.<sup>58</sup> Moreover, he argues that the cultic and ritual components of the so-called “holy war” were not unique to Israel, but instead were common through the ancient Near East. That same year (1972) Fritz Stolz concurred with Weippert’s findings. Stolz’s work highlights the “non-homogenous” early cultural life of ancient Israel. With such diversity between the tribes, an institution like “holy war,” as defended by von Rad and others, was simply impossible. He maintained that there was no discernable pattern of warfare shared by the tribes, no ritual continuity between individual military engagements, no common vocabulary to describe warfare, and no repeated political or cultic setting for commencing a war.<sup>59</sup> Thus, “holy war” for Stolz is a misnomer.

Following the work of Weippert and Stolz, scholars have continued to move away from the “holy war” versus “Yahweh war” controversy that occupied earlier writers. For example, H. H. Schmid’s work focuses on the themes of peace and cosmic order in the Old Testament.<sup>60</sup> Since the mythical clash of the powers of cosmic order and chaos are a recurring theme throughout ancient Near Eastern literature, Schmid maintains that these ideas must also lie behind the Old Testament’s theology of warfare. Consequently for him, the battle for peace is the only appropriate background in which to read the war narratives of the Bible. War was at its root an attempt to restore what had been fractured by the forces of chaos; it was to restore peace.<sup>61</sup> Frank Moore Cross and Patrick D. Miller have written on warfare in early Israel from the perspective of early Hebrew poetry.<sup>62</sup> This literature portrays the God of Israel arrayed against the forces of chaos bent on destroying the universe (an image borrowed from Canaanite literature). While fighting these elements the Lord also fought against the historical or actual enemies of his people.<sup>63</sup> Thus lying behind the war narratives of the Bible are even earlier poetic traditions of war (e.g., Exod 15; Deut 33; and Ps 68) which Cross and Miller examine.

Scholarly concern with the issues raised by *herem* and warfare in the Bible has continued unabated. One recent study by Millard C. Lind, *Yahweh is a Warrior: The Theology of Warfare in Ancient Israel* (1980), was written by a Mennonite who provides an exegetical basis for a pacifist interpretation of the Pentateuch, the Deuteronomistic history, and ancient Israelite war

---

<sup>57</sup> Rudolf Smend, *Yahweh War and Tribal Confederation: Reflections upon Israel’s Earliest History*, M. G. Rogers, trans., (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970), 36–36, 40–42.

<sup>58</sup> Manfred Weippert, “‘Heiliger Krieg’ in Israel und Assyrien,” *ZAW* 84 (1972): 490.

<sup>59</sup> Fritz Stolz, *Jahwes und Israels Krieg*, *Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments* 60 (Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 1972), 204–206. In this regard also see G. H. Jones, “‘Holy’ War or ‘Yahweh War?’” *VT* 25 (1975): 642–658.

<sup>60</sup> H. H. Schmid, “Heiliger Krieg und Gottesfrieden im alten Testament,” *Alttestamentliche Theologie* (Zurich: Theologische Verlag, 1972), 91–120.

<sup>61</sup> Schmid, 96, 120.

<sup>62</sup> Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973); Patrick D. Miller, *The Warrior in Early Israel* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972).

<sup>63</sup> See Ollenburger, 30.

narratives.<sup>64</sup> He maintains that the early paradigm of the Lord fighting on behalf of his people (as at the Red Sea when Moses told the people to “stand and see the deliverance of the LORD” from the pursuing hordes of Pharaoh [Exod 14:13]) is the normative mode of military engagement in the Old Testament.<sup>65</sup> Only after Israel became like the nations around them did other types of conflict become necessary. T. R. Hobbs, *A Time for War: A Study of Warfare in the Old Testament* (1989), describes ancient Israelite warfare (personnel, tactics, weaponry, etc.) and discusses related historical and literary issues.<sup>66</sup> His goal in writing is to provide a more accurate basis upon which Christians may debate the issues of the divine warrior and warfare in the Old Testament.

Philip D. Stern’s, *The Biblical Herem: A Window on Israel’s Religious Experience* (1991), is the first monograph on *herem* and pursues a line of thought similar to H. H. Schmid’s earlier work.<sup>67</sup> For Stern, *herem* was a means of obtaining land and restoring “ordered existence.”<sup>68</sup> By so doing, the moral order of the universe is approximated. He furthermore suggests that the use of *herem* in extra-biblical sources implies some type of sacrifice “to win the gods’ aid in the battle against the encroachment of chaos.”<sup>69</sup>

Susan Niditch presents a distinctive argument in her book, *War in the Hebrew Bible: A Study in the Ethics of Violence* (1993). She maintains that the Israelites, though different from modern Bible readers in many ways, were also similar to them in that they worried about the ethics of war and the justness of the “ban.”<sup>70</sup> Their queries, she holds, reflect an intra-biblical debate and are evinced in “the confusion and self-contradiction implicit in portrayals of war, from text to text, and within texts, as biblical writers themselves attempt to make sense of this violent life-taking phenomenon.”<sup>71</sup> Thus the Bible preserves more than one perspective on *herem*.<sup>72</sup>

Perhaps the most radical critique of *herem* and warfare in the Hebrew Bible may be found in Gerd Lüdemann’s book, *The Unholy in Holy Scripture: The Dark Side of the Bible* (1996). This book calls to the church to repudiate the repulsive *herem* texts of the Bible. Lüdemann devotes an entire chapter (“Unholy Violence Against Others”) to the topic *herem* of in the Bible. He addresses issues such as, “The phenomenon of the Holy War,” “Is the ban historically excusable?,” “Reasons for the slaughter of the Canaanites,” and “At no time can there be different opinions on genocide.” The thrust of his work may be found in his Conclusion (“A Criticism of my Church”) where he calls for a “creative break” to the preaching from the

---

<sup>64</sup> Millard C. Lind, *Yahweh is a Warrior: The Theology of Warfare in Ancient Israel* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1980). For a supporting opinion, see G. Ernest Wright, *The Old Testament and Theology* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), 123–24.

<sup>65</sup> Lind, 170.

<sup>66</sup> T. R. Hobbs, *A Time for War: A Study of Warfare in the Old Testament* (Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, 1989).

<sup>67</sup> Philip D. Stern, *The Biblical Herem: A Window on Israel’s Religious Experience* (Atlanta: Scholar’s Press, 1991).

<sup>68</sup> Stern, 49.

<sup>69</sup> Stern, 50.

<sup>70</sup> Niditch, 10.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.* For an opposing view, cf. G. E. Wright, *The Old Testament and Theology*, 123–128.

<sup>72</sup> Niditch pursues her thesis along seven lines of thought (she devotes chapter-length reviews to each of the following): The Ban as God’s Portion (meaning sacrifice); The Ban as God’s Justice; Priestly Ideology of War in Numbers 31; The Bardic Tradition of War; Ideology of Tricksterism; Ideology of Expediency; and Toward an Ideology of Non-Participation.

“Word of God” that has caused such pain over the millennia (e.g., the Crusades, the Holocaust, etc.).<sup>73</sup>

Most recently, Harold Wayne Ballard, Jr. has focused his efforts on an examination of the divine warrior motif in the Psalter.<sup>74</sup> In *The Divine Warrior in the Psalms* (1999), Ballard begins by reviewing the divine warrior in the cultic literature of the ancient Near East and then proceeds to examine the motif in ten representative Psalms.<sup>75</sup> He thus presents a composite picture of the divine warrior in the Psalms that is informed by similar imagery found in other surrounding cultures.

This brief review of the modern scholarly study of *herem* and warfare in the Bible demonstrates that there is no dearth of interest in this field of study. On the contrary, this most disturbing of biblical concepts continues to attract learned inquiry as a biblical and military convention that both intrigues and horrifies. Before examining the perspectives of Walter C Kaiser, Jr., Peter C. Craigie, and Tremper Longman, III on *herem* and warfare in the Bible, a review of *herem* in the Bible is warranted.

---

<sup>73</sup> Gerd Lüdemann, *The Unholy in Holy Scripture: The Dark Side of the Bible*, John Bowden, trans., (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 133–36.

<sup>74</sup> Harold Wayne Ballard, Jr., *The Divine Warrior in the Psalms* (North Richland Hills, TX: Bibal Press, 1999).

<sup>75</sup> Ballard examines Pss: 7, 44, 46, 68, 74, 76, 78, 105, 110, and 144.

## CHAPTER 1

### *HEREM*

There are many resources available to those who would like to study warfare in the Hebrew Bible in general, or the phenomenon of *herem* in particular. The last fifty years have seen a profusion of study in this area. Monograph-length examinations include Susan Niditch's *War in the Hebrew Bible: A Study in the Ethics of Violence* (Oxford, 1993) and Philip D. Stern's *The Biblical Herem: A Window on Israel's Religious Experience* (Scholars Press, 1991). Other scholars have included reviews of *herem* within their larger studies of warfare in the Bible.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, many article-length studies could be added to the list.<sup>2</sup> Obviously, there has been no dearth of scholarly interest in *herem* and warfare in ancient Israel. This chapter will examine the use of *herem* in the Bible with a particular focus on its occurrence in Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy is by far one of the richest sources of information on the military customs and concepts of ancient Israel.<sup>3</sup> This text not only contains a series of detailed directives about

---

<sup>1</sup> Some prominent reviews include: Gerd Lüdemann, *The Unholy in Holy Scripture: The Dark Side of the Bible* (Westminster John Knox Press, 1997 [first published by Radius Verlag, 1996]); Charles Sherlock, *The God Who Fights: The War Tradition in Holy Scripture* (Lewiston, NY: Rutherford House, 1993); James Barr, *Biblical Faith and Natural Theology* (Oxford, 1993); T. R. Hobbs, *A Time for War: A Study of Warfare in the Old Testament* (Michael Glazier, 1989); Sa-Moon Kang, *Divine War in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East* (Walter de Gruyter, 1989); Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford, 1985); Millard C. Lind, *Yahweh is a Warrior: The Theology of Warfare in Ancient Israel* (Herald Press, 1980); Patrick D. Miller, *The Divine Warrior in Early Israel* (Harvard, 1973); G. Ernest Wright, *The Old Testament and Theology* (Harper & Row, 1969); Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions* (McGraw-Hill, 1961); C. H. W. Brekelmans, *De Herem in het Oude Testament* (Nijmegen: Centrale Drukkerij, 1959); and Gerhard von Rad, *Holy War in Ancient Israel* (Eerdmans, 1991 [first published by Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1951]).

<sup>2</sup> Some noteworthy articles include: Robert P. Carroll, "War," *What the Bible Really Says* (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1989); John Howard Yoder, "'To Your Tents, O Israel: The Legacy of Israel's Experience of Holy War,'" *SR* 18 (1989): 345–362; William Horbury, "Extrication and Excommunication," *VT* 25 (1985): 13–38; Carol P. Christ, "Feminist Liberation Theology and Yahweh as Holy Warrior: An Analysis of Symbol," *Women's Spirit Bonding*, Janet Kalven and Mary I. Buckley, eds., (New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1984): 202–212; H. Eberhard von Waldow, "The Concept of War in the Old Testament," *HBT* 6 (1984): 27–48; Waldemar Janzen, "God as Warrior and Lord: A Conversation with G. E. Wright," *BASOR* 220 (1975): 73–75; G. H. Jones, "'Holy' War or 'Yahweh' War?" *VT* 25 (1975): 642–658; Duane L. Christensen, "Num 21:14–15 and The Book of the Wars of Yahweh," *CBQ* 36 (1974): 359–60; Moshe Greenberg, and Haim Cohn, "*Herem*," *EncJud* 8, Cecil Roth, and Geoffrey Wigoder, eds., 16 vols., (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1972), 344–355; Michael Janzen, "War in the Old Testament," *Mennonite Quarterly Review* 46 (1972): 155–66; Michael Walzer, "Exodus 32 and the Theory of Holy War: The History of a Citation," *THR* 61 (1968): 1–14; S. R. Driver, "Hebrew Homonyms," *VTSup* 16 (1967): 50–64; F. M. Cross, "The Divine Warrior in Israel's Early Cult" *Biblical Motifs: Origins and Transformations*, A. Altman, ed. (Harvard, 1966); Patrick D. Miller, "God the Warrior: A Problem in Biblical Interpretation and Apologetics," *Int* 19 (1965): 39–46; Norman K. Gottwald, "'Holy War' in Deuteronomy: Analysis and Critique," *RevExp* 61 (1961): 296–310.

<sup>3</sup> Von Rad, *Holy War*, 115.

military engagement and conduct in battle, in contrast to the Holiness Code (Lev 17–26) or the Book of the Covenant (Exod 20:22–23:33), von Rad maintains that an “outspoken war ideology” permeates the entire narrative.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, Deuteronomy holds the bulk of the Pentateuchal material referring to *herem*. (In contrast, Genesis is the only book in the Torah where *herem* is lacking.<sup>5</sup>) Among the Pentateuchal law codes, only Deuteronomy contains regulations for war.<sup>6</sup> It thus provides a worthy starting place of the study of *herem*.<sup>7</sup>

## The Biblical *Herem*

According to the *TDOT*, the root **חרם** (“*herem*”), occurs fifty-one times in the Hebrew Bible;<sup>8</sup> with these, *herem* appears thirty-three times in Deuteronomy through 2 Kings.<sup>9</sup> Although it does not appear in the Qal,<sup>10</sup> it regularly appears as a Hiphil or Hophal<sup>11</sup> verb, or as a noun. The Hiphil of *herem* assumes various meanings in translation, including:<sup>12</sup>

- (1) To consecrate something or someone as a permanent and definitive offering for the sanctuary.
- (2) In war, to consecrate a city and its inhabitants to destruction.
- (3) To carry out this type of destruction, or totally annihilate a population.

The passive Hophal assumes a slightly different connotation:<sup>13</sup>

- (1) To be condemned to capital punishment with certain additional conditions
- (2) The execution of capital punishment and/or the confiscation of property.”

The noun form of *herem* refers to the object or person consecrated or condemned, or to someone who is contaminated by contact with that which is consecrated or condemned to destruction. The noun may also refer to the actual act of consecration, extermination, or killing.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Stern, *The Biblical Herem*, 89.

<sup>6</sup> Cyril S. Rodd, *Glimpses of a Strange Land: Studies in Old Testament Ethics* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 200), 195.

<sup>7</sup> This chapter is intended to review and summarize the work of multiple scholars on *herem* in the Hebrew Bible as preparatory ground work for examining the three evangelical scholars in question. For an exhaustive examination of *herem* see Philip D. Stern, *The Biblical Herem: A Window on Israel's Religious Experience* (Scholars Press, 1993).

<sup>8</sup> *Herem* occurs 48 times Hiphil and 3 times in the Hophal. 34 of these occurrences are in narrative texts, two in legal texts, and 8 in prophetic texts (Lohfink, 181). For a review of *herem* in the LXX see Appendix C.

<sup>9</sup> Jackie A. Naudé, “**חרם**,” *NIDOTTE* 2:276.

<sup>10</sup> The “Qal” is the basic, or unaugmented verbal form of Hebrew words. Not all Hebrew verbs from antiquity have a Qal form and thus theoretical forms are at times suggested by scholars. This is the case with **חרם**.

<sup>11</sup> “Hiphil” and “Hophal” are additional forms of verbs in Hebrew. The Hiphil is commonly (though not always) causative, and the Hophal is passive.

<sup>12</sup> N. Lohfink, “**חרם**,” Vol. 5, David E. Green, trans., in *TDOT*, 9 vols., Johannes G. Botterwick, Helmer Ringgren, and H. Fabry, eds., (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977–1998), 188. Cf. Leon J. Wood, “**חרם**,” *TWOT* 1: 324.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. Cf. Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Toward Old Testament Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983), 266–67.

In contrast to BDB,<sup>15</sup> Lohfink maintains that the usual translation of *herem* as “ban” is false and misleading. He says that meaning is derived from a later medieval Jewish understanding of *herem* which corresponded to secular banishment or ecclesiastical excommunication. Such an interpretation is unattested in the Hebrew Bible.<sup>16</sup> Although the use of *herem* for social banishment, so popular in later times, is indeed wanting in the Hebrew Bible as Lohfink suggests, the ban as something dedicated to destruction is very apparent in the Hebrew Bible as BDB maintains.<sup>17</sup> S. R. Driver says *herem* became “a mode of secluding, or rendering harmless, anything imperiling the religious life of the nation, such objects being withdrawn from society at large.”<sup>18</sup>

The narratives of the Hebrew Bible suggest that the following are to be considered to be *herem*:<sup>19</sup>

- (1) Israelites who worship other gods, idols or their accoutrements including individuals or entire communities. This is the worst degree of *herem* and as such, an abomination to the Lord. Since this type of *herem* is considered to be contagious (Josh 7:24–25), human beings and livestock must be killed and inanimate objects must be burned. Nothing is to be retained of the spoil or the livestock.

Whoever sacrifices to any god other than the LORD must be destroyed. (Exod 22:20 [H19])

<sup>25</sup> The images of their gods you are to burn in the fire. Do not covet the silver and gold on them, and do not take it for yourselves, or you will be ensnared by it, for it is detestable to the LORD your God. <sup>26</sup> Do not bring a detestable thing into your house or you, like it, will be set apart for destruction. Utterly abhor and detest it, for it is set apart for destruction. (Deut 7:25–26)

- (2) The six nations inhabiting the land promised to the Israelites. Of these peoples, not a soul is to remain alive:

<sup>17</sup> Completely destroy them—the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites—as the LORD your God has commanded you. <sup>18</sup> Otherwise, they will

---

<sup>14</sup> Lohfink, 188.

<sup>15</sup> William Gesenius, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, Edward Robinson, trans., Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, eds., (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 355.

<sup>16</sup> Lohfink, 188. For a corroborating perspective see William Horbury, “Extrication and Excommunication,” *VT* 25 (1985): 19–20. For a converse opinion see: Johannes B. Bauer, “Ban,” *Sacramentum Verbi: An Encyclopedia of Biblical Theology*. New York: Herder and Herder, 1970 (55–57).

<sup>17</sup> BDB, 355–56.

<sup>18</sup> S. R. Driver, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Deuteronomy*, ICC 5, C. A. Briggs, S. R. Driver, and A. Plummer, eds., (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1902), 98.

<sup>19</sup> Moshe Greenberg, and Haim Cohn, “*Herem*,” *EncJud* 8, Cecil Roth, and Geoffrey Wigoder, eds., 16 vols., (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1972), 344–45. For a similar review see Norman K. Gottwald, “‘Holy War’ in Deuteronomy: Analysis and Critique,” *RevExp* 61 (1964): 297–98.



teach you to follow all the detestable things they do in worshiping their gods, and you will sin against the LORD your God. (Deut 20:17–18)<sup>20</sup>

Again, as with the first category of *herem*, contamination by foreign cultic practices is a major motivation factor in evoking the *herem*.

(3) Anything that someone individually offers to the Lord as *herem*. This also is most sacred and once offered may not be revoked at a later time.

<sup>28</sup> Nothing that a man owns and devotes to the LORD—whether man or animal or family land—may be sold or redeemed; everything so devoted is most holy to the LORD. <sup>29</sup> No person devoted to destruction may be ransomed; he must be put to death. (Lev 27:28–29)<sup>21</sup>

In one passage, the Israelites promised to destroy (*herem*) the enemy if the Lord would grant them military victory (Num 21):

<sup>1</sup> When the Canaanite king of Arad, who lived in the Negev, heard that Israel was coming along the road to Atharim, he attacked the Israelites and captured some of them. <sup>2</sup> Then Israel made this vow to the LORD: “If you will deliver these people into our hands, we will totally destroy their cities.” <sup>3</sup> The LORD listened to Israel’s plea and gave the Canaanites over to them. They completely destroyed them and their towns; so the place was named Hormah.

More frequently, however, the Bible records that God commands the total destruction of the enemy without regard to an Israelite plea for victory over an enemy. This is especially true in Deuteronomy and Joshua. Sometimes a reason for the annihilation is given (e.g., Sihon and Og would not allow the Israelites to pass through their territory [Num 21:21–23; Deut 2:30–35]; or the persistent temptation of idolatry in Canaan [Deut 7:2–4]). Elsewhere the reader looks in vain for the reason for the *herem* and must infer it from the context.<sup>22</sup> Accompanying verbs of destruction (e.g., “struck with the edge of the sword” [Josh 10:28]; or “we left no survivor” [Deut 2:34]) and lists of living beings or animals to be destroyed remove any possibility of misinterpretation on the reader’s part. In addition to *herem*, the Israelites were to “attack” and “spare nothing” including, “men, women, children and infants, cattle and sheep, camels and donkeys” (1 Sam 15:3, cf. Josh 10:28). Susan Niditch is right; the *herem* passages are a most chilling narrative.<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> See Deut 7:1–2 for a slightly different list. With regard to Deut 20:17–18, see Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 200–01.

<sup>21</sup> Wood, 324.

<sup>22</sup> See Josh 6:17, 21; 8:24–29; 10:28, 30, 31–32.

<sup>23</sup> Niditch, 28.

## *Herem* in Deuteronomy

The passages in Deuteronomy that contain the word *herem* include: 2:26–37 (v. 34 in particular); 3:1–7 (v. 6); 7:1–6 and 17–26 (vs. 2 and 26); 13:12–18 (v. 17); and 20:10–20 (v. 17). In contrast to the detailed battle narratives of Joshua and Judges, the battles of Deuteronomy 2 and 3 are described briefly in order to direct the reader’s focus from the battle itself to the paradigmatic quality of the story. Thus these battles become a model of how Israel should conduct itself in war and of what they could expect when they did so. The leitmotif associated with these battles is “totality”: all of the enemy is defeated, all their territory is captured, all their cattle are taken as booty. Indeed, in fourteen verses (2:31–3:1), *kol* (“all”) is repeated no less than fourteen times. No survivor escapes; no city is spared.<sup>24</sup>

Though the Lord had given Sihon and his land to the Israelites (2:24), Moses sent messengers to the king in order to request safe passage through his territory. The king refused such passage and chose instead to engage Israel in battle. The Bible records that the result of the conflict was the total destruction of the southern Transjordan kingdom:

The LORD our God delivered him over to us and we struck him down, together with his sons and his whole army. At that time we took all his towns and completely destroyed them—men, women and children. We left no survivors. (2:33–34)

Moreover, the Israelites took as booty both the livestock and the valuable objects (i.e., the “spoil” of war) of Sihon and his people. The result was continued military success in the surrounding areas as word of the Israelites’ defeat of Sihon spread and Israel engaged other communities nearby. “Not one town was too strong for us. The LORD our God gave us all of them” (36).

J. H. Tigay maintains that in the context of ancient warfare, where the gods were believed to be the main fighters against the forces arrayed to destroy a people, the proscription of an enemy “seemed to be a natural way for an army to express devotion to a deity.”<sup>25</sup> Thus the *herem* could indeed be an act of worship. However Deuteronomy never speaks of proscribing wartime victims to God. Rather, it uses the *herem* in a purely secular fashion, meaning simply “destruction.” It is not a sacrifice to God per se, but purely a necessary measure to prevent the Israelites from adopting Canaanite practices.<sup>26</sup>

Chapter three of Deuteronomy is a continuation of the narrative of chapter two. After successfully removing the threat of Sihon and the Amorites and committing them to the *herem*, the Israelites then moved north toward Bashan and its king Og. Again God had promised this land to Israel as part of what would be their new homeland. Nevertheless a battle ensued and Bashan was destroyed and no survivor remained. The description of the cities “fortified with high walls and with gates and bars” (5) together with many unwallled villages suggests the magnitude of the conflict. The cities of Og were treated in the same manner as those of Sihon.<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup> Jeffrey H. Tigay, *Deuteronomy*, in *The JPS Torah Commentary*, Nahum M. Sarna, ed., (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1996), 32.

<sup>25</sup> Tigay, 471.

<sup>26</sup> Tigay, 472.

<sup>27</sup> Driver, *Commentary on Deuteronomy*, 51.

Such formidable obstacles were little match for the army of Israel, and this victory is recalled many years later in the nation's corporate memory:

<sup>10</sup> He struck down many nations and killed mighty kings—<sup>11</sup> Sihon king of the Amorites, Og king of Bashan and all the kings of Canaan—<sup>12</sup> and he gave their land as an inheritance, an inheritance to his people Israel. (Ps 135:10–12; cf. 136:18–22)

Whereas the *herem* of Deuteronomy 2 and 3 had a narrow focus (on Sihon, Og, and their people), the *herem* of chapter 7 is much broader including a list of people to be either driven out of the land or exterminated. Similar lists with some differences appear elsewhere (cf. Gen 15:19–21; Exod 3:8, 17; 23:23; 33:2; Josh 3:10; 24:11; and especially Deut 20:17).<sup>28</sup> These lists are intentionally general and are meant to reflect the pre-Israelite population of Canaan and some of the surrounding areas. Inhabitants who were not driven out or who did not leave of their own accord were to be eliminated. No treaty was to be made with them and no mercy was to be offered. Chapter seven continues after the call for the *herem* to warn against intermarriage with foreigners:

<sup>3</sup> Do not intermarry with them. Do not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons, <sup>4</sup> for they will turn your sons away from following me to serve other gods, and the LORD's anger will burn against you and will quickly destroy you. <sup>5</sup> This is what you are to do to them: Break down their altars, smash their sacred stones, cut down their Asherah poles and burn their idols in the fire. <sup>6</sup> For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession. (Deut 7)

The reason behind such aggressive military action against the inhabitants of Canaan had nothing to do with ethnic issues. Rather, the ongoing viability of the covenant between *YHWH* and the people of Israel was at stake. The people could not worship other gods and continue as recipients of covenantal blessings. A covenant with the LORD was an exclusive covenant and thus precluded all other covenants. Syncretism was not an option.

Chapter 7 concludes its discussion on the conquest by mentioning that no nation would be able to stand against the army of Israel (24). With the Lord's help, Israel would be victorious. Nevertheless, there was another danger that would present itself in the land of Canaan which, if the Israelites were not careful, would ultimately give victory to the Canaanites. That danger was again the allure of idolatry:

<sup>24</sup> No one will be able to stand up against you; you will destroy them. <sup>25</sup> The images of their gods you are to burn in the fire. Do not covet the silver and gold on them, and do not take it for yourselves, or you will be ensnared by it, for it is detestable to the LORD your God. <sup>26</sup> Do not bring a detestable thing into your house or you, like it, will be set apart for destruction. Utterly abhor and detest it, for it is set apart for destruction. (Deut 7)

---

<sup>28</sup> For an extensive study of the variations in the lists and multiple ancient Near Eastern parallels see Stern: 89–103, or Christensen: 152–160. For a review of *herem* and its possible ancient Near Eastern context see: Abraham Malamat, "The Ban in Mari and the Bible," in the *Proceedings of the Ninth Meeting of the Die Ou-Testamentiese Werkgemeenskap in Suid-Afrika*: The University of Stellenbosch, (1966: 40–49).

All contact with the cultic accoutrements of the Canaanites was to be avoided lest the Israelites become *herem* themselves by contamination. Verse 26 ends with two strong words of rejection, “utterly abhor and detest it [the *herem*].” S. R. Driver maintains that only such an attitude would be able to keep the Israelites away from the enticements of Canaanite cultic practices. Idolatry would not be tolerated.<sup>29</sup>

The next passage to include the word *herem* in Deuteronomy is chapter 13. Its primary theme is “the temptation to worship other gods.”<sup>30</sup> Whether from a prophet (13:1-3), a family member (13:6–11), or from someone in the community at large (13:12–13), in every instance, those who instigate idolatry are to be put to death. The passage concludes with,

<sup>15</sup> You must certainly put to the sword all who live in that town. *Destroy it completely*, both its people and its livestock. <sup>16</sup> Gather all the plunder of the town into the middle of the public square and completely burn the town and all its plunder as a whole burnt offering to the LORD your God. It is to remain a ruin forever, never to be rebuilt. <sup>17</sup> None of those *condemned things* shall be found in your hands, so that the LORD will turn from his fierce anger; he will show you mercy, have compassion on you, and increase your numbers, as he promised on oath to your forefathers, <sup>18</sup> because you obey the LORD your God, keeping all his commands that I am giving you today and doing what is right in his eyes. (italics mine)

Even entire communities that chose to reject the Lord to worship other gods were to be punished just as false prophets and interpreters of dreams would be punished (cf. Deut 13 and 18). If upon a thorough investigation, it becomes certain that the people have abandoned the Lord saying, “Let us go and worship other gods’ (gods you have not known),”<sup>31</sup> then the town must be completely destroyed (“*herem-ed*”). Inhabitants, livestock, and all its contents were to be made a whole burnt offering to the Lord and the town was to remain an eternal ruin, never inhabited again. Such abandonment of an inhabitable site runs contrary to the typical ancient Near Eastern practice of re-inhabiting previously destroyed sites. This highlights the serious nature of such defection from the Lord to worship other gods.

Deuteronomy 13 differs from chapters 7 or 20 in that the *herem* in question is not related to foreign nations but to groups of Israelites who had adopted idolatrous practices that were strictly forbidden. Since alien people living among the Israelites frequently brought with them prohibited cultic practices and alien idols, Stern notes that one of the root anxieties in dealing with alien people was the possible enticement to syncretism and idolatry. This fear informs every appearance of *herem* in Deuteronomy. Stern says, “It partly accounts for the religiously motivated xenophobia of Deuteronomy 7 and 20.”<sup>32</sup> Since Israel believed that it owed its possession of the land to godly favor, anything that might jeopardize that favor was dealt with most harshly lest they lose their homeland. The words of Moshe Weinfeld are apt:

---

<sup>29</sup> Driver, *Commentary on Deuteronomy*, 98, 106.

<sup>30</sup> Calum M. Carmichael, *The Laws of Deuteronomy*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974), 73.

<sup>31</sup> Verse 13.

<sup>32</sup> Stern, 105.

Religious treason is here described and combated just as if it were political treason. Inciting an entire community to adopt foreign worship implies no less than its delivery into the hands of the enemy. It is precisely for this reason that the punishment is so severe.<sup>33</sup>

Chapter 20, the final chapter in Deuteronomy containing *herem*, contains three sections about military engagements: preparing for battle (1–9), the treatment of defeated peoples (10–18, called “the Law of *Herem*” by Weinfeld),<sup>34</sup> and the treatment of trees near besieged cities (19–20). Additional laws about war appear in 21:10–14 (female prisoners of war); 23:10–15 (hygiene in the military camp); 24:5 (exemption from military service for newlyweds); and 25:17–19 (treatment of the Amalekites). As harsh as some of these regulations seem in light of modern military conventions, Tigay maintains that they are intended to limit the wanton destruction of life and property and are the oldest known biblical rules of warfare that regulate the treatment of conquered peoples and their territories.<sup>35</sup>

Generally speaking, before the Israelites attacked a distant city (those somewhat removed from the land of Canaan), they were to be given the opportunity to surrender before the battle ensued. If they agreed, their people were not to be harmed but would become part of a work force for the Israelites (11). If however, they insisted on battle and were defeated, only their men were to be killed and the others were to be taken captive along with their property (14).

The cities in the Promised Land, however, were an exception to this rule as chapters 7 and 20 suggest. They were not to be offered the possibility of surrender, but were to be totally destroyed (“completely destroy [*herem*] them”; the same phrase used in 7:2). According to verse 18, the intent of such violent and irreversible actions was to prevent the Israelites from adopting abhorrent Canaanite practices (e.g., idolatry and child sacrifice, cf. 4:26; 7:4; 11:13–21).<sup>36</sup> Deuteronomy regarded preventing such influence as a matter of life and death for the nation of Israel. It teaches that the security of the nation depended on exclusive loyalty to the Lord and that any compromise of covenant regulations could have had disastrous consequences.<sup>37</sup>

---

<sup>33</sup> Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School*, (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1972), 92 [quoted by Stern].

<sup>34</sup> Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1–11: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary, The Anchor Bible 5*, (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 172.

<sup>35</sup> Tigay, 185.

<sup>36</sup> Carmichael, 131.

<sup>37</sup> Tigay, 189.

## CHAPTER 2

### WALTER C. KAISER, JR.

#### Introduction

Walter Christian Kaiser, Jr. was born into a German Baptist (now North American Baptist) home on April 11, 1933 in Folcroft, PA. His parents, Walter Christian and Estelle Evelyn Jaworsky Kaiser, were farmers who wanted to participate in a church in their home community and thus they attended an independent fundamental church in Folcroft. Walter Kaiser, Jr. studied at Wheaton College and Graduate School majoring in Bible with a minor in Greek and philosophy (BA [1955] and BD [1958]). He also studied Hebrew while at Wheaton under Frank Neuberg who earned his doctorate under the tutelage of William F. Albright at Johns Hopkins University. Kaiser's other professors at Wheaton included Merrill Tenney,<sup>1</sup> Kenneth Kantzer,<sup>2</sup> and A. Berkeley Mickelsen.<sup>3</sup> Kaiser was married just before his senior year at

---

<sup>1</sup> Merrill C. Tenney (1904–1985) was a Professor of Bible and Theology and Dean of the Graduate School at Wheaton College and some of the volumes he has published include: *John: the Gospel of Belief, An Analytic Study of the Text*, Eerdmans, 1948; *New Testament Survey*, Eerdmans, 1961; *New Testament Times*, Eerdmans, 1965; *John*, Vol. 9 in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Zondervan, 1981, 1995 [Tenney also served as a New Testament Consulting Editor for the EBC]; *The Land of the Bible* (ed. with J. I. Packer, and William White, Jr.), Nelson, 1985; *Public Life in Bible Times* (ed. with J. I. Packer, and William White, Jr.), Nelson, 1985; *The New International Dictionary of the Bible* (General ed.), Zondervan, 1987 [previously *The Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary*, 1975]; and *Interpreting Revelation*, Eerdmans, 1988; See also the *Festschrift: Current Issues in Biblical and Patristic Interpretation: Studies in Honor of Merrill C. Tenney* (Gerald F. Hawthorne, ed.), Eerdmans, 1975. For more information see .

<sup>2</sup> Kenneth Kanzer (1917–) was ordained by the Evangelical Free Church of America in 1948. Later he became an Instructor of Old Testament at Gordon College, Wenham, Mass. (1944–46); then an Instructor, Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, and eventually a Dean, Professor of Theology, and Chairman of the Department of Bible and Philosophy at Wheaton College (1946–63). At Trinity Evangelical Divinity School he was a Dean, Vice-President of Graduate Studies, and Dean Emeritus (1963–1978). He also served as the Senior Editor for *Christianity Today* (1978–1996). His publications include: *Evangelical Roots*, Thomas Nelson, 1978; and *Perspectives on Evangelical Theology*, Baker Books, 1980.

<sup>3</sup> A(nton) Berkeley Mickelsen studied at Wheaton College (B.A., 1942) and the University of Chicago (M.A., B.D., and Ph.D., 1950). He was an ordained Baptist minister and was an Instructor (1951–52), Assistant Professor (1952–56) Associate Professor (1956–61), and Professor of Bible and Theology at Wheaton College. Later he taught at Bethel Seminary as Professor of New Testament Interpretation. His publications include: *Interpreting the Bible*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963; *Family Bible Encyclopedia*, 2 Vols., David C. Cook Publishing, 1978; *Understanding the Scripture: How to Read and Study the Bible*, (co-authored with his wife, Alvera M. Mickelsen, and first published as *Understanding Scripture: A Layman's Guide to Interpreting the Bible*, Regal Books, 1982 ), Hendrickson, 1992; *Daniel and Revelation: Riddles or Realities*, Nelson, 1984; *The Picture Bible Dictionary*, Chariot Victor Publishing, 1993. "A(nton) Berkeley Mickelsen," 1 [cited 15 March, 2003],

Wheaton. He then served as an assistant pastor of the Geneva Baptist Church (General Conference) in Geneva, IL (1957–58) and received his ordination from the Evangelical Free Church of America in 1966.<sup>4</sup>

After graduation Kaiser taught at Wheaton as Instructor (1958–61) and then Assistant Professor of Bible (1961–65), and later as the Acting Director of Archaeology and Near Eastern Studies (1965–66). During the summer months he traveled to Brandeis University to study under Benjamin Mazar, Samuel Noah Kramer, Harry Orlinsky, and Cyrus H. Gordon. His studies at Brandeis included Middle and Late Egyptian hieroglyphics, Ugaritic, Homeric Greek, biblical Hebrew, Old Babylonian cuneiform, Assyrian cuneiform, and the history and archaeology of the ancient Near East.

In the fall of 1963, Kaiser was asked to teach a class at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, IL, when another professor suddenly became ill. In 1964 Kaiser began a two year term of teaching at both Wheaton and Trinity. While pursuing graduate studies at Brandeis, in the fall of 1966 Kaiser joined the faculty at Trinity as an Associate Professor (1966–73). After finishing his studies at Brandeis (MA [1962] and Ph.D. in Mediterranean Studies [1973]), Kaiser became a Professor of Semitics and Old Testament and the Department Chair (1973–80). He eventually became the Academic Dean and Vice President of Education (1980–89) at Trinity, and then Senior Vice President of Education (1989–93). In 1993 Kaiser moved to Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, South Hamilton, MA, where he is currently the Seminary President and the Colman M. Mockler Distinguished Professor of Old Testament.<sup>5</sup>

Kaiser recalls that his own interest in the Old Testament was sparked by a high school biology class in which the teacher took a firm stance against the biblical account of creation in Genesis. When Kaiser voiced his opposition to the instructor, he was challenged to prepare a paper that would support his opinions. Kaiser then produced a forty-page paper complete with anthropological drawings that he maintains launched a life-long career in Old Testament studies.<sup>6</sup>

Kaiser writes as a conservative biblical scholar whose approach to Old Testament study is marked by a “special concern for practical, pastoral application.”<sup>7</sup> Kaiser’s writings encourage his readers to think systematically and creatively about familiar Old Testament stories and characters, as well as enigmatic biblical conundrums. He has never been one to shy away from passages that provoked interpretative controversy. On the contrary, those passages seem to have provoked his considered inquiry. Mark Noll has observed that Kaiser’s work exhibits a sustained

---

*Contemporary Authors Online*. The Gale Group: Biography and Genealogy Master Index, 2003. Online: <http://galenet.gale.com/a/acp/db/bgmi/index.html>.

<sup>4</sup> For more information see Frank S. Mead, *Handbook of Denominations in the United States*, 10<sup>th</sup> ed., (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 140–41. This church has its roots in the Swedish, Norwegian, and Danish evangelical movements of the later 1800’s, and of significance for this paper, sponsors Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.

<sup>5</sup> “Walter Christian Kaiser, Jr.,” 1 [cited 15 March, 2003], *Contemporary Authors Online*. The Gale Group: Biography and Genealogy Master Index, 2003. Online: <http://galenet.gale.com/a/acp/db/bgmi/index.html>. See also Hershel Shanks, ed., *Who’s Who in Biblical Studies and Archaeology*, 1<sup>st</sup> ed., Washington: Biblical Archaeology Society, 1987, 113; *Who’s Who in Biblical Studies and Archaeology*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1993, 147. Dr. Kaiser maintains two homes: one near Gordon-Conwell, the other in Cedar Grove, Wisconsin is his permanent family home (farm) and most of his family live nearby. See also, John H. Sailhamer, “Walter C. Kaiser, Jr.,” *Bible Interpreters of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century: A Selection of Evangelical Voices* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House Company, 1999), 375–76.

<sup>6</sup> Sailhamer, 375.

<sup>7</sup> Bray, *Biblical Interpretation: Past & Present*, 550.

effort “to construct both theology and ethics from the Old Testament around the theme of ‘promise’” (see “Kaiser’s Work in Context” below).<sup>8</sup>

He is a prolific writer (see “Bibliography”). Some of his writing which deals with war and *herem* in the Hebrew Bible include (in publication date order):<sup>9</sup>

Kaiser, Walter C. Jr. *The Christian and the “Old” Testament*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library Publishers, 1998.

\_\_\_\_\_. *A History of Israel: From the Bronze Age Through the Jewish Wars*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1998.

\_\_\_\_\_. “Leviticus.” Vol. 1 in *The New Interpreter’s Bible*. Leander C. Keck, ed., et al. 12 vols. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994.

\_\_\_\_\_. *More Hard Sayings of the Old Testament*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Exodus*. Vol. 2 in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*. Frank E. Gaebelin, ed., et al. 12 vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Hard Sayings of the Old Testament*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Toward Old Testament Ethics*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Toward an Exegetical Theology: Biblical Exegesis for Teaching and Preaching*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981, 1998.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Toward an Old Testament Theology*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978, 1991. Kaiser, Walter C., Jr., Peter H. Davids, F. F. Bruce, and Manfred T. Baruch, eds. *Hard Sayings of the Bible*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996.

## Kaiser’s Work in Context

Gerhard Hasel<sup>10</sup> places Walter Kaiser’s work (specifically his *Toward an Old Testament Theology*) within a larger context of intensive Old Testament theological study that occurred

---

<sup>8</sup> Noll, *Between Faith and Criticism*, 136–37; 184. The theme of promise is introduced in one of Kaiser’s first books, *The Old Testament in Contemporary Preaching* (1973), and fully developed in what John Sailhamer has called Kaiser’s most important work (384), *Toward an Old Testament Theology* (1978).

<sup>9</sup> For an extensive list of publications see: <http://www.gcts.edu/facil/kaiser.html>.

“Gerhard Franz Hasel,” 1–2 [cited 15 March, 2003], *Contemporary Authors Online*. The Gale Group: Biography and Genealogy Master Index, 2003. Online: <http://galenet.gale.com/a/acp/db/bgmi/index.html>. Hasel studied at Atlantic Union College (B.A., 1959), Andrews University (B.D., 1961), and Vanderbilt University (Ph.D., 1970). He was an Assistant Professor of Religion at Southern Missionary College, Collegedale, TN (1963–66). At Andrews University he has been Associate Professor (1967–77), Professor of Old Testament and Biblical Theology,



during the second half of the twentieth century.<sup>11</sup> After noting some of the important new Old Testament theologies from the early 1970s that preceded Kaiser's work,<sup>12</sup> Hasel remarks,

Never before in the history of [Old Testament] theology has such a short span of time produced as many theologies as the years 1978–1981. In that period no less than seven tomes were published in English or German on [Old Testament] theology by scholars from Europe and North America.<sup>13</sup>

Hasel places Kaiser's work within a lengthy classification of Old Testament theological methodologies that he utilizes to sort the work of numerous authors into distinct categories.<sup>14</sup> His system for classifying the work of various Old Testament scholars and selected examples follow:

a. *The Dogmatic-Didactic Method* (This method seeks to describe what the text meant. Hasel considers this to be the traditional method of organizing Old Testament theology into categories borrowed from dogmatic or systematic theology, i.e., "God-Humanity-Salvation," or "Theology-Anthropology-Soteriology," 39–42): G. L. Bauer, *Theology of the Old Testament* (1796); R. C. Denton, *The Knowledge of God in Ancient Israel* (1968); D. F. Hinson, *Theology of the Old Testament* (1976).

b. *The Genetic-Progressive Method* (This method emphasizes the principle of historical progression in the biblical text, including periods or eras of divine revelation and the theory of progressive revelation; 42–47): C. K. Lehman, *Biblical Theology* (1971); R. E. Clements, *Old Testament Theology: A Fresh Approach* (1978).

---

and Director of Ph.D. and Th.D. Programs (1978–81), and Dean of the Seminary (1981–present). "Gerhard F(ranz) Hasel," [Cited 15 March, 2003], *Contemporary Authors Online*, The Gale Group: Literature Resource Center, 2003, Online: <http://galenet.gale.com/a/acp/db/bgmi/index.html>.

<sup>11</sup> Gerhard F. Hasel, *Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., revised and expanded, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 39–114 [Kaiser is discussed on pages 52–54].

<sup>12</sup> Including: A. Deissler, *Die Grundbotschaft des Alten Testaments* (1972); W. Zimmerli, *Grundriss der alttestamentlichen Theologie* (1972); G. Fohrer, *Theologische Grundstrukturen des Alten Testaments* (1972); J. L. McKenzie, *A Theology of the Old Testament* (1974), 3–4.

<sup>13</sup> Including: C. Westermann, *Elements of Old Testament Theology* (1982); W. Zimmerli's *Grundriss der alttestamentlichen Theologie* was translated into English in 1978; R. E. Clements, *Old Testament Theology: A Fresh Approach* (1978, 79); E. A. Martins, *God's Design: A Focus on Old Testament Theology* (1981); W. A. Dryness, *Themes in Old Testament Theology* (1979); and W. Kaiser, *Toward and Old Testament Theology* (1978), 4–5. Hasel holds that such scholarly productivity is unparalleled in any decade since the discipline of Old Testament theology began roughly 200 years ago (39). Similar to Hasel's reckoning, Kaiser records that eleven new Old Testament theologies appeared in the 1970's ("Old Testament Theology," *New Dictionary of Theology*, Sinclair B. Ferguson and David F. Wright, eds., [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988], 478). To Hasel's list he adds: G. E. Wright (1970), M. G. Cordero (1970), C. K. Lehman (1971), G. Fohrer (1972), J. L. McKenzie (1974), F. Hinson (1976), W. Zimmerli (1978), S. Terrien (1978).

<sup>14</sup> Hasel, *Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate*, 39–114. For another listing of important monographs in biblical theology see Thomas H. Olbricht, "Biblical Interpretation in North America in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century," in *Historical Handbook of Major Biblical Interpreters*, Donald K. McKim, ed., (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 553.

- c. *The Cross-Section Method* (This diachronic methodology examines the biblical text to find larger unifying themes [e.g., Eichrodt's covenantal emphasis] in the Bible which help to "shape" or at least illumine the entire Bible; 47–60): W. Eichrodt, *Theologie des Alten Testaments* (1960, 64); Th. C. Vriezen, *Outline of Old Testament Theology* (1954, 1970); W. Kaiser, *Toward a Theology of the Old Testament*, (1978); John Goldingay, *Theological Diversity and Authority of the Old Testament*, (1987).
- d. *The Topical Method* (This method is distinguished from the dogmatic-didactic method by refusing to allow outside categories to be superimposed on the reading of the Old Testament. It also is distinct from the cross-section method and its attempt to synthesize the Old Testament world of thought; 60–71): J. L. McKenzie, *A Theology of the Old Testament*, (1974), G. Fohrer, *Theologische Grundstrukturen des Alten Testaments* (1972); W. Zimmerli, *Grundriss der alttestamentlichen Theologie* (1972).
- e. *The Diachronic Method* (This methodology utilizes traditio-historical criticism in order to reconstruct the history of a given literary unit from its hypothetical origin, through its oral development, and into its final redaction in literary form; 71–79): G. von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, (1957, 61 [English trans. 1965]).
- f. *The "Formation-of-Tradition" Method* (This methodology focuses on the historical process of development of the Old Testament, or the growth of theology as the formation of tradition; 79–85): Hartmut Gese, "Tradition and Biblical Theology," in *Tradition and Theology in the Old Testament*, (1977).
- g. *The Thematic-Dialectical Method* (This somewhat eclectic method emphasizes the convergence of "newer" approaches to Old Testament theology without positing one over another; 86–94): W. Brueggemann, "A Convergence in Recent Old Testament Theology," *JSOT* 18 (1980) 2–18; S Terrien, *The Elusive Presence: Toward a New Biblical Theology*, (1981); C Westermann, *Elements of Old Testament Theology*, (1982).
- h. Recent "*Critical*" *Old Testament Methods* (This is not a new attempt at composing an Old Testament theology, but rather, a reflection on the future of the discipline and a call for a fresh critical approach to the Old Testament; 94–103): James Barr, *Old and New Testament Interpretation: A Study of the Two Testaments*, (1966); John Collins, "Is Critical Biblical Theology Possible?" in *The Hebrew Bible and its Interpreters*, W. H. Propp, B. Halpren, and D. N. Freedman, eds. (1990).
- i. *The "New Biblical Theology" Method* (This method stresses the connection between the Old and New Testaments and rejects of the older critical dichotomy between what the Bible meant in the past and what it means today; 103–111): Brevard Childs, *Biblical Theology in Crisis*, (1970), and *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*, (1979).

In a similar review of previous writing on Old Testament theology, Kaiser posits his own list of methodological approaches to the Old Testament, including: Structural, Diachronic,

Lexicographic, and a Biblical Themes-type.<sup>15</sup> He rejects all four categories and proposes his own:

Our proposal is to distinguish sharply biblical theology's method from that of systematics or the history-of-religion [approach]. . . . Rather than selecting that theological data which strikes our fancy or meets some current need, the text will already have set up priorities and preferences of its own. These nodal points can be identified, not on the basis of ecclesiastical or theological camps, but by such criteria as: (1) the critical placement of interpretive statements in the textual sequence; (2) the frequency of repetition of ideas; (3) the recurrence of phrases or terms that begin to take on a technical status; (4) the resumption of themes where a forerunner has stopped often with a more extensive area of reference, . . . [etc.].

In our proposed methodology, biblical theology draws its very structure of approach from the historical progression of the text and its theological selection and conclusions from those found in the canonical text.<sup>16</sup>

Returning to Hasel's methodology, he puts Kaiser into his third category, "the Cross-Section Method" because Kaiser asserts that there is "an inductively derived theme, key, or organizing pattern which the successive writers of the Old Testament overtly recognized and consciously supplemented in the progressive revelation of the Old Testament text."<sup>17</sup> That center is the theme of promise and blessing conceived as a "unifying but developing concept."<sup>18</sup> Kaiser believes that,

The promise-plan of God is His declaration to be and to do something for Israel, and thereby, to be and do something for all the nations of the earth. It is a plan that is at once singular, simple, and focused on the Messiah who is to come; yet its single promise spreads out into a multiplicity of specifications that is continually being fulfilled, continually expanded, and continually enlarged.<sup>19</sup>

John S. Feinberg has noted that, "one can hardly read Kaiser's work and not be convinced that the concept of promise is crucially important for the whole of the Old Testament."<sup>20</sup> According to Kaiser, this central promise-theme can be perceived "under a constellation of such words as promise, oath, blessing, rest, [or] seed," and in multiple passages

---

<sup>15</sup> Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Toward an Old Testament Theology*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978, 1991), 9–10.

<sup>16</sup> Kaiser, *Toward an Old Testament Theology*, 11–12.

<sup>17</sup> Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., "The Center of Old Testament Theology: The Promise," *Themelios* 10 (1974), 3.

<sup>18</sup> Kaiser, *Toward and Old Testament Theology*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978, 1991), 23. Cf. *The Theology of the Old Testament*, Vol. 1 in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Frank E. Gaebelein, ed., et al., 12 vols., (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979), 291–305.

<sup>19</sup> Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., "Biblical Theology of the Old Testament," *Foundations for Biblical Interpretation*, David S. Dockery, Kenneth A. Matthews, and Robert R. Sloan, eds., (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 332.

<sup>20</sup> John S. Feinberg, "Salvation in the Old Testament," In *Tradition and Testament: Essays in Honor of Charles Lee Feinberg*, John S. Feinberg and Paul D. Feinberg, eds., (Chicago: Moody Press, 1981), 60.

throughout the Bible such as, “I will be your God and you shall be my people” or “I will dwell in the midst of you,” or “I am the Lord your God who brought you up out of Egypt.”<sup>21</sup> Hasel notes that Kaiser is the first to use the “blessing-promise” theme as the key for organizing Old Testament theology.<sup>22</sup> Although he disagrees with Kaiser’s identification of the central biblical theme and is repeatedly suspicious of the entire “theme-seeking” enterprise, the value of Hasel’s work for this project is his placement of Kaiser in the ongoing dialogue among other seminal Old Testament thinkers in the quest for the center of the Old Testament.<sup>23</sup>

Kaiser imposes two very important constraints on his “promise theme” as a proposal for the center for the Old Testament. First, he maintains that the proposed center must act as a key that can order and chronologically arrange the various subjects and themes of the Old Testament into a unit whole. Second, the proposed center must have been a part of the consciousness of the original biblical authors as they deliberately added to the ongoing growth of the center.<sup>24</sup> Kaiser is adamant about these two constraints. Elsewhere he maintains that “if no such key can be demonstrated inductively from the text, and if the writers were not writing out of such an awareness, then we shall have to be content with talking about the different theologies of the OT.”<sup>25</sup> Kaiser believes, however, that these criteria can indeed be met. He thus pursues his “promise theme” in *Toward an Old Testament Theology* beginning with the pre-patriarchal period (via the initial divine intention to bless all created beings in Genesis 1:22, 28), and then in the patriarchal narratives with the promises of an heir, an inheritance, land, and blessing to Abraham. In the Mosaic period Kaiser sees the continuation of the promise theme as the “people of promise” become the people of the covenant.<sup>26</sup> He then traces the “promise theme” through the pre-monarchical period where the fledgling nation acquires land (“the place of promise”), the Davidic period (where kingship is a fulfillment of earlier promises extended to the patriarchs [Gen 17:6, 16; 35:11; 36:31]),<sup>27</sup> the sapiential period (where “the Abrahamic-Davidic Promise of God [finds] a practical expression in the marketplace”<sup>28</sup>), the prophetic period with its multiple references to earlier biblical promises, and finally into the post-exilic era where he discusses “the

---

<sup>21</sup> Kaiser, *Toward an Old Testament Theology*, 12.

<sup>22</sup> Hasel, 53. “Promise” appears elsewhere in R. E. Clements, *Old Testament Theology: A Fresh Approach* (1978), not as the major organizational theme of the Bible (as with Kaiser), but as one of several important biblical themes. Not to be outdone, and despite his suspicions about the “theme-seeking” quest, Hasel proffers his own unique theme for the central message of the Old Testament, namely, the dynamic person of “God” (168–71).

<sup>23</sup> It is interesting to note that Hasel’s observations notwithstanding, Walter Brueggemann’s *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), does not even mention Walter Kaiser in his review of seminal Old Testament thinkers in the last two centuries. This is a surprising lacuna because Kaiser’s single-themed approach (“promise”) to the text is similar to other single-themed approaches mentioned by Brueggemann (including Eichrodt’s Covenant Theology” or Terrien’s “Elusive Presence” [Brueggemann, 28]). Moreover, elsewhere Brueggemann acknowledges the importance of the “overarching theme [of] promise and fulfillment” (69). Yet for Brueggemann mono-themed theologies are for ages past. He maintains that given the climate of current theological reflection, “clearly there is no going back to the singular constancy of Eichrodt. The general epistemological climate in which we work and the current needs of the theological community do not permit such a return” (41). Nevertheless, Kaiser has tried to “return” (to use Brueggemann’s illustration) to a singular central biblical theme in his writings, but his work is surprisingly overlooked in Brueggemann’s book.

<sup>24</sup> Kaiser, *Toward an Old Testament Theology*, 11, 14, 20–21.

<sup>25</sup> Kaiser, *Toward an Old Testament Theology*, 20–21.

<sup>26</sup> Kaiser, *Toward an Old Testament Theology*, 100–107.

<sup>27</sup> Kaiser, *Toward an Old Testament Theology*, 151.

<sup>28</sup> Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., “Wisdom Theology and the Centre of Old Testament Theology,” *Evangelical Quarterly* 50 (1978), 145.

Triumph of the Promise.”<sup>29</sup> Kaiser then extends his work on “promise” into the New Testament and conceives of the fulfillment of the ancient promise in the “Man of Promise, Jesus Christ.”<sup>30</sup> The concept of promise as a centralizing motif in the Bible is frequently mentioned in many of Kaiser’s writings, and even where it is not mentioned directly, it is never far from the surface.

In addition to his work on the theme of promise in the Old Testament, Kaiser sees his work in *Hard Sayings* as part of the long and noble tradition of scholarly discussion on problematic passages<sup>31</sup> of the Bible. He notes that “history is filled with the names of great biblical scholars of another day,” including the early church fathers Eusebius, Chrysostom, Augustine, and Theodoret who devoted a substantial amount of effort (producing treatises or parts of treatises) to this topic.<sup>32</sup> He opines that apparently other issues took priority in scholarly research from the latter half of the fifth century until the beginning of the sixteenth because there are almost no scholarly works that can be cited on difficult biblical passages. Thereafter many titles begin to appear as disputed passages are addressed again.<sup>33</sup>

Kaiser places himself firmly within the ranks of evangelical scholars in the “Introduction” to *The Old Testament in Contemporary Preaching* (1973) when he writes, “Our evangelical disparagements of the Old Testament are mostly in the realm of practice and not theory.”<sup>34</sup> He then goes on to discuss various evangelical hermeneutical approaches to reading the Old Testament which he considers unsatisfactory. These include studying the Old Testament as merely a lineage of Israel’s failings, or as a sourcebook of scattered predictions of the Messiah. Another piecemeal, unproductive approach to Old Testament study, according to Kaiser, allegorizes the entire Old Testament and perceives a New Testament message in nearly every Old Testament verse. Such approaches, he maintains, do not examine the central message of the Old Testament nor were they even known to those who originally penned it (a recurring theme in Kaiser’s writings).<sup>35</sup>

*Hard Sayings of the Old Testament* is one of Kaiser’s attempts to inspire Christian readers of the Bible to read the Old Testament. He notes that despite many good intentions, most Christians simply ignore reading it altogether. It is too confusing, too archaic to be of any real value, and thus is “often treated as an artifact of our primitive origins.”<sup>36</sup> Opposing this mentality, Kaiser maintains that Christians should “take-up the Old Testament once again”<sup>37</sup> because the New Testament teaches that “until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest

---

<sup>29</sup> Kaiser, *Toward an Old Testament Theology*, 250–61.

<sup>30</sup> Kaiser, *Toward an Old Testament Theology*, 263.

<sup>31</sup> Cyril S. Rodd refers to these “problematic passages” as biblical “blemishes,” (*Glimpses of a Strange Land*, 2).

<sup>32</sup> Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Hard Sayings of the Old Testament*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 14–15.

<sup>33</sup> Some of the titles mentioned include: Johannes Thaddaeus and Thomas Man, *The Reconciler of the Bible Enlarged [sic]*, London, 1662; Oliver St. John Cooper, *Four Hundred Texts of Holy Scripture with their Corresponding Passages Explained*, London, 1791; Samuel Davidson, *Sacred Hermeneutics, Developed and Applied*, Edinburgh, 1843; John W. Haley, *An Examination of the Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible*, Andover, MS, 1874 (reprinted Whitaker House, 1992). This text cites 42 works from the Reformation and Post-Reformation eras that address this topic (437–442 reprint).

<sup>34</sup> Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *The Old Testament in Contemporary Preaching*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1973), 11.

<sup>35</sup> Kaiser, *The Old Testament in Contemporary Preaching*, 11.

<sup>36</sup> Kaiser, *Hard Sayings of the Old Testament*, 11.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished” (Matt 5:18). Moreover, Jesus taught that anyone who breaks even the least of the biblical commandments, or teaches others to do so, will be called the least in the kingdom of heaven (Matt 5:19). Thus for Kaiser, it is imperative that Christians read and appropriate the Old Testament into their lives of faith and practice. *Hard Sayings of the Old Testament* attempts to remove some of the obstacles that keep people from reading the Old Testament.

In *The Old Testament in Contemporary Preaching*, Kaiser asked a similar question: “Why bother with the Old Testament?”<sup>38</sup> The book, like *Hard Sayings*, is an extended reply to this question. One of the points mentioned here and not in *Hard Sayings* is that the Old Testament was the Bible of the early Church. According to the writer of Second Timothy, it was sufficient for salvation (2 Tim 3:16). Furthermore, even Christ used the Old Testament to illumine the minds of his disciples on the road to Emmaus, “beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself” (Luke 24:27). If this is so, then the modern church neglects the Old Testament at its peril.<sup>39</sup>

With regard to Kaiser’s specific evangelical roots, John Sailhamer’s comments are particularly instructive. He notes that the work of three scholars of the 19<sup>th</sup> century form the foundation for Kaiser’s own scholarly development: Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg (the German evangelical Old Testament scholar), Willis Judson Beecher, and Milton Terry (1840–1914). Hengstenberg (1802–69)<sup>40</sup> was greatly influenced by the evangelical revivals that swept through Europe following the Napoleonic wars and is remembered for his relentless attacks against the rise of biblical criticism, rationalism, and anti-supernaturalism.<sup>41</sup> Many of his writings are still in print. In the “Foreword” to a reprint of Hengstenberg’s *Christology of the Old Testament*, Kaiser wrote, “This man, more than any others of his day or ours, epitomized that wonderful combination of earnest Christian experience and thorough Biblical scholarship. . . . He fearlessly asserted the neglected truths of orthodoxy to a modern age.” Further on, Kaiser continues with a comment that is suggestive of his own theological debt to Hengstenberg, “May his spiritual descendants follow in his train to the Glory of our Great God and Savior Jesus Christ.”<sup>42</sup> Certainly Kaiser saw in Hengstenberg a welcome starting point for his own work in Old Testament theology. Sailhamer maintains that Kaiser accepted the common evangelical view that

---

<sup>38</sup> Kaiser, *The Old Testament in Contemporary Preaching*, 13.

<sup>39</sup> Kaiser, *The Old Testament in Contemporary Preaching*, 21. For the Gospel in the OT see 21–22.

<sup>40</sup> Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg (1802–1869) was a champion of Lutheran orthodoxy during the nineteenth century. He qualified for matriculation into the University of Berlin when he was only seventeen years old and did so well in Oriental language and philosophy that he published a translation of an Arabic book in German when he was only twenty-one (his dissertation was a Latin translation of the Arabic author Amrulkaisi Moallakah). He continued his studies of Semitic languages at Bonn, taught eastern languages at Basel Missionary College, and at twenty-six was named Ordinary Professor (or full professor) of Theology at the University of Berlin (1928). He wrote numerous books including, *Commentar ueber die Psalmen* (1842–45; English 1844–48); *The Gospel of John Expounded* (1861–63; English 1865); *The Prophecies of Ezekiel Expounded* (1867–68); *The Book of Job Expounded*; *A Commentary on Ecclesiastes with Treatise on the Song of Solomon English* (1869); *Balaam and His Prophecies* (1842); *Commentary on Revelation*; and *Christology of the Old Testament* (1829–35). See Kaiser’s “Foreword” and the dust jacket to *Christology of the Old Testament* and “Hengstenberg, Ernst Wilhelm,” 1 [cited 15 March, 2003], *Contemporary Authors Online*. The Gale Group: Biography and Genealogy Master Index, 2003. Online: <http://galenet.gale.com/a/acp/db/bgmi/index.html>.

<sup>41</sup> Sailhamer, 377.5.

<sup>42</sup> Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., Foreword to *Christology of the Old Testament*, by Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg, (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1970), ix–x.

Hengstenberg had successfully cleared away the debris of destructive criticism and heterodoxy.<sup>43</sup> Hengstenberg had given biblical critics an adequate reply to their concerns, and further response was thus unnecessary. He had provided the evangelical community with the type of thoughtful biblical scholarship that would enable it to respond to the needs of the modern world. Thus Kaiser does not exhibit

the kind of nervous preoccupation with attacks on the Bible which [can be so prominent in] evangelical Old Testament scholarship. Rather, Kaiser exhibits a calm confidence in the historical trustworthiness of the Bible, an assurance grounded in the belief that the best minds of the past have already fought and won the great territorial battles. What remains is to occupy the land.<sup>44</sup>

Indeed, Kaiser mentions in the Introduction to his *Classical Evangelical Essays in Old Testament Interpretation* that much conservative Old Testament scholarship progresses with little or no apparent awareness that many critical issues have already been resolved by earlier evangelical scholars. This collection of older evangelical essays attempts to make some of that scholarship accessible to future generations of evangelical scholars. (It is not surprising that Kaiser's anthology contains articles from both Hengstenberg and Beecher.)

Along with Hengstenberg, William Henry Green (1825–1900) should also be mentioned as influential in the development of Kaiser's theology.<sup>45</sup> Green is accorded two chapters in Kaiser's *Classical Evangelical Essays in Old Testament Interpretation*.<sup>46</sup> Of Green, Marion Ann Taylor has written,

His arguments against the documentary hypothesis and the presuppositions undergirding the entire critical enterprise [have] never been superseded in the eyes of those who continue to share many of his theological presuppositions. . . . Indeed many of his spiritual heirs have either simply used Green's works or updated and reformulated his views.<sup>47</sup>

---

<sup>43</sup> Sailhamer, 377.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> William Henry Green studied at Princeton Theological Seminary under the tutelage of Archibald Alexander, Samuel Miller, and Charles Hodge. He also studied in Germany under E. W. Hengstenberg and F. Tholuck. In 1851 he was appointed General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church to the chair of biblical and Oriental literature at Princeton, a position he held until his death in 1900. Green's department was at the center of the "battle over the Scriptures" at Princeton, and at his inauguration in 1851 he was given the charge to fight the intellectual battles of the church and the seminary. (The authority of the Scriptures was the subject of his inaugural speech.) Some of his writings include: *The Argument of the Book of Job* (1874); *An Elementary Hebrew Grammar* (1866); *A Grammar of the Hebrew Language* (1861); *The Higher Criticism of the Pentateuch* (1895, reprinted by Baker in 1978); and *The Unity of the Book of Genesis* (1895, reprinted by Baker in 1979). See "William Henry Green" by Marion Ann Taylor, 22–36 and "William Henry Green," 1–3 [cited 15 March, 2003], *Contemporary Authors Online*. The Gale Group: Biography and Genealogy Master Index, 2003. Online: <http://galenet.gale.com/a/acp/db/bgmi/index.html>.

<sup>46</sup> Chapter one: "Primeval Chronology" ([1890] this essay shows that Bishop Usher's dates for Gen 5 and 11 need not be accepted); and chapter 12: "The Ethics of the Old Testament."

<sup>47</sup> Marion Ann Taylor, "William Henry Green," *Bible Interpreters of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century: A Selection of Evangelical Voices*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House Company, 1999), 33.

In addition to Hengstenberg and Green, Kaiser saw in Milton Spencer Terry's work (*Biblical Hermeneutics*) a ready guide to the grammatical-historical study of the Bible.<sup>48</sup> If the Bible was historically accurate as Kaiser believed Hengstenberg had shown, then there was nothing to fear from grammatical-historical analysis of the biblical text, and Terry's many examples of biblical interpretation were a welcome directive to the young Kaiser. Furthermore, Kaiser recognized that if the Bible was to be studied as a historical document, then the central themes of the Bible (and for Kaiser, the Old Testament) must be read within their own historical context. Willis Judson Beecher's *The Prophets and the Promise* developed an evangelical view of Scripture with an emphasis on the gradual revelation of salvation history.<sup>49</sup> This perspective can be found in Kaiser's overall biblical theme of promise. For Kaiser, the Bible is "a repository of historical facts waiting to be sorted and organized, along with evidence from ancient history, in[to] a single, meaningful whole."<sup>50</sup> Thus he is faithful to one of the premiere tenets of nineteenth-century evangelicalism, namely, that history is the primary locus of divine activities (both revelatory and redemptive) and that if humanity is to know God, they can only know him via his actions in history and the channels of historical research.

Before leaving the historical context of Kaiser's work, it should be noted that there are several other evangelical legacies bequeathed to Kaiser by early evangelicals. One is an unshakable conviction that the original manuscripts of the Scripture are the inspired Word of God. Sailhamer maintains that this is, more than any other idea, the central characteristic of Kaiser's work.<sup>51</sup> By accepting this position on inspiration, Kaiser acknowledges that since we do not possess the original manuscripts of the Bible, we therefore can not claim ultimate or final authority for the text of the Bible that we possess. However, he does maintain that the faithful can come to the Scriptures with the greatest confidence that the copies of the Bible that we do have are accurate representations of the biblical story.

In concurrence with his certainty of the veracity of previous evangelical scholarship (mentioned above), Kaiser rarely speaks of biblical inspiration. His concern is not whether or not the Bible is inspired, but rather, how ancient divine inspiration impacts modern biblical interpretation. On at least one occasion, however, Kaiser felt that it was necessary to respond to recent discussions about biblical inspiration as developed by B. B. Warfield and A. A. Hodge.<sup>52</sup>

---

<sup>48</sup> Milton Spencer Terry was a prominent theologian and biblical scholar in the Methodist Episcopal Church. He grew up in a Quaker home but was drawn to Methodism and entered the New York Conference Seminary in Charlottesville, NY in 1857. While there he joined the Methodist Episcopal Church and was ordained in 1864. In 1879 he became the presiding elder of the New York District of the Church and eventually he was able to serve as a delegate to the national conference in 1880. His first major work, *Biblical Hermeneutics*, appeared in 1883. Thereafter he was invited to join the faculty of Garrett Biblical Institute (now Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary) in 1884 as head of the Department of Old Testament and Hebrew and as Instructor in Christian Doctrine. His works include: *The Sibylline Oracles* (1890); *The Prophecies of Daniel Expounded* (1893); the *Song of Songs Analyzed* (1893); *The New Apologetic* (1894); *Biblical Apocalypitics* (1894); *Moses and the Prophets* (1901); *Primer of Christian Doctrine* (1906); and *Biblical Dogmatics* (1907). See "Milton Spencer Terry," 1–3 [cited 15 March, 2003], *Contemporary Authors Online*. The Gale Group: Biography and Genealogy Master Index, 2003. Online: <http://galenet.gale.com/a/acp/db/bgmi/index.html>.

<sup>49</sup> Willis Judson Beecher, *The Prophets and the Promise*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1963 [reprint]).

<sup>50</sup> Sailhamer, 378.

<sup>51</sup> Sailhamer, 379.

<sup>52</sup> Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., "The Doctrine of Scripture and the Autographa" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, Northwest Region, March 16, 1991). Dr Kaiser graciously sent me



They, along with others, taught that the concept of inspiration extended to the original manuscripts but not necessarily to the copies of those originals. In a paper presented to the Evangelical Theological Society in 1991, Kaiser argued against giving up the notion of divinely inspired autographs in evangelical parlance. (Since the original documents of the Bible have not been preserved, apparently some writers were suggesting that evangelicals abandon the idea of divine inspiration of the original manuscripts.) On the contrary, Kaiser maintained that the “whole science of textual criticism is at stake . . . if there is not something comparable to an original text”<sup>53</sup> that was the basis for later copies. The work of textual criticism and the traditional understanding of biblical authorship depend on the assumption that the autographs did indeed exist at one time. With regard to later copies, however, Kaiser holds,

To focus on the “canonical” text as we now have it (even though that text is amazingly close to the original as judged by the overwhelming similarities to the readings we possess on so many copies and versions) would be to settle for something different, be it ever so slight, from what God had directed to be written down in all its completeness.<sup>54</sup>

Thus Kaiser maintains a special place for the original biblical autographs while allowing room for textual difficulties in later copies. Such “errors,” however, do not extend to the inerrant originals.<sup>55</sup>

Another common nineteenth-century evangelical theme adopted by Kaiser is the conviction that the historical-critical method is essentially flawed by an anti-supernatural bias. According to him, some of the greatest evangelical minds of past generations (e.g., Hengstenberg or William Henry Green) have shown that this approach is wanting. Evangelicals should employ it only when augmented by faith in the historical veracity of the text. When discussing the

---

a copy of his paper for review. For more information on Kaiser’s thoughts on biblical inspiration see, *The Old Testament Documents: Are they Reliable?*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001): 14–25. For a critical review of the teachings of Warfield and Hodge see, Ernst R. Sandeen, *Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism 1800–1930*, (Chicago: University Press, 1970), 106.

<sup>53</sup> Kaiser, “The Doctrine of Scripture and the Autographa,” 16.

<sup>54</sup> Kaiser, “The Doctrine of Scripture and the Autographa,” 17. This position was reiterated in a recent article by Richard N. Ostling (an Associated Press Religion Writer) who quotes Kaiser on the implications of possible Dead Sea Scroll variations from the biblical text. Kaiser acknowledged that some of the variations between the Scrolls and the Bible could become unsettling, however he maintains that “Truth should never upset anyone. If we think God is a God of truth, real evidence ought never be shunned” (5). On the same issue, Ostling mentions two important points made by Kaiser: first, since the identity of the DSS community is suspect “we can’t figure out from what perspective they were writing (e.g., marginal or centrist); second, “who decides what [text] is authoritative?” He suggests that since the ancient rabbis were “closer to the scene, they obviously had a better shot in determining the best text” (4). See Richard N. Ostling, 1–5 [cited 15 March, 2003], “Scriptural Differences Found in Scrolls,” *Society of Biblical Literature*, Online:

[http://www.sbl-site.org/Newsletter/01\\_2001/ScripturalDifferences.htm](http://www.sbl-site.org/Newsletter/01_2001/ScripturalDifferences.htm).

<sup>55</sup> For Kaiser’s views on *sensus plenior*, dual meanings, double fulfillment, etc., see: Darrell L. Brock, “Evangelicals and the Use of the Old Testament in the New,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 142 (1985): part 1: 209–223, and 306–319 (esp. 210–212, and 306–309); Douglas A. Oss, “Canon as Context: The Function of *Sensus Plenior* in Evangelical Hermeneutics,” *Grace Theological Journal* 9 (1988): 105–127 (esp. 106–111 and n. 24); Stephen K. Henderson, “A Critical Evaluation of the Contribution of the Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., to Old Testament Theology” (Master’s Thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1980), 37–38; and Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. “The Single Intent of Scripture,” *Evangelical Roots: A Tribute to Wilber Smith*, Kenneth S. Kanzer, ed., (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1978), 123–141.

Documentary Hypothesis and its impact on biblical studies in general and evangelical scholarship in particular, Kaiser says that it is legitimate for evangelical scholars (those who view Scripture as the verbal, plenary, inspired, and inerrant Word of God) to utilize the tools of historical criticism. However, the introduction of a previously established philosophical *a priori* into the thought-world of the writers of scripture is totally unacceptable for any biblical scholar, especially evangelicals.<sup>56</sup>

A final tenet of early evangelicalism shared by Kaiser is that the Bible is a historical book, a book about real history. The events recorded in it were recorded just as they occurred and are to be interpreted in light of our ever-growing knowledge of the biblical world. Kaiser frequently refers to evidence garnered from ancient Near Eastern studies and archaeology which may provide a missing key to understanding the Bible. This is due in part to what Sailhamer calls “the wholesale adoption by American evangelicals of the views of the so-called Albright school of biblical archaeology.”<sup>57</sup>

During the first half of the twentieth century, William F. Albright maintained that the Bible is a reliable and accurate account of real events in Israel’s past. Using both archaeology and the study of ancient languages, Albright tried to demonstrate that there was no compelling scientific reason to doubt the essential historical accuracy of the biblical narratives. This type of historical confidence in the biblical text pervades Kaiser’s work as it does most evangelical scholarship. It can be seen in his recent *A History of Israel: From the Bronze Age Through the Jewish Wars* where Kaiser declares,

We have dared to do the unthinkable—as judged by the “biblical minimalists.” The unthinkable is this: We have dared to use the Bible as a source in the construction of Israel’s history. . . . Our approach will be to take the Bible on its own terms, just as we have taken all of the epigraphic materials from the ancient Near East as reliable—until they are proven otherwise. It is the principle of American jurisprudence that will be employed . . . The [Bible] is innocent until proven guilty. All too many [scholars] begin with the thesis that because the biblical text has been used by religious bodies, the Bible must be judged guilty and untrustworthy until proven innocent.<sup>58</sup>

Elsewhere he says,

The present history [of Israel] will adopt the methodology of using the present chronology and statement of the history of this nation as set forth in the biblical texts as our starting point and working assumption. If and when the external evidence clearly refutes that construct, in part or in whole, only then will we abandon it and adopt that for which there is stronger attestation.<sup>59</sup>

Obviously then, Kaiser has great confidence in the historical veracity of the biblical text and affords little consideration to the voices of historical doubt. He is thus free to pursue his

---

<sup>56</sup> Kaiser, *The Old Testament in Contemporary Preaching*, 17.

<sup>57</sup> Sailhamer, 379.

<sup>58</sup> Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *A History of Israel: From the Bronze Age to the Jewish Wars*, (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1998), xi–xii.

<sup>59</sup> Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *A History of Israel: From the Bronze Age to the Jewish Wars*, 14.

interests without the nagging worry of those who were uncertain about the historicity of the Bible. He can focus his energies on biblical interpretation for the modern reader.

Since the Bible is divinely inspired for Kaiser, it should not be altered lightly and it should make sense to the reader. Thus he has devoted a substantial amount of effort as a scholar to sorting out biblical difficulties for his students and readers in an attempt to discern harmony rather than discord in the biblical text. An inspired text should not be cacophonous. Nevertheless, one of the discordant areas that has proven to be most difficult for readers of the Bible is the practice of warfare and *herem* in the Old Testament. It is to Kaiser's writings on *herem* that we now turn.

## Kaiser and *Herem*

Walter Kaiser is a contributor to the InterVarsity Press "Hard Sayings" series that has proven immensely popular among evangelical readers (e.g., *Hard Sayings of Jesus*,<sup>60</sup> *Hard Sayings of Paul*,<sup>61</sup> *More Hard Sayings of the New Testament*,<sup>62</sup> etc.). Years after initial publication, every volume remains in print in an expanded edition that combines all five earlier volumes into one extensive text, *Hard Sayings of the Bible*.<sup>63</sup> These books deal with problematic biblical statements or phrases that are not readily comprehended by modern readers.<sup>64</sup> For example, Old Testament questions include: "How could God direct the Israelites to stone a child simply for stubbornness" (Deut 21:18–21); or "Why does the author of Ecclesiastes maintain that there is nothing better than to eat, drink, and be merry" (2:24–26); or "How could God give the Israelites statutes that were not good" (Ezek 20:25)? New Testament queries include: "Why does Jesus bring a sword rather than peace" (Matt 10:34); or "What is the 'third heaven'" (2 Cor 12:2); or "Are women really not meant to be teachers" (1 Tim 2:11–12)? These and many other biblical conundrums (*Hard Sayings of the Bible* is over 800 pages) are not easily resolved and therefore invite inventive and diverse interpretations to render them palatable to the modern reader. To put it in Kaiser's words, one of the themes that "runs through my books [is] the hermeneutical problem of bridging the gap between the 'then' (or B.C. status of the Old Testament text) and the 'now' (or 1990s position and needs of the contemporary reader, listener,

---

<sup>60</sup> F. F. Bruce, *Hard Sayings of Jesus* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1983).

<sup>61</sup> Manfred T. Baruch, *Hard Sayings of Paul* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1989).

<sup>62</sup> Peter H. Davids, *More Hard Sayings of the New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1991). Kaiser's initial contribution to the series was *Hard Sayings of the Old Testament* (1988) and then *More Hard Sayings of the Old Testament* (1992).

<sup>63</sup> This volume in the *Hard Sayings* series includes additional passages not covered in earlier editions as well as nine introductory articles written by several of the original authors. Kaiser's introductory articles include: "Why Don't Bible Genealogies Always Match Up?" (48–50); "Aren't Many Old Testament Numbers Wrong?" (51–54); "Do the Dates of the Old Testament Kings Fit Secular History?" (55–60); "Does Archaeology Support Bible History?" (61–65); "When the Prophets Say, 'The Word of the Lord Came to Me,' What Do They Mean?" (66–69); "Are Old Testament Prophecies Really Accurate?" (70–75).

<sup>64</sup> Although Cyril S. Rodd has doubts about the entire enterprise of examining the difficulties of the biblical text, he nevertheless refers to them as "blemishes" in the Bible, and says that it is "right that these difficulties should be recognized." He maintains that isolating the "difficulties" of the Bible for modern scrutiny does violence to the context of biblical passages and leads to "a distortion of the Old Testament morality itself" (*Glimpses of a Strange Land: Studies in Old Testament Ethics* [Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2001]: 2).

and interpreter of that B.C. text).<sup>65</sup> The focus of his efforts, then, has been to try to open what for many Christian readers has remained a closed book. Moreover, he has attempted to counter the tendency among many Christians to read the New Testament back into the Old Testament stories rather than allowing them to stand on their own terms.<sup>66</sup> In this sense, Kaiser says, “my approach to the Old Testament will differ from that of many other interpreters—especially of conservative Protestant or Catholic readers of the Old Testament.”<sup>67</sup> It should be noted in this context that Kaiser does not negate the essential “connectedness” of both Testaments. In a modern academic milieu which values interpretative plurality and textual diversity, Kaiser has maintained that there is a unifying theme which is carried throughout both Testaments, and that once allowances have been made for obsolete legal regulations that were limited in their duration and application (e.g., temple regulations), the ethical and moral demands of the former Testament are not foreign or even antithetical to the later Testament.

This type of study is important for those who want answers to difficult or perplexing biblical passages. By attending to the troublesome sections of the Bible, readers can “sharpen [their] attention to the details in all of our Lord’s Word. Thus the more attentively and patiently we examine the text, the more handsome the dividends to our spiritual growth.”<sup>68</sup> Further on Kaiser says, “there can be no debate over the therapeutic effect that [“Hard Sayings”] produce through our increased efforts to understand and obey God’s Word.”<sup>69</sup> Kaiser expresses shock at an alarming increase in biblical ignorance, sheer apathy in learning about the Old Testament, and rampant “spiritualizing” of the Hebrew Bible.<sup>70</sup> Bible “difficulties,” according to Kaiser, when properly studied, produce a “therapeutic effect” in the spiritual life of the reader. They attract the attention of inquiring minds, they prove that there could not have been any authorial collusion between ancient authors, and they even test one’s commitment to Christ. Kaiser notes that the apparent harshness of some of Jesus words (e.g., Mark 4:12; John 6:66) actually rid him of those who refused to be taught or who were halfhearted in their search for truth.<sup>71</sup> Elsewhere he states that the Christian “understanding of the Messianic person, the kingdom of God, the obedience of faith, the final work of God in history and with Israel, and much else besides, rests on our method of interpreting and regarding the Old Testament.”<sup>72</sup> He concludes his “Introduction” to *Hard Sayings* with these words:

I pray that this volume may be used to create a whole new wave of enthusiasms for reading and studying the as-yet-untapped resources of the Old Testament. If it contributes

---

<sup>65</sup> “Walter Christian Kaiser, Jr., “ 3–4 [Cited 15 March, 2003], *Contemporary Authors Online*, The Gale Group: Literature Resource Center, 2003. Online: <http://galenet.gale.com/a/acp/db/bgmi/index.html>.

<sup>66</sup> To “read the New Testament back into the Old Testament” means to read and interpret Old Testament stories with little or no regard for their original contextual environment, but only as they serve to illuminate the New Testament.

<sup>67</sup> Kaiser, *Contemporary Authors Online*, 3.

<sup>68</sup> Kaiser, *Hard Sayings of the Old Testament*, 12. Cf. *The Old Testament in Contemporary Preaching*, 12.

<sup>69</sup> Kaiser, *Hard Sayings of the Old Testament*, 13.

<sup>70</sup> Kaiser, *The Old Testament in Contemporary Preaching*, 13.

<sup>71</sup> Kaiser, *Hard Sayings of the Old Testament*, 13; e.g., Jesus told his disciples, “The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables so that, ‘they may be ever seeing but never perceiving, and ever hearing but never understanding; otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!’” (Mark 4:11–12).

<sup>72</sup> Kaiser, *The Old Testament in Contemporary Preaching*, 12.

to this goal by removing some of the old impediments, my efforts will have been more than worthwhile.<sup>73</sup>

Of the many questions that could be raised about perplexing biblical statements, perhaps the most disturbing of all (and the first one mentioned on the back cover of *Hard Sayings of the Old Testament*) is “How could a just God command Israel to destroy a whole people—men, women, and children?” Kaiser addresses this query in his *Hard Sayings* writings as well as in *Toward Old Testament Ethics* and in *Toward an Old Testament Theology*. The following is a summary of his main points.

Kaiser chose 1 Samuel 15:18, “Go and completely destroy those wicked people, the Amalekites; make war on them until you have wiped them out,” as the masthead verse for his discussion. He notes that this and other passages like it form a considerable obstacle to seeing the God of the Old Testament as a God of love and mercy. How can divine mercy and fairness be depicted in the midst of wholesale extermination? Moreover, western readers of the Bible have no analogies with which to compare the concept.<sup>74</sup> Any attempt to soften the impact of this verse or to ameliorate its effects are doomed from the start. There are simply too many verses that consign whole populations to divine destruction (e.g., Exod 23:32–33; 34:11–16; Deut 2:31–33; 7:1–5; 20:11–16; 1 Sam. 15:18; et al.).

Kaiser further notes that the root idea of *herem*, present in all these passages, is “separation.”<sup>75</sup> However the intended separation is not the positive type of separation involved in sanctification (where something or someone was set aside for special service in religious ceremonies), rather, it is the polar opposite: to set aside something or someone for destruction. *Herem* is “an involuntary dedication of a total people for destruction after they had steadfastly resisted the goodness of God for generations”<sup>76</sup>

Kaiser’s writings offer an attempt to answer some of the questions that might arise in his reader’s minds about the ancient practice of *herem* in the Bible, including:

(1) Why would the God of the Bible categorically assign an entire nation to destruction? Is this not the epitome of cold-hearted brutality, the polar opposite of what people would expect from God? Is it not an example of the creator bent on destroying a portion of his creation? This sounds like Bildad’s query in Job, “Does God pervert justice? Does the Almighty pervert what is right” (8:3), or Abraham’s argument, “Will not the Judge of all the earth do right” (Gen 18:25)? Kaiser proclaims, “I believe the Old Testament does uphold the justice and righteousness of God even in this command to eradicate the Canaanites.”<sup>77</sup> With the call for *herem*, however, it seems as if God were working against himself. Kaiser replies that God indeed directed these things and these people to be destroyed because they “violently and steadfastly impeded or opposed his work over a long period of time.”<sup>78</sup> Those who ignored natural revelation (or the Noahide

---

<sup>73</sup> Kaiser, *Hard Sayings of the Old Testament*, 15.

<sup>74</sup> Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., “Leviticus,” Vol. 1 in *The New Interpreter’s Bible*, Leander C. Keck, ed., et al., 12 vols., (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 1189.

<sup>75</sup> Kaiser, *Hard Sayings of the Bible*, 206. Cf. *Toward an Old Testament Theology*, 135.

<sup>76</sup> Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Exodus*, Vol. 2 in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, Frank E. Gaebelein, ed., et al., 12 vols., (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 409. See also, Kaiser, interview by author, November 19, 2000. Elsewhere Kaiser refers to the *herem* as a “forced dedication” (*Toward Old Testament Ethics*, 267).

<sup>77</sup> Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Toward Old Testament Ethics*, (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1983), 267.

<sup>78</sup> Kaiser, *Hard Sayings of the Bible*, 206.

Laws)<sup>79</sup> over a lengthy period were, in essence, rejecting God and thus worthy of destruction. Kaiser draws support for his position from Genesis 15:13–16 where Abraham is told that his descendants would be aliens in a foreign land and enslaved for 400 years before God would lead them out of that country. The reason for the delay is that “the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure” (15:16; see Deut 9:7 below). Kaiser notes that God waited for centuries while the Amalekites and other Canaanite nations pursued their sinful practices.<sup>80</sup> During that period he never acted against them, but waited graciously and mercifully to see if they would turn from such sinful pursuits.<sup>81</sup> Drawing on the work of Johannes Bauer and G. R. Driver, Kaiser concludes:

After much divine long-suffering and waiting, God called for everything that belonged to him in the first place—life, possessions, [and] valuables—as an involuntary burnt offering. Thus more was involved than mere destruction; [*herem*] was a “religious punishment” which signified the separation from the profane sphere and deliverance into the power of God.<sup>82</sup>

(2) To the query, “Were the Israelites without sin during this time?” Kaiser responds with an unqualified negative. Deuteronomy 9:5 makes it clear that the Israelites would possess the Land of Canaan, not because of their own righteousness or integrity, but because of the wickedness of the Canaanites.<sup>83</sup> This passage negates any attempt to establish the tacit or actual moral superiority of Israel over the Canaanites and explains why.<sup>84</sup>

<sup>4</sup> After the LORD your God has driven them out before you, do not say to yourself, “The LORD has brought me here to take possession of this land because of my righteousness.” No, it is on account of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD is going to drive

---

<sup>79</sup> According to Rabbinic tradition, the Noahide (or Noahic) Laws include the seven precepts given to Adam (prohibition of idolatry; of blasphemy; of murder; of adultery, incest, bestiality, and homosexual relations; of robbery; and the command to establish courts of justice) and an additional commandment given to Noah (the prohibition of eating a limb torn from a living animal) [Book of Judges 9.1], Moses ben Maimon, *The Code of Maimonides (Mishneh Torah)*, Book Fourteen, “The Book of Judges,” Abraham M. Hershman, trans., (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1949), 6.1. Cf. Joseph Telushkin, *Jewish Literacy* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1991): 560–61.

<sup>80</sup> Kaiser explains the long period of divine patience with the Canaanites as beginning with the curse of Canaan (Gen 9:24–25). In response to the query, “Why is this story in the biblical narrative,” Kaiser replies, “It tells the reader that unless there is some moral change in the Canaanites, they are slated for removal from the land. That God is long-suffering and slow to anger is attested by the fact that this judgment [i. e., the judgment of Canaan] did not fall on that group of descendants until the time of Joshua’s conquest of Canaan. It is impossible to date Noah’s times, but it is known that Joshua lived around 1400 B.C. At a minimum this would mean that the grace of God was extended to the Canaanites for several millennia. Surely God was most gracious with these people, giving more than adequate time for sinners to repent” (*Hard Sayings of the Bible* 118).

<sup>81</sup> Kaiser, *Hard Sayings of the Bible*, 206.

<sup>82</sup> Kaiser, *Toward an Old Testament Theology*, 135. Cf. Johannes Bauer, “Ban,” *Sacramentum Verbi* (New York: Herder & Herder: 1970), 1: 55–57; G. R. Driver, “Hebrew Homonyms,” *Vetus Testamentum Supplements* 16 (1967): 56–59.

<sup>83</sup> In this regard, see Rodd, 199.

<sup>84</sup> Kaiser, *Toward Old Testament Ethics*, 267. The memory of the Amalekites continues through the time of Hezekiah (1 Chr 4:43) and into period of Esther (cf. Esth 3:1, where Haman the Agagite is introduced – Agag was the Amalekite king that Saul should have killed in 1 Sam. 15). Cf. *EncJud* 2: 787–792; *ABD* 1: 169–171.

them out before you.<sup>5</sup> It is not because of your righteousness or your integrity that you are going in to take possession of their land; but on account of the wickedness of these nations, the LORD your God will drive them out before you, to accomplish what he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.<sup>6</sup> Understand, then, that it is not because of your righteousness that the LORD your God is giving you this good land to possess, for you are a stiff-necked people.<sup>7</sup> Remember this and never forget how you provoked the LORD your God to anger in the desert. From the day you left Egypt until you arrived here, you have been rebellious against the LORD. (Deut 9:4–7)

Following Ronald Goetz, Kaiser maintains that this passage explains why Israel is helped in spite of her sins, while the Canaanites are destroyed because of theirs.<sup>85</sup> These nations were to be destroyed to protect Israel from being contaminated by their wickedness (Deut 20:16–18). When a nation burns children as gifts to its gods (Lev 18:21), or practices sodomy, bestiality, or other destructive practices (Lev 18:25, 27–30), then the time of divine grace comes to an end and the moment of judgment has arrived.<sup>86</sup>

(3) If *herem* is justified via divine direction, might there be an occasion when it could be evoked and applied today? Kaiser replies with a resolute “No.”<sup>87</sup> Such action would require direct, divine revelation. Moreover, *herem* is always connected to the land of promise. Without the land there is no need for *herem*.

(4) Were there no other means for God to accomplish his purposes? To this question Kaiser responds that the destruction of the Canaanites was essentially the same as earlier biblical judgments (e.g., the Flood, Sodom and Gomorrah, or Pharaoh’s army).<sup>88</sup> Thus the destruction resulting from *herem* is not as unique as some might claim. In situations requiring *herem*, God was acting through Israel like a surgeon who at times must remove some healthy flesh in order to be certain that all of the contaminated flesh is excised. Kaiser maintains (following William Benton Greene, Jr.) that “this is not doing evil [so that] good may come; it is removing the cancer that could infect all of society and eventually destroy the remaining good.”<sup>89</sup> God could have used hurricanes, pestilence, famines, diseases or a host of other “natural” judgments on the Canaanites. In this case, however, he chose to reveal his power directly to both the Canaanites and the Israelites. Kaiser never posits a theory to explain why “natural disasters” were used to execute divine judgment elsewhere in the Bible and why *herem* is employed here. Furthermore, it is unclear whether the Canaanites would interpret the attacking hordes of Israelites as an expression of the judgmental power of God. The charge of cruelty against God, according to Kaiser, is no more deserved in the case of *herem* than it is “in the general order of things in the world where all of these same calamities happen.”<sup>90</sup>

---

<sup>85</sup> Kaiser, *Toward Old Testament Ethics*, 267. Cf. Ronald Goetz, “Joshua, Calvin, and Genocide,” *Theology Today* 32 (1975): 266.

<sup>86</sup> Kaiser, *Hard Sayings of the Bible*, 207.

<sup>87</sup> Kaiser, interview by author, November 19, 2000.

<sup>88</sup> Kaiser, *Toward Old Testament Ethics*, 268.

<sup>89</sup> *Hard Sayings of the Bible*, 207. Cf. William Benton Greene, Jr., *Classical Evangelical Essays in Old Testament Interpretation*, 221.

<sup>90</sup> Is Kaiser saying that all natural calamities are a direct result of divine judgment on humanity or a segment of humanity?

(5) What about non-combatants? Surely they would merit special consideration. In today's world this type of military action would be brought before a war tribunal with a charge of crimes against humanity. Kaiser again replies to the unspoken concerns of his readers. Just as all family members share in the larger benefits and burdens of family life, so members of any given nation similarly share in any national rewards and punishments. Sometimes the reward is good and everyone benefits. At other times, as with *herem*, it is bad and all suffer. With regard to the inclusion of non-combatants in the *herem*, Kaiser maintains that an answer to that question is beyond human comprehension. It requires "an omniscience which we do not possess."<sup>91</sup> He does suggest, however, that if women and children were spared in these situations it would not be too long before new adults would appear who would more likely act just like their predecessors.

(6) Why was God so set against the Amalekites? Kaiser responds: When the Israelites were moving through the desert toward the Promised Land the Amalekites picked-off the weak, sick, and elderly from the end of the group traveling through the wilderness and brutally murdered them.<sup>92</sup> Since this was the Israelites' first hostile encounter after leaving Egyptian bondage and since they were treated so harshly by the Amalekites, the Bible reserves a special place in history for Israel's attackers. They were placed under a permanent *herem*, and the memory of what the Amalekites did to Israel continues for many centuries in biblical narrative. Kaiser notes that some commentators hold that the Amalekites were not fighting over mere territorial disputes, but were attacking Israel in order to discredit Israel's God. If this were so, Kaiser seems to suggest that a far reaching ban would be warranted. Moreover, the Amalekites failed to realize or accept the opportunity for blessing that their ancestors had received from God via the line of Esau (more below). Even the "farther-removed Canaanites of Jericho had been given plenty to think about when they heard about the Exodus" (Josh 2:10).<sup>93</sup> Exodus places the story of the Amalekite attack against Israel in chapter 17 in direct juxtaposition to another group of Gentiles who believed in Israel's God (Jethro's Midianites) in chapter 18. Kaiser aptly notes,

---

<sup>91</sup> Kaiser, *Hard Sayings of the Bible*, 207. Kaiser explained "an omniscience we do not possess" in an interview, saying, "We do not have complete knowledge about such things. We can not know all or everything, but we can have an adequate knowledge." By "adequate" Kaiser means "sufficient evidence on which to make a decision without demanding that we know everything, or understand each topic comprehensively; only God knows comprehensively." (Interview by author, November 19, 2000)

<sup>92</sup> *Exodus* 17<sup>8</sup> The Amalekites came and attacked the Israelites at Rephidim. <sup>9</sup> Moses said to Joshua, "Choose some of our men and go out to fight the Amalekites. Tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill with the staff of God in my hands." <sup>10</sup> So Joshua fought the Amalekites as Moses had ordered, and Moses, Aaron and Hur went to the top of the hill. <sup>11</sup> As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were winning, but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning. <sup>12</sup> When Moses' hands grew tired, they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held his hands up—one on one side, one on the other—so that his hands remained steady till sunset. <sup>13</sup> So Joshua overcame the Amalekite army with the sword. <sup>14</sup> Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write this on a scroll as something to be remembered and make sure that Joshua hears it, because I will completely blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven." <sup>15</sup> Moses built an altar and called it The LORD is my Banner. <sup>16</sup> He said, "For hands were lifted up to the throne of the LORD. The LORD will be at war against the Amalekites from generation to generation."

*Deuteronomy* 25<sup>17</sup> Remember what the Amalekites did to you along the way when you came out of Egypt. <sup>18</sup> When you were weary and worn out, they met you on your journey and cut off all who were lagging behind; they had no fear of God. <sup>19</sup> When the LORD your God gives you rest from all the enemies around you in the land he is giving you to possess as an inheritance, you shall blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven. Do not forget!

<sup>93</sup> Kaiser, "Exodus," 408.



“these two chapters illustrate two kingdoms and two responses to the grace of God from the Gentile world.”<sup>94</sup>

(7) Kaiser makes a final observation in *Toward Old Testament Ethics* that is pertinent to this discussion and is similar to his reply to question one (“Why would God assign an entire nation to destruction?”). He notes that every forecast of doom (like any prophetic word) is always conditional upon the continued actions of the wayward people in question.<sup>95</sup> Generally speaking, the oracles against the nations elsewhere in the Bible (cf. Amos 1–2; Isaiah 13–23, 34; Jeremiah 46–51; et al.) suggest that fair warning of impending judgment was usually given to foreign nations. Judgment in the case of *herem* passages was “the last straw” as it were. The time for patience and longsuffering was over and “God does not always give the exact countdown to the moment of judgment.”<sup>96</sup>

In the case of prophetically announced impending doom, such as with Jonah, if the people would turn from their evil ways the threat of impending harm or destruction would cease. Thus during the period of the wilderness wanderings, Canaan had nearly 40 years to change her ways. Kaiser maintains that we know that at least some of the Canaanites were aware, to a degree, of the events of the Exodus, the crossing of the Reed Sea, and other unusual events that accompanied Israel’s wilderness sojourn because of the attitude of Rahab toward the Israelite spies. (She confessed that such news had terrorized her and her country and the Bible maintains that she expressed some type of faith in the God of Israel [Josh 2:8–14; see Ps 87:4; Heb 11:31; Jas 2:25].) Nevertheless, such news had little or no effect on other Canaanites living in the surrounding territories, and in particular the Amalekites. They had not distanced themselves from their “wicked ways” (Deut 9:5) and thus a *herem* was unavoidable.

Additionally, as distant cousins to the Israelites (Amalek was one of the six sons of Eliphaz and a grandson of Esau [Gen 36:11–12; 1 Chr 1:36]), and as a leader among Esau’s descendants (Gen 36:15–16), Kaiser holds that,

There is every possibility that [the Amalekites] had known about the promise of the land of Canaan that had been given to Esau’s twin brother, Jacob. Had this promise been remembered and taken seriously, they should not have felt any threat to their interests as the Israelites approached their territory in the Negev. After all, the promise was to be a means of blessing Amalek along with all the other nations (Gen 12:3) if only they, like Abraham, would have believed. Instead they attacked Israel at Rephidim.<sup>97</sup>

Thus although they had fair warning of imminent divine judgment and opportunities to change their attitudes and actions, every meeting between Israel and the Amalekites in the Bible is marred by hostility.<sup>98</sup>

(8) Finally, Kaiser does a thorough job of explaining why he thinks *herem* was necessary and what provoked God to call for it in the first place, but that does not answer the question,

---

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Kaiser, *Toward Old Testament Ethics*, 268.

<sup>96</sup> Kaiser, interview by author, November 19, 2000.

<sup>97</sup> Kaiser, “Exodus,” 407–08.

<sup>98</sup> Kaiser, interview by author, November 19, 2000.

“Was it moral?” Kaiser responded to this query in an interview with this author<sup>99</sup> and stressed that it is interesting and not uncommon to hear in discussions about the *herem* passages that cattle, vegetation, and especially small children (all non-combatants) are frequently mentioned as subjects of the ban. This is understandably so because such actions are incomprehensible to us. It is equally interesting, however, that in Jonah when the prophet is upset because God did not destroy Nineveh, God’s reply was, “Nineveh has more than a hundred and twenty thousand people, . . . and *many cattle as well*. Should I not be concerned about that great city” (Jonah 4:11 [italics mine])? Kaiser stressed that it is altogether too easy to focus on divine judgment in some passages while ignoring godly mercy in others.

Was *herem* moral? Kaiser says, “Yes, *herem* was moral. Some evil is so wrong that it apparently can not wait for the final judgment in the hereafter.”<sup>100</sup> Moreover, since nations do not possess immortality they must be judged in the present according to the morality that is required of all nations. Everything that belongs to a nation is affected by its sin and is thus under the judgment of God. Recalling the Garden of Eden story, Kaiser maintained that even the ground was not immune to divine judgment in the Garden (“Cursed is the ground because of you” [Gen 3:17]). In similar fashion, prior to the flood the Bible records that in response to the wickedness of humanity the LORD said, “I will wipe mankind, whom I have created, from the face of the earth—men and animals, and creatures that move along the ground, and birds of the air—for I am grieved that I have made them” (Gen 6:5–7). The judgment announced by the prophet Haggai on the grain, the new wine, etc., is commensurate with the earlier judgments in Genesis:

<sup>9</sup> You expected much, but see, it turned out to be little. What you brought home, I blew away. “Why?” declares the LORD Almighty. “Because of my house, which remains a ruin, while each of you is busy with his own house. <sup>10</sup> Therefore, because of you the heavens have withheld their dew and the earth its crops. <sup>11</sup> I called for a drought on the fields and the mountains, on the grain, the new wine, the oil and whatever the ground produces, on men and cattle, and on the labor of your hands.” (Hag 1:9<sup>b</sup>–11)

Notice that at least some of the consequences for human wrong doing (in the case of Haggai, not following divine mandate to rebuild the Temple after the return from Babylonian exile) are manifest in the environment. When people sin, everyone and everything is corrupted.<sup>101</sup>

## Lingering Questions

In his various books and articles, Walter Kaiser offers a laudable attempt to answer one of the most perplexing of all biblical questions: “How could God do [or require Israel to do] such a thing?” He has addressed an issue that many biblical commentators have avoided or to which they have proffered only a facile response. Without disputing his replies, several unanswered questions remain:

---

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

(1) To the question, “Why would God categorically assign an entire nation to destruction?”, Kaiser replies by resorting to “natural revelation” and in essence says that those who ignore this type of “divine message” are worthy of *herem*. It is not certain, however, whether those subject to the *herem* actually knew that by their actions they were ignoring what amounted to natural revelation and would ultimately be subject to the *herem*. How could the Canaanites be expected to heed some type of generic warning via natural revelation which was by nature always general and not specific? We possess no record of specific warnings of destruction to the Canaanites (like Jonah to the Ninevites) that would follow-up on the dire words of Genesis 15:16. Certainly stories of the exploits and disasters of other people in the surrounding lands followed the trade routes. How could the Canaanites be expected to differentiate between reality and rumor?

To this query, Kaiser would respond that judgment is perhaps the “bad news” of the Bible/Gospel. “God never annihilates anyone. It is man’s own choice—in spite of the many years when God chased him with His goodness and with His grace.”<sup>102</sup> Thus the Canaanites must have had some type of opportunity to respond to God prior to the *herem*. Moreover Kaiser maintains that there are many instances of a “faith” response by people in the Old Testament who were not in a position to understand the specifics of the covenant between God and the Israelites. Before the covenant in Exodus 20 there was Melchizedek (Priest of Salem, Gen 14), Eliezer (Abraham’s servant, Gen 15), and Zipporah (Moses’ wife, Exod 4), and others who proved themselves to be people of faith in God. After the covenant, there were others who were not personally aware of the covenantal stipulations, including, Rahab and Ruth. The universal scope of the Bible may also be seen in Ezekiel 25–32, Isaiah 13–23, Jeremiah 46–51, Amos 1–2, and Daniel 2–7. These and other passages similar to them are certainly in line with Genesis 12:3, “I [God] will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.” Nevertheless, to say that the Amalekites or others like them had “fair warning” of imminent disaster is devoid of textual or archaeological support and thus seems to be an argument from silence. Must a forecast of doom implicitly imply an opportunity to repent and avert disaster as Kaiser seems to indicate?<sup>103</sup> Does the Bible explicitly support this assumption?

(2) When replying to the question about the slaughter of non-combatants, Kaiser maintains that an appropriate answer is beyond human comprehension, requiring “an omniscience that humans do not possess.”<sup>104</sup> This also is an argument from silence and is tantamount to saying “only God knows.” Could not this answer be used to reply to every biblical query and thus make any discussion of perplexing biblical issues very short? While this answer provides a semblance of a reply, and preserves the *divinum mysterium*, it does little to answer this most difficult of Bible difficulties: “Would the God of the Bible actually kill (or explicitly require others to kill) babies?”

---

<sup>102</sup> Kaiser, *The Old Testament in Contemporary Preaching*, 15.

<sup>103</sup> In this regard Kaiser is not alone. Abraham Heschel, in *The Prophets*, holds that “every prediction of disaster is in itself an exhortation to repentance” (*The Prophets*, [New York: HarperCollins Books, 2001; first printed in 1962]: 14; see also 28, 290, 293). Cf. Amos 3:7; 4:6–11.

<sup>104</sup> Kaiser, *Hard Sayings of the Bible*, 207.

(3) If there is any argument that would support the claim that the God of the Old Testament is vindictive, harsh, or war-like, it is Kaiser's explanation of why God would permanently ban the Amalekites. Even if they were the first people to attack the Israelites after they fled Egypt, and even if their attacks were directed not only against Israel but also to discredit Israel's God, this irrevocable ban leaves no room for a turn-of-heart (i.e., individual or national repentance) by subsequent generations and seems uncharacteristic of the God of the Bible. It seems that Kaiser has relied on his own interpretation of these passages, proffering solutions with little or no textual evidence as support. The biblical stories about the sins of the Canaanites in general or Amalekites in particular are simply too terse to permit in-depth analysis, and any attempt to shed interpretative light on the text must be done with caution.

In the final analysis, Kaiser certainly maintains that the practice of *herem* was a historical reality in the Old Testament. It did happen, although he never questions the extent to which it was practiced. He does not question the veracity or historical accuracy of the biblical text. Furthermore, since *herem* was required by God, it must have been justified because the God of the Bible would never act unjustly nor require unjust actions of his people. To hazard an explanation as to why God would require such a thing is another matter. To say whether or not an event did indeed occur is one type of question, but to say why God acts in a certain manner is another type of query altogether. When an answer is not forthcoming, when Kaiser can not penetrate the *divinum mysterium*, he resorts to one of two alternatives: an argument from silence ("Why would God assign an entire nation to such destruction?"), or an appeal to godly omniscience inaccessible to mere humans ("What about the inclusion of non-combatants in the wholesale slaughter?"). I think it would be better, in the end, to say we simply do not understand such things, and that this practice is incomprehensible to modern sensibilities, but that would be contrary to Kaiser's entire enterprise, namely to explain troublesome biblical passages.

## CHAPTER 3

### PETER C. CRAIGIE

#### Introduction

Peter Campbell Craigie was born on August 18, 1938 in Lancaster, England. He was the second of three sons born to Hugh Brechin Craigie and Lilia Campbell Murray. He was reared in the evangelical Anglican tradition and spent the majority of his youth in Edinburgh, Scotland where he attended The Edinburgh Academy, a private secondary school.<sup>1</sup> As a young boy, Craigie planned to become a pilot in the Royal Air Force and travel to exotic locations. He enlisted when he was only seventeen (1956), attained the rank of Pilot Officer, and was stationed in the R. A. F. Administration Branch 2 i/c Mountain Rescue Unit in South Wales.<sup>2</sup> It was during this time that Craigie first became interested in serious biblical study. In the preface to his commentary on the Book of Deuteronomy he writes, “My own first attempt at serious biblical study began while I was serving as an officer in the Royal Air Force. I was advised by a friend to read St. Luke’s Gospel with the help of Geldenhuy’s commentary.”<sup>3</sup> Thus began a life-long commitment to biblical scholarship.

To his dismay, Craigie’s military career as a pilot was short-lived. He was color blind and would never be able to fly as he had dreamed. He completed the requisite two years of military service (1956–58) and then traveled to Canada, where he worked as a ranch hand and lumberjack, and where eventually he enrolled in the Prairie Bible Institute in Three Hills, Alberta. A chance reading of the school’s paper, *The Prairie Overcomer*, captured his attention. He hoped the Institute would afford him the opportunity to combine religious studies and his passion for travel, perhaps as a missionary.<sup>4</sup> The theological position of the college was and

---

<sup>1</sup> Craigie’s mother, Lilia, was reared in the Plymouth Brethren tradition, but was excommunicated when she married an Anglican and joined the Anglican church. See Rebecca G. S. Idestrom, “Peter C. Craigie and the Old Testament,” (Master’s Thesis, Wycliffe College, Toronto School of Theology, University of Toronto, 1990), 101.

<sup>2</sup> Harold Coward, “Academic Biography of Peter C. Craigie,” in *Ascribe to the Lord: Biblical and Other Studies in Memory of Peter C. Craigie*, Lyle Eslinger and Glen Taylor, eds., (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1988), 593. For a review of this volume see Richard J. Clifford, “Ascribe to the Lord: Biblical and Other Studies in Memory of Peter C. Craigie,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 52 (1990): 373–74, who says that “the range of articles in the volume from an international roster of scholars mirrors [Craigie’s] own interests” (373); and H. G. M. Williamson, “Ascribe to the Lord: Biblical and Other Studies in Memory of Peter C. Craigie,” *Vetus Testamentum* 39 (1989): 243–44, who writes that this volume “provides abundant testimony to the international esteem and affection in which Craigie was held (243).

<sup>3</sup> Peter C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, in *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 9. Geldenhuy’s commentary on Luke is part of the same series, the *NICOT*.

<sup>4</sup> Lyle Eslinger, “Peter C. Craigie,” in *Bible Interpreters of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century: A Selection of Evangelical Voices*, Walter A. Elwell and J. D. Weaver, eds., (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), 412.

continues to be traditional evangelical, i. e., stressing the authority of the Bible in matters of faith and practice, biblical inerrancy, Mosaic authorship of the bulk of the Pentateuch, etc. Rebecca Idestrom maintains that the years spent at this interdenominational Bible college (1958–60) “were formative for Craigie’s personal Christian walk.”<sup>5</sup> In addition to teaching the importance and relevance of the Bible for life and faith, the Institute emphasized missionary outreach and personal evangelism at that time, and Craigie joined in their outreach efforts enthusiastically. When Elizabeth Craigie first met her future husband, she recalls that Craigie’s chief desire was to travel overseas as a missionary.<sup>6</sup> Regarding the Prairie Bible years, Lyle Eslinger writes,

[The] conservative stance [of the college] on the Bible fixed an indelible imprint on Craigie, who had been accustomed to it from childhood. Though his later writings show increasing tolerance of historical skepticism, he always approached the “established results” [of modern biblical scholarship] with a skepticism that took inspiration from Prairie Bible’s stance. The choice of Prairie Bible as the institution from which to begin, then, seems to have been well suited to Craigie’s personal theological inclinations.<sup>7</sup>

Craigie finished two years of the three-year program at Prairie Bible Institute before returning to Scotland for a vacation (1960). While at home, his father persuaded him to continue his studies in a bachelor’s program at New College, the University of Edinburgh. It was also during this time that he met Elizabeth and they were married four years later (1964).

When Craigie began his studies in Scotland he had no intention of pursuing a degree in Old Testament literature or ancient Semitic languages. His interest in these areas was sparked by an optional Hebrew course offered by Norman Porteous<sup>8</sup> that happened to fit his schedule. Of this early introduction to Hebrew, Craigie wrote,

---

<sup>5</sup> Idestrom, “Peter C. Craigie and the Old Testament,” 90. Rebecca G. S. Idestrom was born in Sweden and immigrated to Canada with her family when she was ten. She was raised in the Pentecostal church and has remained an active member of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada. She received her B.Th. (Central Pentecostal College, 1985), B.A. (University of Toronto, 1987), M.Rel. (Wycliffe College, the Toronto School of Theology, 1990 [thesis: “Peter C. Craigie and the Old Testament”]), and her Ph.D. (University of Sheffield, 1996). Her dissertation, “From Biblical Theology to Biblical Criticism: Old Testament Scholarship at Uppsala University, 1866–1922,” has been published by *Coniectanea Biblica Old Testament Series* 47 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2000). She has also studied at the University of Saskatchewan (1983–84), the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, (1985–86), and has done research at Uppsala University in Sweden (1992–94). In addition to her thesis, she has published two articles pertinent to this paper: “Some Aspects of Peter C. Craigie’s Approach to the Old Testament,” *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 23 (1994): 457–67, and a joint bibliographic article with Glen Taylor, “Addendum to the Bibliography of Peter C. Craigie,” *JSOT* 51 (1991): 115–117. Idestrom joined the faculty at Tyndale Seminary (an interdenominational school and the largest seminary in Canada) in 2001, after teaching at Western Pentecostal Bible College in Abbotsford, BC for five years. Besides publishing numerous articles in several journals, two commentaries on Habakkuk and Zephaniah are forthcoming with Sheffield Academic Press (personal correspondence from Rebecca Idestrom, 11-06-01; and *Tyndale Seminary Academic Catalogue: 2002–2003*, “The Faculty and Administration: Dr. Rebecca G. S. Idestrom,” 11–12).

<sup>6</sup> Idestrom, *ibid.* Dr. Elizabeth (Betty) Craigie, M.D., adds, although this desire was never fulfilled, during his undergraduate years, Peter Craigie was a missionary at home (91).

<sup>7</sup> Eslinger, “Peter C. Craigie,” 412.

<sup>8</sup> Some of Norman Walker Porteous’s publications include: *Das Danielbuch* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962); “Prophets and the Problem of Continuity” in *Israel’s Prophetic Heritage: Essays in Honor of James Muilenburg* (Harper: 1962); *Theology in Church and University* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh, 1964); “Care of the Poor in the Old Testament” in *Service in Christ: Essays Presented to Karl Barth on His 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday*

I began my own undergraduate studies of the Old Testament quite by accident; a course was offered at the University of Edinburgh which happened to fit my timetable. From that casual beginning I have never ceased reading and enjoying the Old Testament. It is important to me as Scripture, but more than that it has been a continual source of insight, inspiration, challenge to thought, and, indeed, pleasure.<sup>9</sup>

As a result of this class, Craigie enrolled in a M.A. honors program in Semitic Languages and Literature. He studied Hebrew, Arabic, Syriac, and Ugaritic and spent the summer of 1963 in Lebanon at the Middle East Centre for Arabic Studies. His efforts while at Edinburgh were rewarded with a Vans Dunlop Scholarship in Hebrew and Oriental Languages (1965–66).<sup>10</sup> Also while at Edinburgh he met and studied with Professor John C. L. Gibson.<sup>11</sup> Some years later Dr. Gibson assigned to Craigie three volumes in the *Daily Bible Study Series* (Westminster), namely, *Ezekiel* (1983) and the *Twelve Prophets* (2 vols., 1984–85).<sup>12</sup> Craigie received his M.A. in 1965.

Following his years at Edinburgh and the degree in Semitics, Craigie began a two-year diploma program in the Department of Theology at St. John's College, The University of Durham. His intention was to secure ordination with the Anglican Church, but during his time at St. John's, he changed his mind and began to seriously consider pursuing an academic rather than a pastoral career. The change in career paths did not come easily. Eslinger notes that in order to make the decision, Craigie had to endure a significant amount of "soul searching" before choosing academia. The season of self-examination, however, served him well in later years when faced with decisions about whether to assume positions in theological or secular institutions. "He remained committed to a nonconfessional working environment, though he was just as thoroughly committed to improvement and defense of conservative Christianity."<sup>13</sup> Thus Craigie altered his career goal three times, from a pilot in the Royal Air Force to an evangelical missionary, and from missionary to ordained clergy, and finally from priest to biblical scholar. He graduated with distinction from the University of Durham in 1967. Before he left, however, he began the initial work on Judges 5 that would eventually become the basis of his Master's thesis.

---

(Eerdmans, 1966); *Living the Mystery: Collected Essays* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1967); *Das Buch Daniel: uberstezt und erklart* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1968); *Daniel: A Commentary*, in the *Old Testament Library Series* (Philadelphia: Westminster John Knox Press, 1965), et al.

<sup>9</sup> Craigie, *The Old Testament: Its Background Growth, and Content*, (Nashville: Abingdon, 1986), 10; cf. Eslinger, "Peter C. Craigie," 412.

<sup>10</sup> Eslinger, *ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> John C. L. Gibson's (1930–) publications include: *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions*, 3 vols. (Oxford, 1971–82); *Canaanite Myths and Legends* (T&T Clark, 1977–78; first edition by G. R. Driver); General Editor of *The Daily Study Bible: Old Testament* (Westminster, 1981–), Gibson wrote three volumes: *Genesis* (2 vols., 1981 and 1982) and *Job* (1985); *Davidson's Introductory Hebrew Grammar* (T & T Clark, 1994; a revision of Davidson's earlier *Grammar* based on the third edition of 1901); *Language and Imagery in the Old Testament* (Hendrickson, 1999).

<sup>12</sup> In the general preface to Craigie's *Twelve Prophets* Gibson wrote, "I can assure those who use these commentaries that they are in the hands of competent teachers who know what is of real consequence in their subject" (2:5).

<sup>13</sup> Eslinger, "Peter C. Craigie," 413.

After St. John's, Craigie entered The University of Aberdeen where he completed another Master's degree in one year (M. Th., 1968).<sup>14</sup> During this time he received the Bruce and Frazier Scholarship in Divinity and studied under John Gray<sup>15</sup> who supervised his Master's thesis, "Ancient Semitic War Poetry (with Particular Attention to Judges 5)." In the Craigie festschrift, *Ascribe to the Lord*, Gray would recall "precious memories of many stimulating hours in our post-graduate work together in The University of Aberdeen, where Peter left a very distinctive impression both on staff and students."<sup>16</sup> Rebecca Idestrom reports that Gray and Craigie became friends for life.<sup>17</sup> The influence of Gray upon Craigie is evident in the many references to Gray's work in Craigie's books (especially his commentary on Deuteronomy). Moreover, Craigie dedicated his commentary on the Psalms to him. Gray's particular interests at that time included the early stages of ancient Hebrew poetry and comparative philology as a tool to illuminate the Hebrew Bible. He completed his commentary on Judges the year that Craigie arrived at Aberdeen as his student (1967). Along with Gray, Craigie had to grapple with the strong and at times offensive war-like content and imagery of the Hebrew Bible. As a former Royal Air Force officer, this subject of interest was especially intriguing and would continue throughout his career.

Although student and scholar did not necessarily agree with each other's biblical hermeneutic; however, the disagreement did not keep Craigie from learning from Gray or others with whom he did not agree. When acknowledging his debt to others in the Preface to his commentary on Deuteronomy, Craigie says: "My debt to other authors will be evident immediately from the many references to their works throughout the commentary. This debt is to all those from whom I have learned, whether or not I have agreed with their conclusions."<sup>18</sup> On a similar note, Craigie writes of another mentor:

I owe a great debt to my colleague, Professor Eugene Combs [see below]. He has not read this book and might not agree with much of it, but for the intellectual stimulus and the insight which his own work and words have provided, I can not hope to repay him.<sup>19</sup>

Obviously for Craigie, serious differences of opinion with regard to scholarly matters did not preclude respect for other's opinions.

Although Craigie's interest in biblical archaeology and the Near Eastern provenance of the Bible was encouraged by Gray's work in this area, his mentor's most lasting influence on his

---

<sup>14</sup> In his "Academic Biography of Peter C. Craigie," Harold Coward considers this degree to be "very close in quality to a North American Ph.D." (593).

<sup>15</sup> John Gray (1913– ) was a Professor of Hebrew at the University of Aberdeen (1960–80) and has written extensively on several Old Testament themes from archaeology to theology. Some of his publications include: *The Legacy of Canaan: The Ras Shamra Texts and Their Relevance to the Old Testament* (Brill, 1957, 1965); *Archaeology and the Old Testament* (Harper & Row, 1962); *The Canaanites* (Thames and Hudson, 1964); *I & II Kings* (SCM Press, 1964; Westminster, 1970); *A History of Jerusalem* (Hale, 1969); *The Biblical Doctrine of the Reign of God* (T & T Clark, 1979); *Joshua, Judges, Ruth* (Don Mills: Thomas Nelson & Sons, Ltd., 1967; subsequently reprinted by Eerdmans, 1986). Cf. Bray, 390, and *Contemporary Authors Online*. The Gale Group: Biography and Genealogy Master Index, 2003. Online: <http://galenet.gale.com/a/acp/db/bgmi/index.html>.

<sup>16</sup> John Gray, "Israel in the Song of Deborah," in *Ascribe to the Lord: Biblical and Other Studies in Memory of Peter C. Craigie*, Lyle Eslinger and Glen Taylor, eds., (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1988), 421.

<sup>17</sup> Idestrom, "Peter C. Craigie and the Old Testament," 106.

<sup>18</sup> Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, 8.

<sup>19</sup> Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, 9.



student was certainly in the arena of Ugaritic studies. Craigie's fascination with "everything Ugaritic" began while he was at Edinburgh and his summer of intensive language study in Lebanon (1963). When he came to Aberdeen, he expanded his study of the field with a weekly Ugaritic reading with Gray and others.<sup>20</sup> His interests would eventually be expressed in his book on Ugarit and his role as editor for the *Newsletter for Ugaritic Studies*.<sup>21</sup>

Craigie completed his formal training where he began, in Canada, in the Department of Religion at McMaster University. Beginning with the conservative setting of Prairie Bible Institute, he would finish in the confessional pluralism of a religious studies program in a secular university. The years at New College (University of Edinburgh), St. John's College (University of Durham), and the University of Aberdeen had broadened his theological horizons, and at McMaster Craigie would develop his own vision of conservative Christianity as a full and equal partner in the ongoing dialogue of a university community.<sup>22</sup> As with most religion departments, the department at McMaster offered a pluralistic environment in which to investigate the scriptures and traditions of multiple communities of faith. In the late sixties and early seventies, the Department of Religion at McMaster was the largest religious studies department in Canada with over ninety Ph.D. candidates and ample funding.<sup>23</sup> While studying with both John Gibson and John Gray, Craigie had developed an expertise in comparative philology, and especially in how the *Ras Shamra* texts might influence modern perceptions of the Hebrew Bible. Until that time, however, no one in the Department of Religion at McMaster had such interests or expertise.<sup>24</sup> Rather, the university had come under the strong influence of the Canadian political thinker, George Grant.<sup>25</sup> Grant was part of a bi-weekly discussion group that included Craigie.<sup>26</sup> With the input of Grant and his dissertation director, Eugene Combs,<sup>27</sup> Craigie began to study the

---

<sup>20</sup> Idestrom, "Peter C. Craigie and the Old Testament," 107.

<sup>21</sup> John S. Moir, *A History of Biblical Studies in Canada: A Sense of Proportion*, (Chico: Scholars Press, 1982), 88.

<sup>22</sup> Idestrom, "Craigie's Approach to the Old Testament," *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 23 (1994): 458.

<sup>23</sup> Moir, *A History of Biblical Studies in Canada*, 93.

<sup>24</sup> Eslinger, "Peter C. Craigie," 414.

<sup>25</sup> George Parkin Grant (1918–1988) is considered by some to be Canada's leading modern political and social philosopher. He was a Professor of Philosophy at Dalhousie University (1947–60), Professor of Religion at McMaster University (1961–80), and then Professor of Political Science and Classics again at Dalhousie University. Grant wrote from the perspective of a conservative, Canadian nationalist, and Christian philosopher. He is remembered for his *Lament for a Nation: The Defeat of Canadian Nationalism* (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1965), in which he argued that the liberal Canadian party under then Prime Minister Lester Pearson had succumbed to American liberal domination by accepting nuclear weapons for the defense of the nation. The book helped to support the growing opinion that Canada needed to be more independent of its neighbors to the south, a mood that resulted in the nationalization of American-controlled companies in Canada and in opposition to US participation in the Vietnam War. He also wrote, *Philosophy in the Mass Age*, (Vancouver: Copp Clark Co., 1959), *Technology and Empire: Perspectives on North America* (Toronto, House of Anansi, 1969), and *English-Speaking Justice* (University of Notre Dame Press, 1974). Cf., *The George Grant Reader*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998); "George (Parkin) Grant," 1 [cited 15 March, 2003], *Contemporary Authors Online*, The Gale Group: Biography and Genealogy Master Index, 2003. Online: <http://galenet.gale.com/a/acp/db/bgmi/index.html>; and Eugene Combs, "Bibliography of George Grant," in *Modernity and Responsibility: Essays for George Grant*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983), 133–38.

<sup>26</sup> Idestrom, "Peter C. Craigie and the Old Testament," 113.

<sup>27</sup> Eugene Combs (1934–) was born in Oklahoma and studied at Trinity University (A.B., 1956), Union Theological Seminary (M.Div., 1959), and Columbia University (Ph.D., 1963; his dissertation topic was: "The Creation Motif in the 'Enthronement Psalms'"). At McMaster University he has held the positions of Lecturer

impact of political philosophy on biblical hermeneutics, and especially the influence of Baruch Spinoza.<sup>28</sup> Although Combs had been trained in the traditional historical-critical historical methods,<sup>29</sup> his own interests had grown beyond these confines by the time Craigie had arrived at McMaster. Combs' influence on Craigie, then, would be in the area of broader philosophical issues and in his demand of a close reading of the biblical text.<sup>30</sup> He recalls that when Craigie first came to McMaster, he seemed to be rather technical in his approach to the biblical text, focusing on linguistic and historical issues in his work. He suggested that Craigie explore other approaches to the Bible. After Craigie's death, Combs said of his student, "He studied and learned with ease, with a delicate touch that seems to waste no effort . . . his writing was objective in the best sense of the word; freed of himself, it was the best of himself."<sup>31</sup>

Craigie completed his Ph.D., including his comprehensive examinations, in only two years and graduated in 1970. His dissertation continued the trend established earlier in his studies toward the comparative study of some of the oldest poetry in the Bible: "Earliest Israelite Religion: A Study of the Song of the Sea (Exodus 15:1–18)."<sup>32</sup>

Although his formal training had been completed, there are several other people with whom he did not study that had a substantive impact on his work. Occasionally Craigie mentions someone in his writing as a person whose ideas had a significant impact on him. Kenneth A. Kitchen<sup>33</sup> is one such person. In his commentary on Deuteronomy, Craigie maintains that his

---

(1963–64), Assistant Professor (1964–68), Associate Professor (1968–75), Professor of Hebrew Bible and Religious Studies (1975–), and Associate Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences (1981–). Some of his books include: *Modernity and Responsibility: Essays for George Grant* (University of Toronto Press, 1983); and *The Foundations of Political Order in Genesis and the Chandogya Upanisad: A New Method in Comparative Textual Studies* (E. Mellen Press, 1987). Of his recent work he said, "The relation of religious thoughts to actual human orders or political systems has not been sufficiently recognized and studied in recent years. My long range goal is to uncover and articulate this relationship by the close and careful study of both religious and political documents" ("Eugene Combs," 1–2 [cited 15 March, 2003], *Contemporary Authors Online*. The Gale Group: Biography and Genealogy Master Index, 2003. Online: <http://galenet.gale.com/a/acp/db/bgmi/index.html>).

<sup>28</sup> Craigie, "The Influence of Spinoza in the Higher Criticism of the Old Testament," *Evangelical Quarterly* 50 (1978): 23–32. The topic of Spinoza appears frequently in Craigie's work: cf. *The Book of Deuteronomy* 76–77; *Problem of War* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 27.12

<sup>29</sup> Part of Combs' doctoral work included the study of Exodus 15, the topic of Craigie's dissertation (Eslinger, "Peter C. Craigie," 414: 7).

<sup>30</sup> Eslinger, "Peter C. Craigie," 414.

<sup>31</sup> Eugene Combs, "Address for Peter Presented at a Joint Meeting of CSSR [Canadian Corporation for Studies in Religion], CSBS [Canadian Society of Biblical Studies], and CTS [Canadian Theological Society]," June 4, 1986, Learned Societies Meeting, Winnipeg, Manitoba. Quoted by Harold Coward, "Academic Biography of Peter C. Craigie," 594. For more information on Canadian biblical and religious studies societies, see Moir, *A History of Biblical Studies in Canada: A Sense of Proportion*.

<sup>32</sup> Craigie's minor area of concentration was Buddhism and Hinduism.

<sup>33</sup> Kenneth Anderson Kitchen (1932–) is an expert on the 19<sup>th</sup> Dynasty of Egypt (which includes Ramesses II who some consider to be the Pharaoh of the Exodus period). He was born in Aberdeen, Scotland, and studied at University of Liverpool (B.A., 1956, Honors, Egyptology and Semitics, and a Ph.D., 1974.) He served as a Lecturer in Egyptian and Coptic at the University of Liverpool and is currently Professor Emeritus of Egyptology in the School of Archaeology, Classics, and Oriental Studies, University of Liverpool. He has been a prolific writer, publishing over 200 scholarly articles and books. Some of his books include: *Suppiluliuma and the Amarna Pharaohs: A Study in Relative Chronology* (Liverpool University Press, 1962); *Ancient Orient and the Old Testament* (Tyndale Press, 1966); *The Third Intermediate Period in Egypt: 1100–650 B.C.* (Aris & Phillips, 1973 and 1986); *The Bible in its World: The Bible & Archaeology Today* (InterVarsity Press, 1978); *Glimpses of Ancient Egypt: Studies in Honour of H. W. Fairman* (Aris & Phillips, 1979); *Pharaoh Triumphant: The Life and Times of Ramesses [sic] II, King of Egypt* (Aris & Phillips, 1983); *Ramesseid Inscriptions: Translations* (Blackwell, 1993);

perspective of the ancient Near East and ancient Israel is similar to Kitchen's view.<sup>34</sup> In saying this, Craigie draws upon two essential points of argument from Kitchen: (1) In contrast to those who would shorten the time span of the Old Testament by several centuries because of a distrust of the early historical record of ancient Israel (including de Witte, Graf, Wellhausen, et al.),<sup>35</sup> Kitchen maintains and Craigie concurs that such historical contraction (i.e., altering the biblical timetable) is unwarranted. Kitchen held that, "this entire position [i.e., the position of those who want to alter the biblical chronology] has always remained a purely theoretical exercise, within a padded cell as it were—Hebrew history was treated as a self-contained capsule, without any serious attempt at comparison with[out] any independent yardstick or objective standard of measurement."<sup>36</sup> Rather than treat the Old Testament in isolation from the surrounding contemporaneous peoples and shorten its historical timeline, as these scholars had done, Kitchen maintains that it should be studied within the context of multiple ancient Near Eastern countries that had surprisingly similar historical experiences to those of Israel. Furthermore, if the history of one people were to be radically altered (as some scholars suggested), the timetables of all the surrounding countries would have to be necessarily adjusted as well. In light of the shared history of the ancient Near Eastern community, such a cross-cultural historical adjustment was totally unnecessary. On the contrary, the historical record argues against such action.<sup>37</sup> Kitchen maintains that,

The seventeen centuries of essential Hebrew history offered by the Old Testament picture of the history is *not* a period of artificial or inordinate length: it fits well with the rest of the Near East with equal and longer [time] spans.<sup>38</sup>

Since Craigie accepts Kitchen's perspective of Old Testament history, he does not shrink from placing Deuteronomy in the waning years of the Mosaic period. After acknowledging that it is impossible to "prove" or "disprove" the explicit date and authorship of Deuteronomy,<sup>39</sup> and

---

*Rameside Inscriptions: Translated & Annotated: Notes and Comments*, Vol. 1, (Blackwell, 1994); *The World of Ancient Arabia* (Liverpool University Press, 1994); *Documentation for Ancient Arabia: Bibliographic Catalogue of Texts* (Liverpool University Press, 1994, 1999); *Rameside Inscriptions: Notes and Comments*, Vol. 2, (Blackwell, 1999); *Poetry of Ancient Egypt* (Gothenburg: Astrom, 1999); "How We Know When Solomon Ruled" *BAR* 27 (September–October 2001). Kitchen was also a contributor to the Craigie *Festschrift*, *Ascribe to the Lord*, "'Of Bedspreads and Hibernation: From Rio de Janeiro to the Middle East'" (21–27), in which he examines some of the ancient Middle Eastern vocabulary for bedspreads. Cf. Hershhal Shanks, ed., *Who's Who in Biblical Studies and Archaeology*, 1<sup>st</sup> ed., Washington: Biblical Archaeology Society, 1986, 118–19; *BAR* 27.5 (2001): 58; *BAR* (2002) 28.3: 11–12, 62–63; and .

<sup>34</sup> Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, 78.13.

<sup>35</sup> Kitchen, "The Old Testament in Its Context: 6," *TSE Bulletin* 64 (1972), (2). This is the sixth and last article in a series of articles on the Old Testament. Previous articles focused on specific books and historical periods in Old Testament history. This final article attempts to provide a panoramic perspective of the history of the Old Testament, what Kitchen calls "an *over-all*, more unified view of that *whole* history in its *total* ancient Near Eastern context" (2). Cf. Kitchen's section on "Hebrew History, Real and Imaginary" in this article (7).

<sup>36</sup> Kitchen, "The Old Testament in Its Context: 6," 3.

<sup>37</sup> Kitchen, "The Old Testament in Its Context: 6," 4. For a similar biblical chronological issue, cf. Kitchen's recent article, "How We Know When Solomon Ruled: Synchronisms with Egyptian and Assyrian Rulers Hold the Key to Dates of Israelite Kings," *BAR* 27 (2001): 32–37, 58.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, 28.

recognizing that the subject matter and writing style of the book is so diverse,<sup>40</sup> he goes on to say, “my understanding of Near Eastern history as a whole, and of Israelite history in particular, is such that I do not find radical problems in setting Deuteronomy in the context of the close of the Mosaic period.”<sup>41</sup> This position, of course, did not escape criticism.<sup>42</sup>

A second point Craigie adopted from Kitchen (and an outgrowth of the first) is the importance of “contextual Old Testament studies.” Kitchen holds that,

The study of the Old Testament in encapsulated isolation is a sure recipe for disaster. As an external and thus objective measuring-scale, the ancient Near East (in which the Old Testament itself was written) is indispensable for a properly-informed understanding of the externals of the Old Testament.<sup>43</sup>

Craigie repeatedly emphasized the importance of interpreting the Old Testament within its cultural environment, and thus the larger “world of the Old Testament” would be indispensable for his biblical hermeneutic.

Another scholar who influenced Craigie was Roland K. Harrison.<sup>44</sup> As a student Craigie read some of Harrison’s books and Craigie mentions that for years he only knew Harrison via

---

<sup>40</sup> Craigie, *The Old Testament*, 117.

<sup>41</sup> Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, 46, 78.

<sup>42</sup> In “Once More Moses and Deuteronomy,” Ernest W. Nicholson (a respected Deuteronomy scholar [1938–]) took exception to much of Craigie’s hermeneutic in *The Book of Deuteronomy*, and especially to what he believes is Craigie’s premise of Mosaic authorship, saying, “Deuteronomy’s Mosaic origin and its pronounced covenantal theology are everywhere presupposed in [Craigie’s] commentary” (153). (Some of Nicholson’s works include: *Deuteronomy and Tradition*, Fortress 1967; *The Book of the Prophet Jeremiah*, 2 vols. Cambridge University Press, 1973–75; *God and His People: Covenant and Theology in the Old Testament*, Clarendon Press, 1986; *The Pentateuch and the Twentieth Century: The Legacy of Julius Wellhausen*, Blackwell, 1998.) Nicholson’s comments, however, are ill-advised and demonstrate that he is indifferent to (or unaware of) the subtle but important distinctions between conservative and fundamentalist perspectives of the biblical narrative. Moreover, Nicholson succumbs to an overly simplistic read of Craigie who is certainly not calling for Mosaic authorship. Rather, he is careful to say that a “mosaic” imprint (a term Craigie did not use) can be found throughout the book, but that the “text of Deuteronomy substantially in its present form” could conceivably have been committed to writing under the direction of Joshua at the covenant renewal ceremony at Shechem recorded in Joshua 8:30–35 (*The Book of Deuteronomy*, 29, 32). Moreover, Craigie is mindful to add that the “authorship” of such a book as Deuteronomy “has to do with substance (viz., the ‘words that Moses spoke’) and not primarily with the mechanical process of writing or recording” (29.31). Thus Craigie maintains substantial mosaic influence in the pages of Deuteronomy that were composed shortly after the death of Moses. Elsinger calls his view “a modified traditional view” of pentateuchal authorship (*Bible Interpreters of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century: A Selection of Evangelical Voices*: 416). It is interesting to note references to Craigie and his work are curiously absent from Nicholson’s books, including his, *The Pentateuch in the Twentieth Century: The Legacy of Julius Wellhausen*, which has a lengthy section on “reactions to Wellhausen.” For more information see: Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy* 8, 25–28, and for a subsequent elaboration of Craigie’s position see Craigie’s, *The Old Testament*, 105, 116, 122 (*Deuteronomy* was published in 1976, and *The Old Testament*, was published shortly before Craigie’s death in 1986), and Idestrom, *Peter C. Craigie and the Old Testament*, 63–64.

<sup>43</sup> Kitchen, “The Old Testament in Its Context: 6,” 10.

<sup>44</sup> Born August 4, 1920 in Lancashire, England, R. K. (Roland Kenneth) Harrison (1920–93) studied at The University of London (B.D., 1943; M.Th., 1947; and Ph.D., 1952). He was ordained as an Anglican priest in 1943. He served as Chaplain of Clifton Theological College, Bristol, England (1947–49); Professor of Biblical Greek (1949–52) and Hellmuth Professor of Old Testament (1952–60) at Huron College, London, Ontario; Bishops Frederick and Heber Wilkinson Professor of Old Testament and Departmental Chair at University of Toronto, Wycliffe College, Toronto (1960–86); and Professor Emeritus (1986–93). An “indefatigable writer” (this is

correspondence.<sup>45</sup> On at least two occasions Craigie expressed appreciation for the advice and encouragement that Harrison had given to him.<sup>46</sup> Harrison's work was widely read by young evangelical scholars who wanted a conservative response to what they considered to be non-conservative biblical criticism. He set an example for those who would follow him by demonstrating that it was possible to enter the critical scholarly world without sacrificing one's profession of faith. He made it clear that it was not necessary to abandon scholarship in order to remain faithful to Scripture. Craigie also appreciated the fact that Harrison was able to develop his own scholarly conclusions without constant acquiescence to traditional conservative approaches to Scripture. Of Harrison, Craigie wrote:

It is important to understand Harrison's conservatism in the proper light; he is conservative in his approach to *scripture* as such, without feeling particularly constrained by the traditional "conservative" approaches to scripture. Therefore, he can write in the preface to his *Introduction*: "The conclusions that appear in the book are tentative and amenable to modification in the light of whatever relevant factual information may emerge in the future." That is to say, Harrison is conservative in his thought, but he betrays little evidence of being hidebound by traditional conservative perspectives; he feels free to follow the evidence where it leads him but is rarely persuaded by what he considers to be the subjective trends of much of contemporary Old Testament scholarship.<sup>47</sup>

---

Craigie's term [see "Foreword," viii], some of his books include: *Teach Yourself Hebrew* (English Universities Press, 1955); *The Dead Sea Scrolls: An Introduction* (Harper, 1961); *Analytical Concordance to the Bible* (Funk & Wagnalls, 1964, [a reprint of Young's Concordance, 22<sup>nd</sup> American ed.]); *Archaeology of the New Testament* (Association Press, 1964); *Healing Herbs of the Bible* (Brill, 1966); *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Eerdmans, 1969); *A History of Old Testament Times* (Marshall, Morgan, & Scott, 1957 [revised ed., *Old Testament Times* published by Eerdmans, 1970]); *Jeremiah and Lamentations: An Introduction and Commentary* (InterVarsity Press, 1973); *Biblical Criticism: Historical, Literary, and Textual* (Zondervan, 1978); *Leviticus: An Introduction and Commentary* (InterVarsity Press, 1980); *The New International Dictionary of Biblical Archaeology* (Zondervan, 1983); *Major Cities of the Biblical World* (Nelson, 1985); *Encyclopedia of Biblical and Christian Ethics* (Nelson, 1987); *Numbers* (Moody Press, 1990). He served on the editorial board for the *NKJV*, was the first general editor of the *New International Commentary on the Old Testament*, and a contributor to the *Craigie Festschrift, Ascribe to the Lord* ("Philistine Origins: A Reappraisal," 11–19). Gerald Bray refers to him as "a staunch, if sometimes acerbic, defender of classical conservative options in Old Testament criticism" (Bray: 547). See *Contemporary Authors Online*. The Gale Group: Biography and Genealogy Master Index, 2003. Online: <http://galenet.gale.com/a/acp/db/bgmi/index.html>; and Craigie, "Foreword," in *Israel's Apostasy and Restoration: Essays in Honor of Roland K. Harrison*, Avraham Gileadi, ed., (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1988), vii–xi (published posthumously).

<sup>45</sup> Craigie, "Foreword," in *Israel's Apostasy and Restoration: Essays in Honor of Roland K. Harrison*, x.

<sup>46</sup> Craigie wrote in the Author's Preface to *The Book of Deuteronomy*, "I am grateful to the editor [of the commentary series *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament*], Professor R. K. Harrison, not only for issuing the invitation to contribute to the series, but also for his advice and encouragement during the time in which the book was being written" (9); and in the "Foreword" to *Israel's Apostasy and Restoration: Essays in Honor of Roland K. Harrison*, Craigie wrote, "what I have appreciated most in R. K. Harrison is simply his love and enthusiasm for the Hebrew Bible . . . there are elements of the prophet in his character: a deep love for the word of God, an outspoken statement of his views on truth, and an unwavering commitment to the service of fellow human beings" (x–xi).

<sup>47</sup> Craigie, "Foreword," *Israel's Apostasy and Restoration: Essays in Honor of Roland K. Harrison*, ix.

In contrast to Harrison, however, Craigie was not a militant spokesman for the denunciation of “liberal biblical criticism” and higher criticism. Rather, he had a more positive opinion of the various critical methods available to the biblical scholar. By way of example, in his commentary on Deuteronomy Craigie says, “I do not assume that those many works which adopt a viewpoint very different from the one presented here are therefore ‘wrong’ or without value. Skepticism of method does not necessarily involve skepticism of belief.”<sup>48</sup>

In his commentary on the Psalms, Craigie mentions that his perspective on the Psalms has been influenced by several scholars. Before his untimely death, Craigie seemed to be attracted to the new literary approaches that were just coming in vogue in the later 1970s and 80s. If he had been able to continue to develop and write as a scholar, Eslinger suggests that it is likely that he would have pursued his interest in studying the Bible as literature and focusing on its final form.<sup>49</sup> In particular, Craigie was attracted to H. N. Ridderbos’<sup>50</sup> early work on structural and rhetorical analysis of the Psalms. Craigie wrote:

I have been very positively influenced in the study of many psalms in this volume [Craigie’s, *Psalms 1–50*] by the work of H. N. Ridderbos, *Die Psalmen* (1972), in which a balance is achieved between form-criticism, on the one hand, and a close examination of the distinctive literary structure of each psalm (in terms of the “new Stylistics”), on the other hand.<sup>51</sup>

Craigie’s attraction to the work of Ridderbos is further evinced by the fact that he did a revision of Ridderbos’ article on the Psalms for *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*.<sup>52</sup>

Another scholar with whom Craigie did not study, but who nevertheless was influential in Craigie’s work is Stephen Wilson.<sup>53</sup> The two met at the University of Durham and Idestrom

---

<sup>48</sup> Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, 78.

<sup>49</sup> Lyle Eslinger, “Peter C. Craigie,” 416.

<sup>50</sup> Born February 13, 1909 in Oosterend, Belgium, Herman Nicolaas Ridderbos attended seminary in Kampen, Netherlands (Kampen Theological Seminary, B.Th., 1931), and completed his doctoral studies at The Free University of Amsterdam (Dr. Th., 1936). He has served as a Minister of Reformed Churches in both Eefde (1934–39) and Rotterdam, Netherlands (1939–42), and Professor of New Testament at Kampen Theological Seminary (1934–74). In 1974 he was named Professor Emeritus, and one year later Professor Extraordinarius. A prolific writer, some of his books include: *Comment on Galatians* (Eerdmans, 1953); *When the Time had Fully Come* (Eerdmans, 1957); *The Coming of the Kingdom* (Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1962 [English trans.]); *The Speeches of Peter in the Acts of the Apostles* (Tyndale, 1962); *Paul: An Outline of His Theology* (Eerdmans, 1975); *Studies in Scripture and its Authority* (Eerdmans, 1978); *Mattheus* (Regency Reference Library, 1987 [English trans.]); *The Gospel According to John: A Theological Commentary* (Eerdmans, 1997 [English trans.]). Cf. The Gale Group: Literature Resource Center, 2001, See : <http://galenet.gale.com/a/acp/db/bgmi/index.html>.

<sup>51</sup> Craigie, *Psalms 1–50*, 47.

<sup>52</sup> Craigie, “Psalms,” *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, 3 (1986): 1029–40. N.B.: R. K. Harrison was the Old Testament editor for the *ISBE*.

<sup>53</sup> Stephen G. Wilson received B.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Durham, England. He is a Professor in the Department of Religion and the Director of the College of Humanities at Carleton University in Ottawa. His areas of specialization include: Christianity, Judaism, and Graeco-Roman Religions in Late Antiquity. Some of his writings are: *Gentiles and the Gentile Mission in Luke-Acts* (Cambridge University Press, 1973); *Luke and the Pastoral Epistles* (S.P.C.K., 1979); *Luke and the Law* (Cambridge University Press, 1983); *Anti-Judaism in Early Christianity: Separation and Polemic*, Vol. 2 (Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1986); *Related Strangers: Jews and Christians, 70–170 C.E.* (Fortress Press, 1995); *Voluntary Associations in the Graeco-Roman World*, ed. (Routledge, 1996). See [www.carleton.ca/religion/](http://www.carleton.ca/religion/).

reports that they were frequently in contact and remained close associates for life. Despite Wilson's professed atheism, Craigie respected him for his intellectual honesty and valued his scholarly insight rather than judging him for his position.<sup>54</sup>

One final scholar who again was not one of Craigie's teachers, but who had a substantive impact on his work is Mitchell J. Dahood.<sup>55</sup> In his *Psalms 1–50* Craigie mentions Dahood frequently. This is not surprising since both men were Ugaritic specialists and Dahood's *magnum opus* was his three-volume commentary on the Psalms. Speaking of Dahood, in the "Foreword" to his own volume on the Psalms Craigie writes:

Mitchell Dahood . . . is an old friend I should like to have thanked, whose name appears throughout the book. . . . His writings were a constant source of stimulus, and though we rarely agreed on matters Ugaritic, I have learned enormously from his insights. Over the years, through meetings and correspondence, a friendship developed; his death on March 8, 1982, marked the loss of a colleague, friend, and a great companion of the Psalms.<sup>56</sup>

Writing on the Psalms gave Craigie ample opportunity to interact with Dahood's earlier work. Few scholars have been so thoroughly influential in a specific area of study as has Mitchell Dahood. Craigie places him only second to H. Gunkel in influence on modern Psalm study.<sup>57</sup> Others consider his impact to be even higher. For example, W. F. Albright claims that Dahood has contributed more to our understanding of the vocabulary of Hebrew poetry than all other scholars combined, saying, "If only a third of his new interpretations of the Psalter are correct in principle—and I should put the total proportion higher—he has contributed more than all other scholars together, over the past two thousand years, to the elucidation of the Psalter."<sup>58</sup> Similarly, G. Sauer maintains that no one has offered a more thorough treatment of the meaning of the Psalms since the Reformation.<sup>59</sup> The juxtaposition of Craigie's and Dahood's use of extra

---

<sup>54</sup> Idestrom, "Peter C. Craigie and the Old Testament," 114. This information is based upon two interviews Idestrom conducted while doing the research for her M.A. thesis: an interview with Wilson, and an interview with Elizabeth Craigie.

<sup>55</sup> Born in Anaconda, MT (February 2, 1922), Mitchell Joseph Dahood (1922–1982) received a B.A. (1945) and M.A. (1948) from Boston College; another M.A. (1949) and a Ph.D. (1951) from Johns Hopkins University; a S.T.L. (1955) from Weston College. He served as a Roman Catholic Priest of the Society of Jesus (S.J.) and as a Professor of Ugaritic Language and Literature at the Pontifical Biblical Institute, Rome, Italy. He also served as a Guest Professor at Yale University in 1970. He is remembered as a clergyman, educator, author and translator, especially of ancient Ugaritic texts. Moreover, he worked closely with the translation efforts of an important cuneiform tablet discovered at Ebla in 1975. In addition to hundreds of scholarly articles, Dahood also wrote *Northwest Semitic Philology and Job* (Pontifical Biblical Institute Press, 1962); *Proverbs and Northwest Semitic Philology* (Pontifical Biblical Institute Press, 1963); *Ugaritic-Hebrew Philology: Marginal Notes on Recent Publications* (Pontifical Biblical Institute Press, 1965, 1989); and the three volume *Anchor Bible Commentary* (Vols. 16, 17, and 17a): *Psalms 1–50* (1966); *Psalms 51–100* (1968); *Psalms 101–150* (1970). Cf. "Mitchell Joseph Dahood," 1–3 [Cited 15 March, 2003], *Contemporary Authors Online*. The Gale Group: Biography and Genealogy Master Index, 2003. Online: <http://galenet.gale.com/a/acp/db/bgmi/index.html>.

<sup>56</sup> Craigie, *Psalms 1–50*, 9. Considering Craigie's premature death, the closing words of this quote are moving. Cf. Idestrom, "Craigie's Approach to the Old Testament," 461.

<sup>57</sup> Craigie, *Psalms 1–50*, 51.

<sup>58</sup> William F. Albright, "Some Excavation Reports and Synthesis," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 186 (1967): 54.

<sup>59</sup> G. Sauer, "Die Ugaritistik und die Psalmenforschung." *Ugarit-Forschung* 6 (1974): 401.

biblical materials to illuminate the meaning of the biblical text (and in particular the Psalms) is important when considering Craigie's hermeneutic (see below).

During his years at various schools Craigie realized first hand that sincere differences of opinion could exist over biblical hermeneutics or textual criticism among confessing Christians, not simply among Christians and (to use Idestrom's words) "non-Christian, 'liberal' [biblical] scholarship."<sup>60</sup> Consequently, Idestrom holds that Craigie did not espouse the dichotomous "we-they" mentality so common with fundamentalist religions, and he became less defensive toward opposing views than many of his conservative colleagues.<sup>61</sup> Since at times he studied with teachers with whom he disagreed (Christian or non-Christian), and at other times he studied with teachers who were sincere Christians, though not necessarily evangelical, Craigie became more open-minded and less territorial about his own tradition of faith and biblical interpretation.

Upon completion of his Ph.D., Craigie assumed a position at Carleton University in Ottawa as Assistant Professor of Religious Studies (1970–71). He remained only one year before being offered the same position at McMaster University. He would remain there for three years (1971–74). In 1974 he had two opportunities, one as the Principal of Huron College at The University of Western Ontario, and the other as Associate Professor in the new Religious Studies Department at The University of Calgary. He went to Calgary to join Harold Coward<sup>62</sup> and Terence Penelhum<sup>63</sup> to begin the new program. The move from McMaster University to The University of Calgary was a risky one. He had tenure at McMaster, but the position offered at Calgary was only a non-tenure track, limited-term position that was funded jointly by the local Jewish and Christian communities (Calgary Interfaith). He spent much of his time during the early years at Calgary giving lectures outside the academic context, and Idestrom writes that he addressed a widely diverse audience, including Jewish, Christian, Muslim, and Buddhist

---

<sup>60</sup> Idestrom, "Peter C. Craigie and the Old Testament," 95.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Harold G. Coward (1936–) was born in Calgary, Alberta. He received his B.A. (1958), B.D. (1967), and M.A. (1969) from the University of Alta, and his Ph.D. from McMaster University (1973). He has held the following positions at the University of Calgary: Professor of Religion (1973–92); Department Chair (1976, 1979–83); Associate Dean of Humanities (1977); Director of the University Press (1981–83); Director of Calgary Institute of the Humanities (1980–92); and Director of the Centre for Studies in Religion and Society and Professor of History at the University of Victoria (1992–). Some of his publications include: *Sphota Theory of Language* (1980); *Jung and Eastern Thought* (1985); *Pluralism: Challenge to World Religions* (1988), *Sacred Word and Sacred Text: Scripture in the World Religions* (1988); *Hindu Ethics: Purity, Euthanasia and Abortion* (1988); *Derrida and Indian Philosophy* (1990). He has also edited or co-authored: *Mystics and Scholars* (1977); *Revelation in Indian Thought* (1977); *Religion and Ethnicity* (1978); *Ethical Issues in the Allocation of Health Care Resources* (1982); *Studies in Indian Thought* (1982); *Religions in Contact and Change* (1983); *Aging and Dying: Legal, Scientific and Religious Challenges* (1993); *Population, Consumption and the Environment* (1995); *Life After Death in World Religions* (1997), et al. Cf. "Harold G. Coward," 1–2 [cited 15 March, 2003], *Contemporary Authors Online*. The Gale Group: Biography and Genealogy Master Index, 2003. Online: <http://galenet.gale.com/a/acp/db/bgmi/index.html>.

<sup>63</sup> Terence Michael Penelhum (1926–) was born in Bradford-on-Avon, England. He received a M.A. from Edinburgh (1950), and a D.Phil. from Oxford University (1952). He has held multiple positions at the University of Calgary including Professor of Philosophy (1963–78); Chair of the Philosophy Department (1963–70); and Dean of the Arts and Sciences (1964–67). He is currently a Professor Emeritus in the Religious Studies Program (1988). Some of his publications include: *Survival and Disembodied Existence* (1970); *Religion and Rationality* (1971); *Problems of Religious Knowledge* (1971); *Hume* (1975); *God and Skepticism* (1983); *Butler* (1985); *David Hume: an Introduction to his Philosophical System* (1992); *Reason and Religious Faith* (1995). He has edited or co-edited: *Immortality* (1973); *Faith* (1989); *The First Critique* (1969). Cf. "Terrence M. Penelhum," 1–2 [cited 15 March, 2003], *Contemporary Authors Online*. The Gale Group: Biography and Genealogy Master Index, 2003. Online: <http://galenet.gale.com/a/acp/db/bgmi/index.html>.



communities, multiple civic organizations, and teacher's associations.<sup>64</sup> Such talks were always well received outside the Department, and the religious community eventually acknowledged his work among them with an honorary Doctorate of Divinity (*Honoris Causa*) degree from St. Stephen's College at The University of Alberta and with a canonship (or Canon Theologian) by the Bishop of the Anglican diocese of Calgary.<sup>65</sup>

In addition to his work in the community at that time, Craigie played an important role in the growth and development of the nascent Religious Studies program at Calgary. The Department quickly developed both undergraduate and graduate studies programs and its early success is due, in part, to Craigie's efforts. In a department that stressed pedagogical excellence, he was a master teacher and administrator. Early on in his years at Calgary he was named "Best Humanities Instructor in the Faculty of Arts and Science" (1975) and subsequently "Superior Teacher" (1976).<sup>66</sup> He began at Calgary outside of the tenure track in 1974 as an Associate Professor. By 1977, however, he had become a Professor of Religious Studies and the chair of the Department, a position he held for one year.<sup>67</sup> From there he became the Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, a position he held for five years (1979–84), and both the Associate Vice President and eventually Vice President of Academic Affairs (1984–85, and July to September 1985 respectively).<sup>68</sup> Simultaneously, Craigie served on multiple university advisory boards and committees<sup>69</sup> and continued to write and publish numerous books and articles (see the selected bibliography below). In his final year at Calgary he was also the President of the Canadian Society for Biblical Studies (1985).<sup>70</sup> In addition to these positions, Craigie served the Canadian

---

<sup>64</sup> Idestrom, "Peter C. Craigie and the Old Testament," 98. Stephen G. Wilson recalls that "churches, study groups, universities, and colleges sought him out as a scintillating, witty, and provocative speaker" (Wilson, "Peter Campbell Craigie, 1938–1985: In Memoriam." *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 14 (1985): 233. Coward writes that Craigie "seldom declined a request to speak, and the requests were unending" ("Ascribe to the Lord," 595).

<sup>65</sup> Eslinger, "Peter C. Craigie," 414. A "Canonship" or "Canon Theologian" is an ecclesiastical title that originally referred to all the official staff of a diocese (excluding monks, private chaplains, etc.). It was gradually limited to include any "secular" clergy involved with a cathedral or collegiate church. There are several sub-categories of canons including, "minor canons," "residential canons," and non-residential canons" (often "honorary canons"). Craigie's title was a non-residential canon which means that it was a non-salaried position involving certain privileges and responsibilities as designated by the church. Cf. F. L. Cross, and E. A. Livingstone, eds., "Canon Episcopalis" (n.a.), *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), 230–231.

<sup>66</sup> Coward, "Ascribe to the Lord," 594.

<sup>67</sup> Apparently during the earlier years of the Department the duties of the Chair changed hands frequently. Harold Coward was also Chair for only one year just prior to when Craigie was Chair (1976), and then subsequently Coward became Department Chair again for several years (1979–83).

<sup>68</sup> "Peter Campbell Craigie," 1–2 [cited 15 March, 2003], *Contemporary Authors Online*. The Gale Group: Biography and Genealogy Master Index, 2003. Online: <http://galenet.gale.com/a/acp/db/bgmi/index.html>.

<sup>69</sup> Craigie's service included: the General Faculties Council Executive Committee; Dean's Council Executive Committee; and the President's Executive Advisory Committee.

<sup>70</sup> In honor of Peter Craigie, the Canadian Society of Biblical Studies sponsors a bi-annual "Craigie Lecture" at its annual meeting in late May or early June. Previous speakers include: James M. Robinson, "The Historical Jesus, Q and Nag Hammadi," (2001); James Kugel, "You're Killing Me With Kindness, or, A Modest Proposal Concerning the Teaching of 'Introduction to the Old Testament,'" (1999); Wayne Meeks, "Judaism, Hellenism and the Birth of Christianity," (1997); Carol Newsom, "The Book of Job and the Remaking of the Moral Imagination," (1995); John Dominic Crossan, "Jesus as Peasant," (1993); Meir Sternberg, "The Code of Double Refusal in the Bible," (1991); Krister Stendahl, "From History of Salvation to Wisdom Common and Eternal,"

Corporation for Studies in Religion as both Vice President (1977–79) and President, (1979–81) and the Canadian Federation for Humanities.<sup>71</sup> Before his fatal accident, he seemed to be the obvious candidate for the next Presidency of the University.<sup>72</sup>

In September 1985, only a few months after assuming his new position as Vice President of Academic Affairs at The University of Calgary, Craigie was involved in what would prove to be a fatal automobile accident. Although he and his family survived the crash (his wife and children eventually recovered), Craigie's wounds were too serious to overcome, and he died at the age of forty-seven on September 25, 1985.<sup>73</sup> At a university memorial service which followed a few days later, then President Norman Wagner tried to express the great sorrow and sense of loss that the university was experiencing, but words were insufficient to the task. Craigie's untimely death is remembered to this day with a sense of great loss to the university, the local community,<sup>74</sup> and the scholarly world.<sup>75</sup>

Although Craigie's service as a teacher and administrator were second to none, his most enduring legacy to the academic community and the church is his scholarly work. He focused his efforts in two areas: Bible commentaries (including Deuteronomy, Psalms, Ezekiel, the Twelve Prophets, and Jeremiah) and general and thematic introductions to the Old Testament (including *The Problem of War in the Old Testament; Ugarit and the Old Testament; and The Old Testament: Its Origin, Growth, and Content*). He also initiated and edited the *Ugaritic Newsletter* through thirty-three volumes until the time of his death. In addition to dozens of scholarly articles, he also took the time to distill the results of scholarly research for publication in popular journals such as *Christianity Today*, *The Chelsea Journal*, and *Crux*. He demonstrated his concern for the non-specialist when on two different occasions he accepted invitations to give

---

(1989); John H. Yoder, "'Holy War' Among the Ancient Hebrews," (1987). Cf. Idestrom, interview by author, November 18, 2001.

<sup>71</sup> Stephen G. Wilson, "Peter Campbell Craigie Dies," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 12.1 (1986): 8. See also Wilson, "Peter Campbell Craigie, 1938–1985: In Memoriam." *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 14 (1985): 233. Prior to being President of the Canadian Society of Biblical Studies, Craigie served as Executive Secretary (1975–78).

<sup>72</sup> Eslinger, "Peter C. Craigie," 415.

<sup>73</sup> Wilson, "Peter Campbell Craigie Dies," 8.

<sup>74</sup> Alan Robertson, ed., "A Memorial for Peter Craigie," *The University of Calgary Gazette*, October 9, 1985, 4–5. This moving memorial includes brief articles by Alan Robertson, Dean of Fine Arts; Leslie Kawamura, Head of Religious Studies, Norman Wagner, President of the University at the time of Craigie's death; and a word of appreciation by Betty Craigie. Cf. Norman Wagner, "Reflections: A Memorial Service for Peter Craigie, October 2, 1985," in *Ascribe to the Lord: Biblical and Other Studies in Memory of Peter C. Craigie*, Lyle Eslinger and Glen Taylor, eds., (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1988), 599–601.

<sup>75</sup> See articles by Stephen G. Wilson, "In Memoriam," *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 14 (1985): 233; and "Peter Campbell Craigie Dies," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 12.1 (1986): 8–9. Additionally see the *Craigie Festschrift, Ascribe to the Lord: Biblical and Other Studies in Memory of Peter C. Craigie*. (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1988). Note especially the remarks of Cyrus H. Gordon who refers to Craigie as "an esteemed colleague snatched from us before his time," and "a unique scholar who rendered a unique service to Ugaritology through his *Newsletter for Ugaritic Studies*" (179); John Gray who recalls "precious memories of many stimulating hours in our post-graduate work together in the University of Aberdeen, where Peter left a very distinctive impression both on students and staff" (421); and John Sandys-Wunsch who writes, "those of us who had the great fortune to know Peter Craigie will always remember his interest in showing what the Old Testament might mean for our present era. He was always willing to take on both the hermeneutical and theological tasks this involved and his treatments of the question of war left us all aware of how little we had appreciated the problems up to that time" (545).

a lecture series to the Tyndale Fellowship for Biblical and Theological Research in Cambridge, England in 1970 and 1982.<sup>76</sup> John D. W. Watts and David A. Hubbard, editors of the *Word Bible Commentary* series wrote these words of their lost colleague:

He wed learning to piety,  
clothed brilliance in humility,  
joined service in the academy with fruitfulness in the church.  
More than most of his peers, he mastered  
the high art of doing many things well:  
scholarship in matters Hebraic and Semitic,  
collegiality with teachers older and younger,  
vitality in the learned societies to which he was pledged,  
effectiveness in his ministry and as dean and provost of the University of Calgary,  
affection and care for his wife and family,  
congeniality with a host of friends, and  
adoration of his Maker and Redeemer.<sup>77</sup>

Shortly before his death, the Craigie family moved to some land west of Calgary. On the crest of a hill with a panoramic view of the Canadian Rocky Mountains, Craigie planned to withdraw gradually from his administrative duties and devote himself to research and writing.<sup>78</sup> His premature death denied both him the world the fulfillment of this dream and the fruit of his labor.

Although his academic career was tragically cut short,<sup>79</sup> he nevertheless left a substantial scholarly legacy (see “Bibliography”). Some of his writing which deals with war and *herem* in the Hebrew Bible include (in publication date order):

Craigie, Peter C. *The Book of Deuteronomy. New International Commentary on the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Problem of War in the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Psalms 1–50. Word Biblical Commentary*. Vol. 19. Waco: Word, 1983.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Old Testament: Its Background Growth, and Content*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1986.

---

<sup>76</sup> Coward, “Ascribe to the Lord,” 596.

<sup>77</sup> John D. W. Watts, and David A. Hubbard, “Foreword,” in *Jeremiah 1–25, Word Biblical Commentary*, Vol. 26, Dallas: Word, 1992: i.

<sup>78</sup> Coward, “Ascribe to the Lord,” 596.

<sup>79</sup> The Canadian Society of Biblical Studies holds a bi-annual “The Craigie Lecture” in honor of Craigie. Some of the scholars who have addressed the Society at the “The Craigie Lecture” include: Phyllis Byrd (2003), James M. Robinson (2001), James Kugel (1999), Wayne Meeks (1997), Carol Newsom (1995), John Dominic Crossan (1993), Meir Sternberg (1991), Krister Stendahl (1989), John H. Yoder (1987). For more information see “The Craigie Lecture” at <http://www.ccsr.ca/csbs/CraigieLecture.html>.

Craigie, Peter C, Kelly H. Page, and Joel Drinkard. *Jeremiah 1–25. Word Biblical Commentary*. Vol. 26. Dallas: Word, 1992.<sup>80</sup>

## Craigie’s Work in Context

Craigie’s interests and scholarly work centered on three areas: (1) the application of the results of Ugaritic studies in the area of biblical studies; (2) biblical commentaries; and (3) general and thematic works on the Old Testament. Rick R. Marrs has said,

His work was characterized by careful, judicious use of the Ugaritic materials and a sensitive awareness of the theological implications of higher criticism for those from a conservative perspective. His expository work and study of traditional difficulties (for conservative readers) is marked by balance and thoroughness.<sup>81</sup>

In his book, *Between Faith and Criticism*, the church historian Mark A. Noll mentions that Craigie’s work addresses what Noll considers to be the primary issue for evangelical scholars—the need for a more self-conscious awareness of ideological, theological, and theoretical frameworks in biblical and theological study. To do so would enable them to see the inherent difficulties of their work and to increase the opportunity of learning from the work of non-evangelical scholars. Of this issue Craigie wrote:

Conservative biblical scholarship does not have primarily an apologetic role within contemporary biblical scholarship. Within the study of the Pentateuch, for example, the conservative role is not to establish this or that particular interpretation of the Pentateuch, over and against the current consensus held in the larger arena of biblical scholarship. Such a task, in my view, is essentially pointless, for it presupposes that the differences between the conservative and non-conservative views are based primarily on the interpretation of the data as such. In my judgment, the difference lies elsewhere; the principle ground of difference lies in the theological or philosophical assumptions of the starting point. These assumptions, in turn, dictate which of the possible interpretations of the data is most appropriate. Thus, with respect to apologia and debate it should more appropriately be conducted in the areas of philosophy and theology, not with respect to the actual interpretation of the biblical data. And with respect to the practice of conservative scholarship, an awareness of the implications of different assumptions should introduce a more irenic attitude towards scholars with different assumptions, and consequently different interpretations of this or that set of biblical data.

---

<sup>80</sup> At the time of his death Craigie had completed the first seven chapters and four verses of chapter 8 of the commentary on Jeremiah. (The original plan was for Craigie to complete both volumes of Jeremiah for the *Word Bible Commentary* series.) The “Introduction” to volume 1 is also from his pen. P. H. Kelley and J. F. Drinkwater finished the commentary in Craigie’s absence and are listed as co-authors along with him.

<sup>81</sup> Rick R. Marrs, “Craigie, Peter Campbell (1938–85),” *Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation*, Vol. 1, John H. Hayes, ed., (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999), 229.

The role of conservative biblical scholarship is thus not primarily apologetic; it lies rather in the realm of the articulation of biblical teaching and truth within the circle of those who share a common conviction as to the nature and status of the Bible, but who desire to see that conviction expressed in an informed manner, at once consonant with the contemporary world, but at the same time committed to the particular interpretation of the ancient faith which has been received with respect to the truth and authority of the Bible.<sup>82</sup>

A similar review of “non-conservative” biblical scholarship by Craigie would be most illuminating.

## Craigie and War in the Old Testament

Lyle Eslinger has noted that four themes recur with some regularity in Craigie’s writings. They include: (1) traditional ascriptions of biblical authorship; (2) the problem of the moral offensiveness of some parts of the Bible; (3) the contradiction between biblical miracles and the empiricism of historical criticism; and (4) the role of archaeology in biblical study.<sup>83</sup> It is the second of these categories, the problem of the moral offensiveness of some parts of the Bible, that includes Craigie’s attention to warfare in the Bible. Given his military background, it is not surprising that Craigie wrote frequently on this topic (he mentions that his concern with this issue began while he was a student<sup>84</sup>). His writing includes: a dissertation on the Song of the Sea (Exod 15:1–18), one monograph (*The Problem of War in the Old Testament*), several Bible encyclopedia or Bible dictionary articles, at least ten journal articles, occasional book reviews of other scholarly writing on the subject, and numerous biblical commentary entries on warfare in the Old Testament (from Deuteronomy, Psalms, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Twelve Prophets).<sup>85</sup>

---

<sup>82</sup> Craigie, “The Role and Relevance of Biblical Research.” *JSOT* 18 (1980): 29. See also, “The Word Became Flesh: An Introduction to the Origin, Purpose, and Meaning of the Old Testament” (review of Horace D. Hummel, St. Louis: Concordia, 1979), *JBL* 100 (1981): 106–107.

<sup>83</sup> Eslinger, “Peter C. Craigie,” 417.

<sup>84</sup> Craigie, *The Problem of War in the Old Testament*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 106.

<sup>85</sup> Some of Craigie’s writing on warfare in the Bible include: *The Problem of War in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978); “War, Religion, and Scripture,” *Bulletin of the Canadian Society of Biblical Studies* 46 (1986): 3–14 (published posthumously); “Yahweh is a Man of Wars,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 22 (1969): 183–188; “War and Peace” (review of Vernard Eller, *War and Peace from Genesis to Revelation*), *Christianity Today* 26.1 (1982): 74; “Hebrew thought about God and Nature and its Contemporary Significance,” *Canadian Journal of Theology* 16 (1970): 3–14; “Psalm XXIX in the Hebrew Poetic Tradition,” *VT* 22 (1972): 143–151; “Hiroshima After Thirty Years: Reflections on the Politics of Omnipotence,” *The Chelsea Journal* 1.4 (1975): 163–66; Review of Millard C. Lind, *Yahweh is a Warrior: The Theology of Warfare in Ancient Israel. Interpretation* 36 (1982): 306; “Religion, War, and Peace,” *CALUM* [Alumni Magazine, University of Calgary] 7.2 (1975): 8; Review of John Ferguson, *War and Peace in the World’s Religions*, *The Canadian Churchman* 104.4 (1978): 20; “The Conquest and Early Hebrew Poetry,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 20 (1969): 76–94; “The Idea of War,” 1018–1021, Vol. 4, *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, ed., et al. (Grand Rapids, 1979–1988); and selected passages in the following commentaries: *The Book of Deuteronomy* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976); *Ezekiel* (DBSS; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983); *Psalms 1–50* (WBC 19; Waco: Word, 1983); *Twelve Prophets* (DBSS: 2 vols.; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984–85); *The Old Testament: Its Background Growth, and Content* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1986), published posthumously; and Peter C. Craigie, Kelly H. Page, and Joel Drinkard, *Jeremiah 1–25* (WBC: 26; Dallas: Word, 1992), published posthumously.

Early in his book, *The Problem of War in the Old Testament*, Craigie delineates the problems that Old Testament militarism creates for the Christian reader. The most glaring is that war and stories related to war are seeming everywhere in the Old Testament. He calls it “the puzzle of war’s predominance in the Old Testament.”<sup>86</sup> Craigie notes that this is disturbing, or “at least it *should* be” for most Christians.<sup>87</sup> Moreover, this “relationship between religion and war” is depressing; “too often, the sound of religious words of peace is drowned by the noise of religious acts of violence.”<sup>88</sup> It is not that writings on war are rare in antiquity. Craigie mentions that many people have come to expect military themes and depictions to be an important part of historical writing.<sup>89</sup> The problem with war in the Old Testament, Craigie asserts, is “exactly because it is *not* primarily a history book; rather, it is believed to be a part of God’s revelation to mankind.”<sup>90</sup> Additionally, another problem that Old Testament militarism creates for modern readers is that it is exactly this material that has provided fodder for those who would critique the Bible and Christian faith.<sup>91</sup>

Craigie notes that Christians have responded to these issues variously. There are those who would “spiritualize” Old Testament stories of war and thereby remove or at least neuter any offensive material. Thus the battle and ultimate victory for those arrayed against Jericho speaks of the victory in store for those who totally commit themselves to the Lord. Craigie does not dispute the spiritual implications in such biblical stories, but he does not want to ignore the reality of battle in the story—“the literal slaughter of men *and* women, young *and* old, all in the name of obedience to God.”<sup>92</sup> For Craigie spiritual application of biblical stories should not come at the expense of biblical narrative.

Another typical reaction to the war stories of the Old Testament is revulsion. “How could a loving God allow and require such actions?” Without a plausible reply, Christians easily become negative towards the Old Testament as a whole. To this issue Craigie responds, “some kind of solution must be found to the problem of war in the Old Testament, if ever that book is to become meaningful [to those with similar questions] in public worship or private devotions.”<sup>93</sup>

Yet a third response to Old Testament militarism Craigie notes is to openly embrace it, or at least to adapt it to the need of the moment. This is not infrequent among military personnel, two of which Craigie mentions. Shortly before the invasion of Normandy, General and Field

---

<sup>86</sup> Craigie, *Problem of War*, 93. Cf. Idestrom, “Craigie’s Approach to the Old Testament,” 463.

<sup>87</sup> Craigie, *Problem of War*, 10. He does not pause to explain why the militarism of many Old Testament passages are repugnant to Christian readers (many of whom are familiar with New Testament passages such as, “love your enemies” [Matt 5:44; Luke 6:27, 35]; “If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also” [Matt 5:39], etc.), he simply assumes his readers will agree. Cf. “Hiroshima After Thirty Years: Reflections on the Politics of Omnipotence” *The Chelsea Journal* 1/4 (1975): 164, and “Religion, War, and Peace,” *CALUM* [Alumni Magazine, University of Calgary] 7.2 (1975), 8.

<sup>88</sup> Craigie, a review of John Ferguson, *War and Peace in the World’s Religions*, *The Canadian Churchman* 104.4 (1978), 20.

<sup>89</sup> Craigie notes that Michael Grant, a distinguished classical scholar, indicates that war is both the most frequent and most important topic of ancient history writers ( *Ancient History* (New York: Harper Torchbook, 1965; first published in 1952), 129–52. Cf. “The Idea of War,” *ISBE* 4 (1988): 1018.

<sup>90</sup> Craigie, *Problem of War*, 9.

<sup>91</sup> Craigie, *Problem of War*, 10. Cf. “War and Peace” (review of Vernard Eller, *War and Peace from Genesis to Revelation*), *Christianity Today* 26.1 (1982): 74; and a review of Millard C. Lind, *Yahweh is a Warrior: The Theology of Warfare in Ancient Israel*, *Interpretation* 36 (1982): 306.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> Craigie, *Problem of War*, 11.

Marshal Bernard Law Montgomery closed his message to his troops with these words, “Let us pray that the Lord Mighty in Battle will go forth with our armies, and that his special providence will aid us in the struggle.”<sup>94</sup> Both the words and the intent reflect the words of the psalmist who wrote,

Who is the King of Glory?  
The Lord, strong and mighty,  
The Lord, mighty in battle. (Ps 24:8)

Similarly, General George S. Patton wrote his famous “Soldier’s prayer” on January 1, 1944:

God of our fathers, who by land and sea has ever led us to victory, please continue your inspiring guidance in this the greatest of our conflicts.

Strengthen my soul so that the weakening instinct of self-preservation, which besets all in battle, shall not blind me in my duty to my own manhood, to the glory of my calling, and to my responsibility to my fellow soldiers.

Grant to our armed forces that disciplined valour and mutual confidence which ensures success in war.

Let me not mourn for the men who have died fighting, but rather let me be glad that such heroes have lived.

If it be my lot to die, let me do so with courage and honour in a manner which will bring the greatest harm to the enemy, and, please, Oh Lord, protect and guard those I shall leave behind.

Grant us the victory, Lord.<sup>95</sup>

Both generals believed that if God had fought on behalf of the chosen people in the Old Testament, why would he not also fight with them against such evil in the modern world?

A fourth and final reaction listed by Craigie against the militarism of the Old Testament takes a different position toward these passages than Montgomery and Patton. For example, the Christian theologian, C. E. Raven, came to a very different conclusion about biblical militarism in a book published just prior to World War II. Raven said, “until lately, the Old Testament stood along the New as inspired. . . . [Yet] large parts of the Old Testament glorify the God of Battles rather than the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”<sup>96</sup> Raven’s inability to reconcile ostensibly

---

<sup>94</sup> Craigie, *Problem of War*, 33.

<sup>95</sup> Craigie, *Problem of War*, 33–34, quotes a portion of this prayer recorded by H. Essame, *Patton: A Study in Command* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1974), 253. For a trenchant critique of this perspective of warfare, see: Mark Twain, “The War Prayer,” reprinted in Kay Boyle and Justine von Gundy, *Enough of Dying: Voices for Peace* (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1972): 92–95.

<sup>96</sup> Craigie, *Problem of War*, 34; quoting Raven, *War and the Christian* (London: S. C. M., 1938), 51. Cf. Craigie, “Yahweh is a Man of Wars,” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 22 (1969): 184.

opposing pictures of God in the Old and New Testaments led to his subsequent rejection of the Old Testament as authoritative for Christian life. His actions are not without precedent in the annals of Christendom. At least as early as Marcion<sup>97</sup> in the second century C. E., some Christians resorted to excising the Old Testament from what they considered “holy writ.” Many, including Marcion, selectively extracted sizable passages from the New Testament as well because they did not seem to fit into what they deemed appropriate for the Bible.<sup>98</sup> A common reason for such action, Craigie maintains, is the apparently insurmountable dichotomy between what seemed to be a warmonger deity of the Old Testament and the loving and merciful God of the New Testament.<sup>99</sup>

Craigie is clearly concerned with these responses to problematic passages in the Old Testament. Of the various reactions to Old Testament militarism, Craigie asserts:

These contrasting illustrations have been employed deliberately to bring into focus the dilemma which faces the contemporary Christian reader of the Old Testament. God is clearly associated there with the wars of ancient Israel. And yet, just as clearly, the New Testament leads us to believe that war and the God of Christian faith should be totally antithetical. Are we not, enjoined to love one another, even our enemies (Luke 6:27)? And is not this because God himself is love? Can God be both loving and warlike? The immediate answer would seem to be: NO! And yet simply to reject the Old Testament altogether is too radical, for it has been a part of the Christian Bible from the earliest of Christian generations.<sup>100</sup>

Craigie warns against laying aside the Old Testament too hastily, lest the Old Testament appear inferior or as “‘second class’ revelation in contrast to the New Testament,”<sup>101</sup> and he continues, that to be true to the legacy of Christianity, it is necessary to keep the whole Bible. “While the relationship between those Testaments may be difficult to understand, nevertheless, *to question a part of the canon of Scripture is to question the whole*” (italics mine).<sup>102</sup>

From these various concerns, Craigie distills three primary areas of concern which form the focus of his book.<sup>103</sup>

(1) First, there is the *problem of God*, or the theological problem. Stated succinctly, the problem lies in the fact that one of the dominant representations of God in the Old

---

<sup>97</sup> Marcion, a shipping magnate who was very influential in the nascent church (114–124, d.160), was excommunicated from the church in Rome because of his belief that Gospel of the Church should be wholly and entirely a “Gospel of Love.” Since he maintained that the God of the Old Testament (a militaristic, legalistic God) had nothing to do with the God of the New Testament, he attempted to exclude of all of the Old Testament and much of the New as well from what he accepted as canonical literature. The result was a “kinder, gentler Bible” that looked very different than the Bible of the day.

<sup>98</sup> E.g., Craigie notes that in contrast to the actions of Marcion and others, the writers of the Book of Acts did not reject the Divine Warrior theme when they referred to the deliverance of ancient Israel from Egyptian bondage (Acts 7: 35–36; 13:17).

<sup>99</sup> Craigie, *Problem of War*, 35.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Craigie, *Problem of War*, 12. See Rodd, 198.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Craigie, *Problem of War*, 11–12.



Testament is that of God as Warrior. It is not easy to reconcile this conception of God with the New Testament description of God as loving and self-giving.

- (2) Second, there is the *problem of revelation*. The problem here is complex; it is related in part to the manner of God's self-revelation in war, and in part to the preservation of war literature within the corpus of the written Word of God. Granted that wars took place in ancient Israel, as they do in the modern world, why was it necessary for so much of the literature of war to be preserved as a part of the revealed Scripture?
- (3) Third, there is the *problem of ethics*. Once again the problem is complex. Are ethical teachings in Christianity to be based in the New Testament alone? Or may they be developed on the basis of the whole Bible? If all the Bible has relevance for ethics (the Ten Commandments, after all, are contained in the Old Testament), does it not follow that war may be pursued legitimately? But if war may be pursued legitimately, would this position not appear to be somewhat in conflict with the New Testament?

Craigie's solution to these problems is stated succinctly:

A solution to the problem is required which will enable us to understand the meaning of the conception of God the Warrior, without simply rejecting it out of hand, or, alternatively, rejecting the Old Testament itself. To find such a solution, it will be necessary to examine the Old Testament and attempt to understand something of the context in which God is described as a Warrior. Only then may it be possible to determine whether this conception is primitive or "pre-Christian," whether it is essentially alien to the Christian faith, or whether there is in fact something profound to be learned from the conception of God the Warrior.<sup>104</sup>

Before addressing the specific issues of God and warfare in the Old Testament, Craigie posits that the problems that most people have with this subject are a modern phenomenon. Craigie asserts that the warfare mentioned in the Bible was not a problem to the original writers or compilers of the text.<sup>105</sup> He says,

We can trace no coherent philosophical background to the thought of such warriors. War was for them a natural—if unpleasant—part of the world in which they lived [here Craigie is following the thought of G. E. Wright in Wright and Fuller, *The Book of the Acts of God*, (London: Duckworth Press, 1960), 86]. The reality of God to them was the reality of His presence and help in a crisis. The "ethics" of any particular situation was determined by its relationship to the Covenant, and war, as a means toward fulfilling the Covenant, could not be thought of as unethical.<sup>106</sup>

---

<sup>104</sup> Craigie, *Problem of War*, 35.

<sup>105</sup> Craigie, *Problem of War*, 12.1, and "Yahweh is a Man of Wars," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 22 (1969): 185.

<sup>106</sup> Craigie, "Yahweh is a Man of Wars," 185.

For Craigie, the biblical material that most closely approximates the ancient Israelites' approach to warfare is the early poetry of war because it "preserves for us the emotions of the warriors who partook in the battles" (see Judg 5, etc.).<sup>107</sup>

At this juncture in *The Problem of War in the Old Testament*, Craigie addresses a most difficult Old Testament epithet for God from Exodus 15:3, "Yahweh is a Man of Wars" (Craigie's translation).<sup>108</sup> This is the epicenter of his book. He lists multiple biblical examples to demonstrate that the theme of the "Warrior God" is not tangential to the Old Testament, but actually an important recurring theme. In addition to Exodus 15:3, some of his examples include: Exodus 15:21, where God destroyed the Egyptian army; Psalm 24 (mentioned above), where God is hailed as a victorious military hero; or Judges 5:31 where a prayer is offered for future military victory similar to a current victory (the "Song of Deborah"). The examples are legion. The Old Testament authors wrote of God as the "Lord of Hosts" (literally *Armies*) more than 200 times; the Ark of the Covenant symbolized God's presence on the battlefield (Num 10:35–36); prior to battle the Lord was consulted (Judg 1:1; 20:18), and following the victory the a portion of the spoils of war were dedicated to God (1 Sam 15).<sup>109</sup> Divine involvement in military activities of ancient Israel is a recurring central theme of the Old Testament.

Craigie maintains that the story of the Exodus, and in particular, the narrative of God's victory over Egypt (he says "God's victory" to indicate that the ancient Israelites had little to do with the conflict—it was God who fought against the Egyptians<sup>110</sup>) has unique importance for understanding the religion of the Old Testament because it illustrates two principle modes of divine revelation in the Bible. They include: (1) divine self-revelation via the "spoken word" (words from Moses, the prophets, or at times, others); and (2) divine self-revelation by means of "participation in human history."<sup>111</sup> The second form of revelation is important in this context because in the Exodus story God is believed to have participated directly in the liberation of Israel from the bondage of slavery. This intervention of God into the affairs of humanity provides a clue for Craigie to understand the concept of God as a warrior.

Citing Genesis 1:1–2, Craigie maintains that the primary conceptual affirmation about God in the Hebrew Bible is that he is transcendent, that is, God is distinct from nature (witness creation) and thus terms from the natural world are inadequate to describe God. However, "the living experience of the immanent God is to be found in the fabric of human history" and thus natural world terms can be used to approximate the divine. Moreover, the experience of God in human history can only be expressed in human terms, "otherwise God ([who is] ultimately

---

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Craigie's vocalization the Tetragram appears in his writings before many biblical scholars adopted "LORD" out of deference to Jewish conventions regarding vocalizing the Divine Name. In this regard see, Joel S. Kaminsky, review of Walter Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy, Review of Biblical Literature* 1 (1999): 5, or Carol Meyers, Toni Craven, and Ross S Kraemer, "Preface," *Women in Scripture: A Dictionary of Named and Unnamed Women in the Hebrew Bible, the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books, and the New Testament*, Carol Meyers, Toni Craven, and Ross S Kraemer, eds., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000, xiv.

<sup>109</sup> Craigie, *Problem of War*, 36. Cf. "The Idea of War," *ISBE* 4 (1988): 1019; and "Psalm XXIX in the Hebrew Poetic Tradition," *VT* 22 (1972): 146–47.

<sup>110</sup> Craigie makes a distinction between divine military intervention on the behalf of Israel in Exodus 15 (which is considered as a miraculous undertaking initiated and completed by God) and the accounts of military conquest which follow the Exodus, e.g., the conquest. In the latter, divine self-revelation was not found in miraculous events, but rather, via godly interaction in the activities of Israel (40).

<sup>111</sup> Craigie, *Problem of War*, 39.

transcendent) could not be known at all.”<sup>112</sup> To call God a warrior, then, is to use human terms to describe a transcendent being. It is the language of immanence. It is anthropomorphic language, and like all human language it is limited, but from a theological perspective it “points to a truth about God which is greater than the language itself.”<sup>113</sup>

Craigie maintains that God acting as a Warrior determined in some sense the outcome of human events by “participating through the *normal* forms of human activity; God as Warrior, fought *through* the fighting of his people.”<sup>114</sup> Since the people through whom God has chosen to act were not perfect or sinless,

To describe God as a warrior is thus to say that God participates in human history, through *sinful human beings*, and through what have become the “normal” forms of human activity. Insofar as God is active in the world through human lives, he is employing for his purpose sinful persons.<sup>115</sup>

Elsewhere, in “Yahweh is a Man of Wars,” Craigie follows Mowinckel in *The Old Testament as the Word of God*,<sup>116</sup> and says similarly,

If God is to meet man in history and act on his behalf, it must be in the world as it is. But the world which is, is a world which is sinful, for God has given to man a certain freedom. Therefore, if God is to work on behalf of man in the world, He must give the appearance to man of using sinful means—He must seem to be unethical in His behaviour.<sup>117</sup>

Thus the interaction of God with the world via human agents, according to Craigie, must always be to some degree associated with sin. As such, the participation of God in human history does not provide a glimpse of divine moral standards, but rather, it demonstrates godly will and intent to act among humanity. Moreover, God was not limited to the miraculous only (as with the Exodus narrative), but is able to participate in all aspects of human life, including warfare.<sup>118</sup>

Craigie continues, to call God a warrior does not legitimize warfare. Neither does it mean that some conception of a noble end can justify the means in approaching that end. “War is always evil,” maintains Craigie.<sup>119</sup> Sometimes the reasons God chooses to act via warfare may seem evident (e.g., punishing evil men or nations through that actions of Israel, or the punishment of Israel herself by foreign powers), but they “remain as much a mystery as the initial mystery of God’s creation of, and gift of, life.”<sup>120</sup>

Craigie concludes his remarks on the warrior God with what he calls two preliminary observations: (1) since war seems to be an unending reality of human existence, it is not

---

<sup>112</sup> Ibid. For more on Craigie’s thought about divine transcendence, see “Hebrew Thought about God and Nature and its Contemporary Significance,” 4–5, and 8–9.

<sup>113</sup> Craigie, *Problem of War*, 39–40.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Craigie, *Problem of War*, 41

<sup>116</sup> S. Mowinckel, *The Old Testament as the Word of God* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1959), 51.

<sup>117</sup> Craigie, “Yahweh is a Man of Wars,” 186.

<sup>118</sup> Craigie, *Problem of War*, 42–43.

<sup>119</sup> Craigie, *Problem of War*, 42. Cf. “The Idea of War,” *ISBE* 4 (1988): 1019.

<sup>120</sup> Craigie, *Problem of War*, 43.

surprising to find the “ultimate sovereign of human history” in some kind of relationship to the affairs of war. “We perceive, though not always clearly, that war is a form of evil human activity in which God participates actively for the purposes of both redemption and judgment; in this participation, God is the Warrior.”<sup>121</sup> Craigie, observes that (2) the idea of God as a warrior actually provides hope for humanity. He explains, if the precondition for divine interaction in human affairs were perfection or sinlessness, from a biblical perspective, God’s presence in history would never be known. “God as a Warrior,” however, is a concept that proclaims to all in the most forceful language, that even in the nadir of human experience, God may be found. Divine presence in situations of war will not justify those actions or somehow make them holy, but it does offer hope in a hopeless situation.<sup>122</sup>

Craigie sees the problem of war in the Old Testament as two-fold: (1) not only is God identified as a warrior, fighting on behalf of his people, (2) he has also commanded his people to engage in wars of aggression which have sometimes been referred to a “Holy Wars.” Craigie is careful to point out, however, that the actual approach to military aggression in the Bible is bifurcated between battles against cities which lay outside the Promised Land, and battles against those cities lying within the parameters of what would become the land of Israel. In the former, terms of peace would be offered prior to an attack; if the offer was rejected the Israelites were to besiege the city, slay all the males but retain the women and children as part of the spoils of war (Deut 20:10–15). When a city lay within the Promised Land, however, it was to be attacked and all living creatures were to be put to death (Deut 20:16–20). For Craigie, this seems to be at polar opposites to anything that could be called “holy.” Nevertheless, the term “holy war” has persisted in Christian writing in part because of von Rad’s, *Holy War in Ancient Israel*.<sup>123</sup> Von Rad claimed that warfare in ancient Israel was undertaken as a cultic act by a confederation of Hebrew tribes. Thus it was holy, not because it had some kind of religious dimension to it, but rather because it was initiated and carried-out as a cultic endeavor.<sup>124</sup> Other scholars have criticized von Rad’s proposal and have offered a modification that seems to approximate the biblical perspective of warfare more accurately. Rather than referring to the wars of ancient Israel as “holy wars,” these scholars prefer “Yahweh wars.”<sup>125</sup> Since the expression “holy war” is not derived from the Bible,<sup>126</sup> and the biblical writers repeatedly used the expression, “Wars of the LORD”<sup>127</sup> (Num 21:14; 1 Sam 18:17; 25:28; etc.), Craigie maintains that this is a more accurate term to describe the conflicts of the Bible. Moreover, he asks,

Did God’s command and God’s presence transform something essentially evil into a holy act? Can the ruthless requirement for the extermination of the enemy—men, women, and

---

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid. Cf. G. E. Wright, *The Old Testament and Theology*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), 130.

<sup>123</sup> Gerhard von Rad, *Holy War in Ancient Israel*, Marva J. Dawn, trans., (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991; originally published as *Der heilige Krieg im alten Israel* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1951]). Cf. “The Idea of War,” *ISBE* 4 (1988): 1019.

<sup>124</sup> Von Rad says, “We can indeed consider holy war as an eminently cultic undertaking—that is, prescribed and sanctioned by fixed, traditional, sacred rites and observances. ‘The armed camp, the cradle of the nation, was also its most ancient holy of holies’” (51).

<sup>125</sup> R. Smend, *Yahweh War and Tribal Confederation: Reflections upon Israel’s Earliest History*; G. H. Jones, “‘Holy War’ or ‘Yahweh War?’” *Vetus Testamentum* 25 (1975), 642–658, et al.

<sup>126</sup> Here Craigie follows G. H. Jones who suggests a Greek origin of the phrase (642).

<sup>127</sup> Craigie, “The Conquest and Early Hebrew Poetry,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 20 (1969): 78.

children—in any way be regarded as holy? I think that it can not!<sup>128</sup>

Holy or not, the fact remains that wars of aggression were carried out in the Bible “at the command of God, in the name of God, and with the help of God.”<sup>129</sup>

In this context, Craigie wonders how the theory and practice of war in ancient Israel should be understood? In other words, what can modern Christians learn from these narratives? His answer is succinct. For Craigie, the war narratives preserved in the Old Testament serve as,

A massive and solemn warning. If war is to be waged at all, it must be done thoroughly. There are no half-measures in war; it is not a game to be played casually. Just because a war may be carried out within the perspectives of religion does not mean that the war will somehow be “nicer” and not quite so horrifying as secular warfare. The theory and practice of war in ancient Israel destroy any illusions that we may have about war being “not all that bad,” a kind of sport played by gentlemen. The war narratives of the Old Testament are a safer guide to the reality of war than are the various formulations of the “Just War” theory that have emerged in the history of Christianity.<sup>130</sup>

Thus for Craigie, the message of narratives of war to the modern reader is this:

If the use of war is even to be contemplated, it is wise to think realistically of its horrors and implications, and in this the Old Testament gives some guid[ance]. War is never less than unmitigated evil and its frequent mention in the Old Testament does not elevate its character. It is, . . . a form of evil human activity through which God in his sovereignty may work out his purposes of judgment and redemption.<sup>131</sup>

Having said that war is always evil, Craigie continues to explain that “for ancient Israel and for modern Israel, war was a practical necessity for survival *as a state*.”<sup>132</sup> Building on the thought of Jacques Ellul,<sup>133</sup> Craigie maintains that as a nation state in antiquity, ancient Israel could not exist without war. To deny the possibility of war would be to deny the possibility of statehood in the first place, and then to deny the possibility of its continued existence via

---

<sup>128</sup> Craigie, *Problem of War*, 48–49.

<sup>129</sup> Craigie, *Problem of War*, 50.

<sup>130</sup> Craigie, *Problem of War*, 53. Craigie is no advocate of Just War theory, and would prefer to call it “Justified War.” The regulations of aggression as proffered in Just War theory (e.g., go to war only when there is a just cause, right authority, and when in battle there should be no large-scale massacre of non-combatants, etc.), according to Craigie, promote a view of warfare as a kind of international sporting event. It must proceed according to rules and if those rules are violated strict penalties should be imposed. Real war, however, is by nature an expression of lawlessness and only after the war has ended do the “rules” become relevant, and then only the victor may indict the loser for “war crimes.” Although both sides of a conflict may commit crimes in war, only the losers are brought to trial (53). Elsewhere Craigie writes, “the notion that one can distinguish within war a particular act or series of acts as ‘war crimes’ has always seemed to contain within it the elements of contradiction; all war is crime, whether or not it may be justified” (“War, Religion, and Scripture” *Bulletin of the Canadian Society of Biblical Studies* 46 [1986]: 4).

<sup>131</sup> Craigie, *Problem of War*, 53–54.

<sup>132</sup> Craigie, *Problem of War*, 66

<sup>133</sup> Jacques Ellul, *Political Illusion* (New York: Knopf, 1967); and *Violence: Reflections from a Christian Perspective* (New York: Seabury Press, 1969).

defensive military engagements. He maintains that every nation state is “established and maintained solely through violence” (of which warfare is only one manifestation).<sup>134</sup> Nevertheless, although violence is necessary and forms a type of rule in human history, it is never to be considered good. Evil can not be good.

Before discussing Craigie’s thought on *herem*, it is important to note that he does not overlook the Old Testament’s mandate for peace. He describes peace according to the concepts of “wholeness” or “completeness” implicit in the idea of Hebrew word, “*shalom*.” It connotes much more than simply the absence of warfare, including good health or prosperity. In contrast to war, which is characterized by the fragmentation of human life, peace offers the “the conditions for wholeness of life, both at the individual and at the societal level.”<sup>135</sup> Thus, peace provides the environment for wholeness, including the absence of war, but is not identical with it. Craigie includes a call for peace in his chapter, “Peace in the Old Testament.” Reflecting on Isaiah 2:4 (“They shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. . .”), he says,

As Christians we have a utopian vision [of peace], but our concept must not be utopian. . . . Certainly living and proclaiming the Christian Gospel should contribute to the task of peace, but we must also search for the weapons lying within our sphere of influence and seek to transform them into instruments of peace.<sup>136</sup>

Craigie is also careful to point out that it is dangerous to study the stories of conquest or even the defensive war chronicles of the Old Testament without studying what he calls the “defeat narratives.”<sup>137</sup> The biblical account preserved the stories of the fall of the northern kingdom of Israel to Assyrian in 722/1 BCE and the subsequent fall of the southern kingdom, Judah, to the Babylonians in 586 BCE. When defeat came to these small countries, it was total destruction. Jerusalem, for example, had not only been captured and occupied, its walls of defense were destroyed and its king was humiliated and taken into captivity. Just as their predecessors (the Canaanites) lost their land and were expelled for their evil deeds, could the Israelites also have lost their homeland because of evil in their midst?

[The biblical prophets] understood that war and the threat of war were more than fate, more than an accidental result of changes in international power; in the eyes of the prophets military danger on the country’s border was intimately related to the religious and moral condition of the nation.<sup>138</sup>

Craigie explains that the prophets believed that their land was a gift of God and evidence of social and moral decline in the nation was the indication of the people’s failure to maintain their covenant obligations. Thus divine judgment was certain, and it came via the means of human warfare. Craigie warns modern readers of the Bible, “the tragedy of the history of Christianity is

---

<sup>134</sup> Craigie, *Problem of War*, 71.

<sup>135</sup> Craigie, *Problem of War*, 85.

<sup>136</sup> Craigie, *Problem of War*, 91, 112.

<sup>137</sup> Craigie, *Problem of War*, 97.

<sup>138</sup> Craigie, *Problem of War*, 78.

that so frequently the Old Testament lessons drawn from defeat in war have been forgotten.”<sup>139</sup> For Craigie then, the Old Testament must be read and studied as a whole lest its message be misconstrued. This is particularly important with the matter of warfare. A misreading of the “conquest narratives,” devoid of input from the “defeat narratives,” was surely a major contributor to the Crusade mentality of the middle ages. “Any Christian doctrine of ‘Crusade,’ insofar as it is based on the narratives of the conquering ‘Wars of the Lord,’ is illegitimate and reflects a failure to understand the message of the Old Testament taken as a whole.”<sup>140</sup>

## Craigie and *Herem*

Craigie, like Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., addresses the issue of *herem* variously in several of his writings. In *The Problem of War in the Old Testament*, he discusses it in the context of the “Holy War” versus “Yahweh War” terminology/theology debate mentioned above. There he is more concerned with the “cultic connection” of Old Testament warfare than with the term *herem* itself.

Craigie barely mentions the *herem* in his many articles on warfare,<sup>141</sup> choosing rather to discuss how the military efforts of ancient Israel were not unique or unusual in the ancient world, but rather were conducted according to a common military standard.<sup>142</sup> Even in his commentary on Deuteronomy (in the *NICOT*) Craigie’s comments on *herem* are rather terse. This may be due to his early scholarly work on early Israelite religion (and specifically his dissertation on Exodus 15)<sup>143</sup> and early Hebrew and Ugaritic poetry. The issue of *herem* does not arise in these texts on early warfare and it does not seem to attract much of Craigie’s attention. Of the six passages where *herem* is found in Deuteronomy,<sup>144</sup> only one receives what could be considered “extended consideration.”<sup>145</sup> Rather than focus on *herem*, Craigie focuses on the larger contextual setting of military aggression in ancient Israel of which *herem* is only one part.

For Craigie, the people Israel did not “sit back” as non-participating observers watching a battle. (In the story of the plagues and the Exodus from Egypt the people did “watch on the sidelines” as it were, as the Lord delivered Israel from Egyptian slavery via “sign and wonders.”)

<sup>139</sup> Craigie, *Problem of War*, 81.

<sup>140</sup> Craigie, *Problem of War*, 97.

<sup>141</sup> Although it is unfortunate that Craigie did not take the opportunity to discuss *herem* in more detail in his book on war (especially in view of this study), it is interesting to note that in the eleven reviews of Craigie’s book that I consulted from a wide spectrum of journals, no reviewer even mentioned that Craigie neglected to give *herem* some type of sustained critical analysis. The following reviews of Craigie’s, *The Problem of War in the Old Testament*, were consulted: Anthony J. Petrotta, *TSF Bulletin* 4 (1980): 21; Duane L. Christensen, *CBQ* 42 (1980): 94–95; Jared J. Jackson, *Interpretation* 34 (1980): 88–90; John Sandys-Wunsch, *SR* 9 (1980): 90–91; John T. Willis, *Restoration Quarterly* 24 (1981): 111–112; Leo G. Purdue, *JBL* 99 (1980): 446–448; Millard C. Lind, *Sojourners* 9 (1980): 31–33; Ronald G. Goetz, *Theology Today* 36 (1980): 598–600; Trent C. Butler, *JSOT* 15(1980): 64–65; William Keeney, *Mennonite Life* 35 (1980): 26–27. Apparently there was little interest in *herem* at the time.

<sup>142</sup> “Yahweh is a Man of Wars,” 187–88; “The Idea of War,” 1019 (mostly about the “Holy War” terminology debate); or in *The Book of Deuteronomy*, Craigie says, “This practice of complete destruction (*herem*) was also used by other nations in Palestine (e.g., the Moabite Inscription, [117]), et al.

<sup>143</sup> “Earliest Israelite Religion: A Study of the Song of the Sea (Exodus 15:1–18).”

<sup>144</sup> 2:26–37; 3:1–10; 7:1–6, 17–26; 13:12–18 [H:13–19]; 20:10–20.

<sup>145</sup> Craigie’s discussion of *herem* in 20:10–20 serves as a review of the word for the whole book. He refers to it repeatedly in the earlier chapters.

Rather, in Deuteronomy 2:26–37, they were directed to attack the king of Heshbon and thereby experience the presence of God in their active obedience and commitment.<sup>146</sup> The cities and inhabitants of Heshbon were “completely destroyed” (*herem*, v. 34) only after “the Lord our God delivered him [i. e., Sihon, King of Heshbon] to us and we attacked him and his sons and all his people” (2:33; [translation Craigie’s, here and following]). The battle against Bashan in 3:1–11 is similar. Craigie mentions that the entire battle is preserved in one terse phrase, “The Lord our God delivered into our power even Og [King of Bashan]” (3:2).<sup>147</sup> The passage leaves no doubt that the people of Israel actively engaged in battle, “we captured all his cities at that time” (3:4). Nevertheless, Craigie maintains that this verse demonstrates that when Israel reflected on the conflict “success was seen as the Lord’s doing. . . . God’s action is referred to first; he delivered Og into the Israelites’ power. Man’s action is only stated second, ‘and we smote him until not a single survivor was left to him’” (3:3).<sup>148</sup> Thus Craigie maintains that *herem*, in these passages of Deuteronomy, was carried out by the people of Israel, but initiated and directed by God.

Craigie places the war passages in Deuteronomy into two categories: (1) battles with enemy cities and people not living within the confines of the Promised Land, and (2) battles with those lands and peoples residing within the Land of Promise.<sup>149</sup> Cities beyond the borders of the Promised Land would be duly warned of imminent attack, offered terms of peace, and the opportunity to surrender. If the city accepted the terms and opened the city gates for the Israelite army to enter, its inhabitants would become vassals of Israel (20:11). If the offer of peace was refused, however, the Israelites would attack, killing all the males but sparing everything else including women, children, livestock, material spoils of warfare, etc. (20:12–14). If a city was located within the Promised Land, however, then Israel was to “completely destroy” (*herem*) everything in the city; “you shall not allow anything that breathes to live from the cities of these peoples” (20:16). This second category is when what Craigie calls “the law of *herem*” came into effect.<sup>150</sup> The military strategy of ancient Israel was simple; at the Lord’s direction, inhabitants of the Promised Land were to be eliminated. No type of treaty was offered to them as was to those living outside the Land. Deuteronomy 7:2 says, “You shall not make a treaty with them and you shall not grant them favor.” Craigie continues,

Any kind of treaty would be a compromise and would lead to disaster; therefore the Israelites were to destroy systematically the physical religious “furniture” of their

---

<sup>146</sup> Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, 117.

<sup>147</sup> Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, 119.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>149</sup> Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, 57. Craigie notes that when dealing with Israelites who might advocate idolatry (13:12–18; especially those who might say, “Let us go and let us serve other gods whom you have not known” [14]), Deuteronomy indicates that the second category (total destruction of those residing within the Promised Land) is to be applied. Only after a thorough investigation of alleged idolatrous charges (13:14), they, their families, and all of their possessions were to be “completely destroyed” (*herem*). Moreover, the town where they lived is to be utterly annihilated and is to remain in ruins forever, never to be rebuilt (13:16). (A similar judgment is required for family members or religious leaders such as prophets who might advocate idolatry [13:1–12], but the word *herem* is not used.) This punishment against people within the nation of ancient Israel is harsher than the military action against Sihon of Heshbon (2:26–37) and Og of Bashan (3:1–10) where the cattle and spoils were spared destruction.

<sup>150</sup> Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, 276.



enemies, indicating thereby their complete lack of recognition for the gods of their enemies.<sup>151</sup>

He contends that there are two reasons for such total annihilation (only one of which is mentioned in this context):

[1] The unstated reason is that the Israelites were the instruments of God's judgment; the conquest was not only the means by which God granted his people the promised land, but was also the means by which he executed his judgment on the Canaanites for their sinfulness (see 9:4<sup>152</sup>). [2] The second reason, which is stated [in chapter 20], appears in v. 18; if the Canaanites survived their unholy religion could turn Israel aside from serving the Lord.<sup>153</sup>

Thus for Craigie, *herem* was indispensable for guarding the covenant relationship between God and Israel. There is yet another purpose for ancient Israel's policy of war. The wording of Deuteronomy 7:6 ("You are a holy people to the Lord your God and the Lord your God has chosen you to be for himself, a people prized more highly than all the peoples on the face of the earth") is reminiscent of the Covenant made at Mt. Sinai in Exodus 19:5–6 ("Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation"). Craigie holds that the Israelites were considered to be holy specifically because of their relationship to God which implied being "cut-off" or separated from other nations around them.<sup>154</sup> Any mingling with the people and especially the religious practices of their neighbors could endanger the covenant. This would not be tolerated because it could erode the fabric of Israelite society. Craigie explains: if co-mingling with idolatrous practices was tolerated, "such action would be contrary to the constitution of the state and of the city (viz., the covenant with God) and (if successful) would have led to a total change in the nature of ancient Israel, which would have been disastrous in its effects."<sup>155</sup> The survival of the nation was at stake.

Craigie is careful to indicate that immediately following the "law of *herem*" in chapter 20, the practice of destroying trees and laying waste the countryside employed as a military tactic by several of Israel's neighbors was forbidden to Israel. These verses in chapter twenty, according to Craigie, show that Israel was to "discriminate in the use of its destructive power and to be guided by good sense and utilitarian requirements."<sup>156</sup> Wanton destruction of fruit trees, in particular, that could provide food for the besieging army and the subsequent new inhabitants of the land was unacceptable.

---

<sup>151</sup> Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, 177.

<sup>152</sup> "When the Lord your God drives them out before you, do not say to yourself: Because of my righteousness, the Lord brought me in to take possession of this land. For it is on account of the wickedness of these nations that the Lord is going to dispossess them before you" (Deut 9:4 [translation, Craigie]).

<sup>153</sup> Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, 276.

<sup>154</sup> Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, 179.

<sup>155</sup> Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, 226.

<sup>156</sup> Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, 277.

## Lingering Questions

Peter Craigie's various writings, and in particular *The Problem of War in the Old Testament*, have offered a sustained review of the problematic warfare passages in the Old Testament. He does not write as a detached observer, but as one who is torn between his allegiance to the authority of the biblical text in his tradition and his negative reaction to the ongoing militarism of the Bible.<sup>157</sup> He is relentless in his search for answers to this dilemma. He will not consider the possibility of rendering the Old Testament as some type of second-class document—something less authoritative than the New Testament. Moreover, he resists the tendency to “spiritualize” the slaughter in warfare passages in the Bible. As Millard C. Lind, who has also written on warfare in ancient Israel has noted, Craigie “rip[s] off the spiritualization with which many Christians read the war stories of the Old Testament.”<sup>158</sup> Since Craigie maintains that the divine warrior motif is not a minor theme in the Bible, his writings address three recurring dimensions of the problem of war in the Old Testament: the concern with divine involvement in warfare, divine self-revelation in militaristic passages, and the issue of the ethics of war.

Craigie writes that the experience of divine interaction within human history can only be expressed in human anthropomorphic terms. Terms from the natural world are inadequate to describe a transcendent God.<sup>159</sup> Nevertheless, such terminology must be utilized if people are to speak of God at all. This thought is important for Craigie's writing on warfare in the Bible.<sup>160</sup> To call God a warrior is to use human language to describe a transcendent being. Craigie's point is that anthropomorphic language only approximates the actions of God; it does not make him a warrior. God is no more a ruthless combatant in the Bible than he has wings (Ps 91:4), hands (Isa 49:16), arms (Num 11:23; Deut 4:34), or feet (Nahum 1:4). By discussing the anthropological language of the Bible at this point in his writings, Craigie offers a way out of the dilemma of divine participation in human warfare or even the call to arms for his readers. What seems to be godly involvement in warfare is rather human attempts to express the role of God in battle. Craigie maintains that from a human perspective, God is engaged in the military affairs of his people, but ultimately God remains above all human affairs and expression.

Although God appears to be engaged in the conflicts of ancient Israel, Craigie holds that divine involvement in warfare does not somehow render war “holy.” For Craigie, the soldier-scholar, war is always and everywhere evil. He says there is nothing “holy” about war. It is an unmitigated evil. Warfare may be a part of religious expression, but it is never holy.<sup>161</sup> Nevertheless, although war is evil, God uses the evil means to accomplish his “purposes of both redemption and judgment.”<sup>162</sup> Craigie argues that if “God participates in human history through

---

<sup>157</sup> Ronald G. Goetz, review of Peter C. Craigie, *The Problem of War in the Old Testament*, *Theology Today* 36 (1980), 598.

<sup>158</sup> Millard C. Lind, “States and Swords: Warfare in the Old Testament,” (review of Peter C. Craigie, *The Problem of War in the Old Testament*), *Sojourners* 9 (1980), 31. Cf. *Yahweh is a Warrior: The Theology of Warfare in Ancient Israel*, (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1980).

<sup>159</sup> Jared J. Jackson, review of Peter C. Craigie, *The Problem of War in the Old Testament*, *Interpretation* 34 (1980), 90.

<sup>160</sup> Rodd, 198.

<sup>161</sup> Trent C. Bulter, review of Peter C. Craigie, *The Problem of War in the Old Testament*, *JSOT* 15 (1980), 64.

<sup>162</sup> Craigie, *Problem of War*, 43, 54.

sinful human beings,” then his work must proceed “through what have become the ‘normal’ forms of human activity” (i.e., war). Thus,

The activity of God in this world, insofar as it involves human beings as agents, must always appear, to a greater or lesser extent, to be associated with sinfulness. . . . The participation of God in human history and through human lives does not primarily afford a glimpse of his moral *being*; it demonstrates rather his will and *activity*.<sup>163</sup>

Although Ronald Goetz takes exception to Craigie’s position here, saying that a God who involves himself in the evil of this world must also become co-responsible with it,<sup>164</sup> Craigie’s argument has substantial biblical backing. Isaiah indicted Assyria, “the rod of [divine] anger,” for pursuing military objectives beyond the mandates of God (10:5–15). Its aggressive military practices had gone too far. Haggai reminded Zerubbabel that God would destroy foreign nations and their military might “by the sword of his brother” (2:22). Thus one nation would attack another at the bidding of God. The entire book of Habakkuk deals with what might be called “the mystery of divine judgment.” The prophet laments the deplorable social conditions of Judah, but is distraught at God’s means to correct it. How could one whose “eyes are too pure to look on evil” (1:13) have appointed the Babylonians to “execute judgment” (1:12) on Judah. He asks, “Why are you silent while the wicked swallow up those who are more righteous than themselves” (1:13)? Other examples could be adduced (Amos 1–3, Gen 50:19, etc.), but these few are sufficient to demonstrate that God may utilize the so-called “evil methods of human beings” to accomplish his purposes without becoming stained by that evil.

Nevertheless, Craigie does not answer all questions. Can the being of God be so conveniently separated from his actions? How can humanity know God except via words and actions? Here, because of both words and deeds, God seems to be complicit with the evil of war.

If war must be undertaken, moreover, Craigie maintains that the lessons of the Old Testament about warfare are clear and succinct: be thorough, decisive, and victorious in battle. In this context Craigie indicts the theory of “Just War” and its attempt to limit the practice and results of warfare. In this regard, however, he overlooks several biblical passages (such as Amos 1–3) against foreign nations for military crimes against humanity. Are the rules of military engagement acknowledged by the international community and expressed in the Geneva Conventions, for example, to be dismissed because of the raw brutality of war? Craigie’s disdain for what some call “holy war” in the Bible is applaudable, but his concomitant dismissal of Just War thought is unwarranted and disturbing. The intent of Just War theory is not somehow to “justify war,” but rather to limit its practice and its consequences.

Craigie is not a warmonger. His chapter on “Peace in the Old Testament” does not overlook the strong mandate for peace in the Old Testament and contains a call for peace in modern times. Craigie explains that peace in the Old Testament is much more than the simple absence of war. It also includes good health, prosperity, and “the conditions for wholeness of life, both at the individual and at the societal level.”<sup>165</sup> Beyond his discussion of the Old Testament mandate for peace, Craigie also wrote on the “defeat narratives” of the Old

---

<sup>163</sup> Craigie, *Problem of War*, 41–42.

<sup>164</sup> Goetz, 599.

<sup>165</sup> Craigie, *Problem of War*, 85.

Testament,<sup>166</sup> for in times of defeat as well as in times of peace he maintains that the biblical writers perceived the presence of God. For Craigie there are lessons to be learned from both stories.

Craigie ignores the issue of theodicy entirely in his book on war in the Old Testament. This is not a minor theme that is easily overlooked. What about Abraham, Moses, Job, Habakkuk, or Jeremiah's questions about the justice of godly actions? When forming a modern hermeneutic on warfare in the Old Testament and God's involvement in those battles, is it not legitimate to give some attention to the issue of theodicy?<sup>167</sup>

When Craigie was writing, few scholars were writing about *herem*. In fact, none of those who reviewed Craigie's book even mentioned it.<sup>168</sup> Craigie mentions *herem* sporadically in his work, but never offers a sustained review of the topic. This is primarily due to the fact that most of his work in early Israelite poetry and the literature of Ugarit did not offer him the opportunity to review it. *Herem* rarely appears before Deuteronomy (Exod 22:19 [E:20]; Lev 27: 21, 28–29; Num 18:14; 21:2–3) and Craigie spent most of his early scholarly career studying biblical literature prior to Deuteronomy. The only extended review of *herem* in his work is found in his commentary on Deuteronomy 20:10–20 (this review serves as a “word study” of the term for the entire commentary). Therein Craigie examines what he calls “the law of *herem*.” By this, Craigie means that a treaty of peace was not to be offered to the inhabitants of the Promised Land. Rather, in contrast to cities beyond the confines of Canaan, “every breathing thing” (Deut 20:16) within the parameters of the future home of the Israelites was to be destroyed. Such drastic action was pursued in order to protect the nascent covenantal relationship between God and Israel. Any co-mingling with the people or especially the religious practices of the Canaanites could be disastrous. It could jeopardize the ongoing life of the nation, and at the very least, erode the fabric of ancient Israelite society. National survival was at stake, and “the law of *herem*” was invoked to protect it.

---

<sup>166</sup> John Sandys-Wunsch, review of Peter C. Craigie, *Problem of War*, *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 9 (1980), 90.

<sup>167</sup> In this regard see, Leo G. Purdue, review of Peter C. Craigie, *Problem of War*, *JBL* 99 (1980), 448.

<sup>168</sup> The following reviews of Craigie's, *The Problem of War in the Old Testament*, were consulted: Anthony J. Petrotta, *TSF Bulletin* 4 (1980): 21; Duane L. Christensen, *CBQ* 42 (1980): 94–95; Jared J. Jackson, *Interpretation* 34 (1980): 88–90; John Sandys-Wunsch, *SR* 9 (1980): 90–91; John T. Willis, *Restoration Quarterly* 24 (1981): 111–112; Leo G. Purdue, *JBL* 99 (1980): 446–448; Millard C. Lind, *Sojourners* 9 (1980): 31–33; Ronald G. Goetz, *Theology Today* 36 (1980): 598–600; Trent C. Butler, *JSOT* 15(1980): 64–65; William Keeney, *Mennonite Life* 35 (1980): 26–27. Apparently there was little interest in *herem* at the time.

## CHAPTER 4

### TREMPER LONGMAN, III

#### Introduction

Tremper Longman, III was born on September 8, 1952 in Princeton, NJ to Tremper and Mary Jane (Stevenson) Longman. He married Alice Linda Scheetz on June 23, 1973, and they have three children.<sup>1</sup> Longman studied at Ohio Wesleyan University, earning a B.A. in Religion in 1974 and then at Westminster Theological Seminary where he earned a Master of Divinity (1977). He was attracted to seminary and biblical studies because of the influence of Raymond B. Dillard<sup>2</sup> at Westminster.<sup>3</sup> He then moved to Yale University and earned a Master of Philosophy (1980). After completing this second Master's degree, Longman returned to Philadelphia and Westminster Theological Seminary to join the faculty first as Lecturer (1980), and then as Assistant Professor of Old Testament (1980–83). During these years he also completed his Ph.D. in Ancient Near Eastern Languages at Yale University (1983).<sup>4</sup> He chose Yale for his doctoral work because of its faculty, including W. W. Hallo,<sup>5</sup> M. Pope,<sup>6</sup> et al. He

---

<sup>1</sup> Tremper, Timothy Scheetz, and Andrew Eastwick. See, "Tremper Longman, III," 2 [cited 15 March, 2003], *Contemporary Authors Online*. The Gale Group: Biography and Genealogy Master Index, 2003. Online: <http://galenet.gale.com/a/acp/db/bgmi/index.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Raymond B. Dillard (1944–1993) taught at Westminster Theological Seminary from 1973–1993 when he died at the age of 49 of a heart attack. Prior to assuming a faculty position at Westminster, Dillard studied at Bob Jones University (B.A., 1966), Westminster Theological Seminary (B.D., 1969), and Dropsie University (Ph.D., 1975). He also studied at Temple University, the University of Pennsylvania, and the University of Tel Aviv. His twenty-four year academic career was spent teaching at Westminster where he was a Professor of Old Testament Language and Literature, coordinator of the department, and moderator of the faculty. In the "Preface" to Dillard and Longman's *Introduction to the Old Testament*, Longman wrote of Dillard, "It was a privilege to work with him at the seminary, to travel with him as we spoke at churches and academic institutions, and to write a book with him over the years" (9). Of Westminster, Longman also wrote, "I can not imagine a better environment for a teaching and writing career" (9). Dillard wrote numerous articles and books. Some of his work includes: *Second Chronicles* (Word, 1988); *The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical and Expository Commentary*, Vol. 5, *Hosea, Joel, and Amos* (Baker, 1992) with Thomas E. McComiskey and Jeffery Niehaus; *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Zondervan, 1994) with Tremper Longman; and *Faith in the Face of Apostasy: The Gospel According to Elijah and Elisha* (P R Publishing, 1999 [pub. posthumously]). Dillard also served on the translation committee for the NIV. Cf. "Raymond Bryan Dillard," *JETS* 37 (1994): 155–56; *WTJ* 55 (1993): II–III.

<sup>3</sup> Longman, interview by author, November 18, 2001.

<sup>4</sup> Longman's dissertation at Yale University was "The Validity, Procedure and Benefit of a Comparative Approach to Akkadian Autobiography" (1983). His book, *Fictional Akkadian Autobiography: A Generic and Comparative Study* (Eisenbrauns, 1991) has received complementary reviews (John Van Seters, *Religious Studies Review* 18 (1992): 49; for an opposing review see Walter Farber, *JNES* 56 (1997): 228–30).

<sup>5</sup> William W. Hallo was born on March 9, 1928 in Kassel, Germany. He studied at Harvard University (B.A., 1950), University of Leiden (Candidatus Degree, 1951), and the University of Chicago (M.A., 1952; Ph.D.

received fellowships at both Westminster (1977) and at Yale University (1980) and he is a Fellow of the American College of Biblical Theology (1994–).<sup>7</sup> Additionally, Longman received a National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Stipend to study semiotics at Princeton University with Professor H. Shapiro (1984), and an American School of Oriental Research grant to study Syro-Palestinian archaeology at the University Museum, Philadelphia. While at Westminster, he moved from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor (1983–86), Associate Professor with Tenure (1986–91) and Professor of Old Testament (1991–98). In 1993 Longman became the Department Chair at Westminster. Beyond the Seminary he served as a member of the board of directors of the Philadelphia Christian Action Council (1983–87), Managing Editor (1982–89) and Book Review Editor (1989–92) for the Westminster Theological Journal, and Faculty Representative to the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees (1993–94). He eventually moved to Santa Barbara, CA to assume the Robert H. Gundry Chair of Biblical Studies in the Department of Religious Studies at Westmont College as Professor of Old Testament (1998–), but he retains close ties to Westminster Theological Seminary as a Visiting Professor of Old Testament.<sup>8</sup>

---

1955). He is currently the William H. Laffan Professor of Assyriology and Babylonian Literature in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at Yale University. He is also the curator of the Yale University Babylonian Collection. He is a prolific scholar. Some of his work includes: *Early Mesopotamian Royal Titles: A Philologic and Historical Analysis* (American Oriental Society, 1957); *Essays in Memory of A. E. Speiser* (editor and contributor, American Oriental Society, 1968); *The Ancient Near East: A History* (co-author, Harcourt, 1971); *Sumerian Archival Texts* (Netherlands Institute for the Near East, 1973); *The Torah: A Modern Commentary* (contributor, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1981); *Early Near Eastern Seals in the Yale University Babylonian Collection* (author of the introduction, Yale University Press, 1981); *The Tablets of Ebla: Concordance and Bibliography* (co-author, Eisenbrauns, 1984); *The Bible in Light of Cuneiform Literature* (co-editor, E. Mellen, 1990); *The Biblical Canon in Comparative Perspective* (co-editor, E. Mellen, 1991); *The Book of the People* (Scholars Press, 1991); *Origins: The Ancient Near Eastern Background of Some Modern Western Institutions* (Brill, 1996); *Scripture in Context* (Brill, 1997). See: <http://www.yale.edu/>, and <http://galenet.gale.com/a/acp/db/bgmi/index.html>.

<sup>6</sup> Marvin Hoyle Pope (1916–1997) was born on June 26, 1916 in Durham, NC. He studied at Duke University (A.B., 1938; M.A., 1939), and Yale University (Ph.D., 1949). Upon graduation he was appointed to the Yale faculty as Assistant Professor of Hebrew. He was later appointed as Associate Professor in 1955 and then as Professor in 1964. He was named to the Louis M. Rabinowitz chair in 1979 and retired from the faculty in 1986 as Emeritus Professor and Senior Research Scholar of Semitic Languages and Literatures and Professor of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations. He also taught in the Divinity School and the Department of Religious Studies at Yale. Some of his work includes: *El in the Ugaritic Texts* (VTSup 2:1955); *The Book of Job* (Doubleday, 1973, 1990), *Song of Songs* (Doubleday, 1977, 1990; National Religious Book award 1978), and *Prohibitive Pontificating in Ugaritic and Biblical Literature: Collected Essays of Marvin H. Pope* (Munster, 1994 [includes an extensive bibliographical listing of Pope's work]). See also, *Love and Death in the Ancient Near East: Essays in Honor of Marvin H. Pope* (Four Quarters Publishing, 1987). Cf. "Renowned Bible Scholar Marvin Pope Dies at Age 81," *Yale Bulletin & Calendar* 25.34 (June 23–July 21, 1997) at <http://www.yale.edu/>, and <http://infotrac.galenet.com/menu>.

<sup>7</sup> "The Scholars," 1–2 [cited 15 March 15, 2003], *The New Living Translation* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers). Online: <http://www.newlivingtranslation.com/>.

<sup>8</sup> "Part Time and Emeritus Faculty," [cited 15 March, 2003], Westminster Theological Seminary, Online: <http://www.wts.edu/general/facultyparttimefp.html>. Longman has also taught at The Florida Theological Center (Visiting Lecturer, 1982), The International Graduate School in Theology, Seoul, Korea (1986), Winnipeg Theological Seminary (1989), and Reformed Theological Seminary, Orlando, FL (1990). He is also an Adjunct Faculty member at Mars Hill Graduate School in Seattle, WA (online: [www.mhgs.net/faculty.html](http://www.mhgs.net/faculty.html)).

In addition to regular participation in multiple academic societies,<sup>9</sup> Longman has remained active in church and community service, serving as chairperson of the Adult Education Committee (1984–89) and elder (1986–92) at New Life Presbyterian Church, Fort Washington, PA, and board member of the Philadelphia Christian Action Council (1983–87). He was a board member of the Institute of Holy Land Studies in Jerusalem (1984–89),<sup>10</sup> a consultant to the Academic Affairs Committee of Zondervan Publishing House (1986–93), a member of the Executive Committee of the Institute for Biblical Research (1988–91),<sup>11</sup> a consultant to Word, Inc., on the *New Century Version* of the Bible, a member of the Central Bible Translation Committee of Tyndale House Publishers, and a consulting editor for *The NIV Application Commentary* (and author of “Daniel”) by Zondervan Publishing House. He is on the board of Cornerstone Counseling services and is a member of El Montecito Presbyterian Church (PCUSA).<sup>12</sup>

Longman a prolific writer (see “Bibliography”). Some of his writing which deals with war and *herem* in the Hebrew Bible include (in publication date order):<sup>13</sup>

Longman, Tremper, III. *Making Sense of the Old Testament: Three Crucial Questions*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998.

\_\_\_\_\_. “צבא.” *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*. Vol. 3. Willem A. VanGemeren, Tremper Longman, et al., eds. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1997.

\_\_\_\_\_. “When God Declares War.” *Christianity Today* 40 (October 1996): 14–21. Cited 15 March, 2003. Online: <http://newfirstsearch.oclc.org/FSIP>.

Longman, Tremper, III., and Daniel G. Reid. *God Is a Warrior*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995.

Dillard, Raymond B., and Tremper Longman, III. *An Introduction to the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994.

Longman, Tremper, III. “Should I Go to War?” *Streams from Scripture II*. Philadelphia: Westminster Media, 1993. Cassette SS205.

---

<sup>9</sup> Society of Biblical Literature (1981–), American Oriental Society (1982–), American Schools of Oriental Research (1982–), Evangelical Theological Society (1980–), Institute for Biblical Research (1983–), Semiotic Society of America (1984–90). See “The Scholars,” 1–2 [Cited 15 March, 2003], *The New Living Translation*, Tyndale House Publishers, Online: <http://www.newlivingtranslation.com/>.

<sup>10</sup> Currently Jerusalem University College (online: <http://www.juc.edu/>).

<sup>11</sup> The Institute for Biblical Research is an organization of evangelical Christian scholars specializing in the Old and New Testaments. In addition to its annual meetings, it also publishes a semi-annual journal, an annual newsletter, and a bibliographic series to guide scholars to important publications in biblical studies. Online: <http://www.eisenbrauns.com/IBR/ibrmember.html>.

<sup>12</sup> Longman, interview by author, November 18, 2001.

<sup>13</sup> Longman also has an article on *herem* and warfare in the Bible (“The Case for Continuity”) in *Show Them No Mercy: 4 Views on God and Canaanite Genocide* (forthcoming from Zondervan, 2003). The author acknowledges Dr. Longman for allowing him to review a pre-publication draft which informed the discussion of *herem* below.

\_\_\_\_\_. “The Task of the Old Testament Scholar at the End of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.”  
Cassette tape. Philadelphia: Westminster Media, 1993.

\_\_\_\_\_. “Psalm 98: A Divine Warrior Victory Song.” *JETS* 27 (1984): 267–274.

\_\_\_\_\_. Review of Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Toward Old Testament Ethics*. *JETS* 27  
(1984): 503–04.

\_\_\_\_\_. “The Divine Warrior: The New Testament Use of an Old Testament Motif.”  
*WJT* (1982): 290–307.

## Longman’s Work in Context

A quick review of Longman’s books and articles (see Bibliography) demonstrates that he writes on both scholarly and popular levels. He has written books on Akkadian fictional autobiographical texts, biblical counseling, Ecclesiastes, Daniel, Song of Songs, and an Old Testament commentary survey. Of the many ongoing issues reflected in his work that could be reviewed, his approach to biblical hermeneutics warrants some consideration.

In the “Editor’s Preface” to *Literary Approaches to Biblical Interpretation*, Moisés Silva writes of Longman,

[His] work blends an intelligent commitment to the authority of the Bible with an impressive expertise in contemporary literary theories. Professor Longman’s doctoral research into a specialized area of Akkadian literature led him to examine in considerable detail competing approaches to literary criticism.<sup>14</sup>

Longman himself describes his work in *Literary Approaches to Biblical Interpretation* as “the intersection between literary studies and ancient literature.”<sup>15</sup>

His writings evince his summation. He has written frequently on biblical hermeneutics and a literary approach to biblical study.<sup>16</sup> One of the preeminent concerns in his work is to strike

---

<sup>14</sup> Longman, Tremper, *Literary Approaches to Biblical Interpretation*, Vol. 3 *Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation*, Moisés Silva, ed., (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1987), vii.

<sup>15</sup> Longman, *Literary Approaches to Biblical Literature*, ix.

<sup>16</sup> Longman describes “literary approach” as importing “the insights, attitudes, and methods of the secular study of literature into the study of biblical literature” (“Storytellers and Poets in the Bible: Can Literary Artifice Be True?,” 143). Some of his writings on the Bible and literary analysis include: “The Literary Approach to the Study of the Old Testament: Promise and Pitfalls,” *JETS* 28 (1985): 385–398; “Form Criticism, Recent Developments in Genre Theory, and the Evangelical,” *WJT* 47 (1985): 46–67; “Reading the Bible Like a Book,” *CT* 31 (March 6, 1987): 27–28; *How to Read the Psalms* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988); “Storytellers and Poets in the Bible: Can Literary Artifice Be True?,” *Inerrancy and Hermeneutic: A Tradition, A Challenge, A Debate*. Harvie M. Conn, ed., (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1988); “What I Mean by Historical-Grammatical Exegesis—Why I Am Not a Literalist,” *Grace Theological Journal* 11(1990): 137–155; *A Complete Literary Guide to the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House: 1993 [published with Leland Ryken and written in part in response to Robert Alter and Frank Kermode’s *The Literary Guide to the Bible*, 1981]); Willem A. VanGemeren, Tremper Longman, et al., eds., *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*, 5 Vols., (Grand Rapids:



a balance, as it were, between biblical study as a purely grammatical exercise (e.g., historical-grammatical exegesis devoid of current application considerations<sup>17</sup>) and pure literary analysis with no regard for the essential historical nature of the text.<sup>18</sup> He does not eschew historical-grammatical exegesis. On the contrary, he utilizes it extensively in his commentaries, books, and articles. Moreover, in contrast to what he calls “plain” or “flat” biblical interpretation,<sup>19</sup> Longman explains his particular usage of historical-grammatical exegesis in “What I Mean by Historical-Grammatical Exegesis—Why I am Not a Literalist.”<sup>20</sup>

When I interpret a text of Scripture, [he explains], my goal is to understand the passage or book in its Old Testament context and from that understanding to bridge the gap to my understanding today. In my mind, exegesis always includes application.<sup>21</sup>

Thus in his exegetical work, he combines two categories: (1) the impact of the text on the original hearers and (2) contemporary application.

With regard to the first category, Longman emphasizes what he calls “distanciation” (distancing the modern reader from the contemporary context in an attempt to gain a better grasp of the text’s original context<sup>22</sup>), authorial intention (this may only be accessed in a limited way via the text<sup>23</sup>), genre identification,<sup>24</sup> and comparative studies.<sup>25</sup> Of authorial intention, Longman

---

Zondervan Publishing House, 1997); “Reading the Bible Postmodernly,” *Mars Hill Review* 12 (1998): 23–30; “Literary Approaches to Old Testament Study,” *The Face of Old Testament Studies: A Survey of Contemporary Approaches*, David W. Baker and Bill T. Arnold, eds., (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999); “Evangelicals and the Comparative Method,” *Creator, Redeemer, Consummator: A Festschrift for Meredith G. Kline*, Howard Griffith and John R. Muether, eds., (Greenville, SC: Reformed Academic Press, 2000); “Comparative Methods in Old Testament Studies,” *TSF Bulletin* 7 (March–April 1984): 5–9; and “Seven Keys to Understanding Scripture,” *Discover the Word: Reading the Bible for All its Worth*, Everett Leedingham, ed., (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1997, 2000).

<sup>17</sup> “Reading the Bible Like a Book,” *CT* 31 (March 6, 1987): 27. Longman is not unaware of the ongoing problems with historical-grammatical analysis (see *A Complete Literary Guide to the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House: 1993): 20–26. Cf. “Literary Approaches and Interpretation,” *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*, Vol. 1, 103–124.

<sup>18</sup> Longman notes that there are two twentieth century trends in literary interpretative theory that support the tendency of some biblical scholars to move away from historical analysis of the biblical text. They are: the shift away from authorial intent in literary analysis (thus ignoring any authorial input in later textual interpretation), and the tendency to deny or severely limit any referential function in literature. Thus not only can the modern reader know nothing of what the original author intended to convey, the reader can not be certain of what the actual words mean. “The result of this [trend] is a turning away from historical investigation of the [Bible] as impossible or irrelevant” (“The Literary Approach to the Study of the Old Testament: Promise and Pitfalls,” *JETS* 28 [1985]: 391–394); *Literary Approaches to Biblical Interpretation*, 53–58; *A Complete Literary Guide to the Bible*: 25–27.

<sup>19</sup> “Plain” or “flat” biblical interpretation is, according to Longman, a distinctive trait of the so-called literal approach of dispensationalism. He writes, “Plain or flat interpretation takes a passage at its most obvious meaning and is hesitant to move beyond that reading.” It is not so much a hermeneutical method as a mindset that ignores literary conventions of the text. “Over against this dispensational view . . . stands the highly subtle and sophisticated rhetorical strategies of the biblical text,” including poetry, prophecy, and apocalyptic literatures that are rich in imagery and subtle literary devices (“What I Mean by Historical-Grammatical Exegesis—Why I Am Not a Literalist,” *Grace Theological Journal* 11 (1990): 148–49.

<sup>20</sup> Longman, “What I Mean by Historical-Grammatical Exegesis,” 137–155.

<sup>21</sup> Longman, “What I Mean by Historical-Grammatical Exegesis,” 138–39.

<sup>22</sup> Elsewhere Longman refers to this as “discontinuity,” ref. “The Task of the Old Testament Scholar at the End of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century,” Cassette tape, (Philadelphia: Westminster Media, 1993).

<sup>23</sup> Longman, “What I Mean by Historical-Grammatical Exegesis,” 140–41.

says, “the fact that the divine Author stands behind all of Scripture (written by an unknown number of human authors) in the final analysis gives us confidence to treat the Bible as an organic unity.”<sup>26</sup> Thus for Longman, “Scripture interprets Scripture,”<sup>27</sup> and that includes New Testament as well. Longman places New Testament interpretation of the Old Testament in the category of contemporary application listed above.

As Christians, [he writes], we may not stop with analysis of how the first readers initially understood the text. This is especially true of the Old Testament. The grammatical-historical method insists on understanding the passage in its ever-expanding context and that context now includes the New Testament. We are drawn to consider the Old Testament from the perspective of the New Testament at the insistence of Jesus himself in Luke 24:27, 44.<sup>28</sup>

Longman is aware that this hermeneutical principle can easily be abused. He writes:

It is wrong to take a short passage of Scripture out of context and twist it until some vague connection with Christ is seen. It is dangerous to read the Old Testament in light of the New before first reading the Old Testament in its original context. But it is equally incorrect for a Christian to neglect to read the Old in the fuller light of the New Testament. After all, the Bible, while composed of many different writings from many different periods, is ultimately one organic revelation, whose author is God himself. We would naturally expect that later revelation would more fully disclose the truths of earlier Scripture.<sup>29</sup>

While Longman insists that the Bible can not be reduced to literature alone, it is amenable to literary analysis. In this context Longman frequently quotes Northrup Frye<sup>30</sup> who

---

<sup>24</sup> Although genre analysis is Longman’s hermeneutic of choice, he does not exclude other interpretative techniques. See “Literary Approaches to Old Testament Study,” *The Face of Old Testament Studies: A Survey of Contemporary Approaches*, David W. Baker and Bill T. Arnold, eds., (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), 115; *A Complete Literary Guide to the Bible*: 29; and “Form Criticism, Recent Developments in Genre Theory, and the Evangelical,” *WJT* 47 (1985): 60–67, where he calls “genre identification” the key to the meaning of a text.

<sup>25</sup> Longman, “What I Mean by Historical-Grammatical Exegesis,” 139–146. With regard to comparative studies, cf. “Evangelicals and the Comparative Method,” and “Comparative Methods in Old Testament Studies,” *TSF Bulletin* 7 (March–April 1984): 5–9.

<sup>26</sup> Longman, “What I Mean by Historical-Grammatical Exegesis,” 141.

<sup>27</sup> Tremper Longman, III., and Daniel G. Reid, *God Is a Warrior* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995), 73. (Longman wrote chapter 2–6 on the Old Testament for this book.)

<sup>28</sup> Longman, “What I Mean by Historical-Grammatical Exegesis,” 146–47. “And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself” (Luke 24:27). “He said to them, “This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms” (Luke 24:44). At this point in his discussion, Longman discusses “prayerful consideration of a biblical text” as an important aspect of historical-grammatical exegesis. Cf. *Daniel. The NIV Application Commentary*, Terry Muck, Tremper Longman, III, John H. Walton, Robert Hubbard, and Andrew Dearman, eds., (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1999), 26, where he quotes Saint Augustine, “The New Testament is in the Old concealed, and the Old Testament is in the New revealed.”

<sup>29</sup> “Evangelicals and the Comparative Method,” 27.

<sup>30</sup> (Herman) Northrup Frye (1912–1991) was a Canadian literary scholar who some consider to be one of the most important literary critics of the twentieth century. He served as a Pastor in the United Church of Canada in

said, “The Bible is as literary as it can be without actually being literature.”<sup>31</sup> Longman explains: “On the one hand, Genesis is not reducible to a work of fiction. On the other hand, we are justified and required by the text itself to apply a literary approach because it possesses undeniable literary qualities.”<sup>32</sup> Longman identifies the following benefits of a literary sensitivity to the biblical text: (1) it helps to understand the conventions of biblical storytelling, (2) it draws the critic’s attention to entire stories, rather than shorter pericopes, and (3) it helps the critic to understand the process of reading in comprehending the text.<sup>33</sup> Longman is not advocating some type of reader-response theory (where a reader may “create” the meaning of a text according to his or her unique perspective of a text), rather, he maintains that that “reading involves the interaction of a writer with a reader through a text, so that any theory that concentrates on one of the three to the exclusion of the others may be distorted.”<sup>34</sup>

Summarizing then, Longman suggests that his approach to the Bible may best be described as “multiperspectival.”<sup>35</sup> He has not “joined” any one particular hermeneutical school, but has developed his own approach that blends elements of traditional grammatical-historical exegesis and modern literary theory.

---

a congregation near Shaunavon, Saskatchewan (1934); Lecturer in English (University of Toronto, Victoria College, Toronto, Ontario, 1939–41); Assistant Professor (1942–46); Associate Professor (1947); Professor of English (1948–91); Departmental Chair (1952–59); Principal (1959–67); and Chancellor (Victoria University, Toronto, 1978–91). He also served as a Visiting Professor at Harvard University, Princeton University, Columbia University, Indiana University, University of Washington, University of British Columbia, Cornell University, University of California, Berkeley, and Oxford University.

His categorization of different approaches used to analyze literature put the field of literary criticism into a whole into new perspective. *The Great Code*, quoted by Longman, examines the creative unity of the Bible, and how myths and symbols are used to convey a message (or theme) of salvation. *The Great Code*, according to Frye, is a study of the “centripetal coherence” of the Bible. Frye was a prolific author. Some of his work includes: *Fearful Symmetry: A Study of William Blake* (Princeton University Press, 1947); *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (Princeton University Press, 1957); *T. S. Eliot: An Introduction* (Grove, 1963); *The Return of Eden: Five Essays on Milton’s Epics* (University of Toronto Press, 1965); *Northrup Frye on Culture and Literature: A Collection of Review Essays*, edited by Robert Denham (Chicago University Press, 1978); *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature* (Harcourt, 1982); *Northrup Frye—Myth and Metaphor: Selected Essays* (University Press of Virginia, 1990); *Words with Power: Being a Second Study of “The Bible and Literature,”* (Harcourt, 1990); *The Double Vision: Language and Meaning in Religion* (University of Toronto Press, 1991). The Society of Biblical Literature has dedicated an entire issue to Northrup Frye with articles written by multiple authors: David Jobling, ed., *Semeia 89: Northrup Frye and the Afterlife of the Word*, (2002); available online: <http://www.sbl-site.org>.

<sup>31</sup> Northrup Frye, *The Great Code* (London: Ark, 1983): 62, as quoted by Longman in “The Literary Approach to the Study of the Old Testament: Promise and Pitfalls,” 386; “Storytellers and Poets in the Bible: Can Literary Artifice Be True?,” *Inerrancy and Hermeneutic: A Tradition, A Challenge, A Debate*. Harvie M. Conn, ed., (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1988): 146; and *Literary Approaches to Biblical Interpretation*, 9–10. Cf. *A Complete Literary Guide to the Bible*: 18–19, 21, 34, 37, et al.

<sup>32</sup> Longman, “Storytellers and Poets in the Bible: Can Literary Artifice Be True?,” 146.

<sup>33</sup> Longman, “The Literary Approach to the Study of the Old Testament: Promise and Pitfalls,” 386–97. Cf. *Literary Approaches to Biblical Interpretation*, 58–62; *A Complete Literary Guide to the Bible*: 28–29; and *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, 26–34.

<sup>34</sup> Longman, *Literary Approaches to Biblical Interpretation*, 61.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

## Longman, War in the Old Testament, and *Herem*

Longman's book-length discussion of warfare in the Old Testament is entitled, *God Is a Warrior*, and is co-authored with Daniel Reid.<sup>36</sup> This is the inaugural volume of the series, *Studies in Old Testament Biblical Theology*, published by Zondervan Publishing House and edited by Willem A. VanGemeren<sup>37</sup> and Longman. Other volumes in the series include J. Gordon McConville's, *Grace in the End* (1993), Walter C. Kaiser, Jr.'s, *Messiah in the Old Testament* (1995), Jeffrey J. Niehaus's, *God at Sinai: Covenant at Theophany in the Bible and the Ancient Near East* (1995), and Michael L. Brown's, *Israel's Divine Healer* (1995). Rather than positing an overarching theme for the entire Old Testament corpus (e.g., "covenant" [W. Eichrodt], the "Elusive Presence" [S. Terrien], or "promise" [Walter Kaiser]), this series addresses what its contributors consider to be major biblical themes important not only for the Old Testament, but for the New Testament as well. Its approach is evangelical throughout, proffering an evangelical hermeneutic of central biblical themes. Following V. S. Poythress,<sup>38</sup> Longman refers to this approach as a "multiperspectival approach"—one that is sensitive to the varied yet subtle nature of the Bible.<sup>39</sup> Longman maintains:

The Bible is about Yahweh. It is his self-revelation. The Bible, however, is not about Yahweh in the abstract; it is about God in relation to humankind. Furthermore, this relationship is not so much described as it is narrated. There is a historical dimension to biblical revelation. Thus, a proper biblical theology must take into account the subject matter of the Bible, the divine-human relationship, and the fact that the Bible's message is told through time.<sup>40</sup>

Tremper Longman begins by mentioning that the Bible is a diverse collection of writings, what he calls, "a veritable anthology of literary works."<sup>41</sup> Biblical readers encounter many literary themes and genres produced by multiple authors living in various cultures and written during different historical periods. Nevertheless, Longman maintains that in the midst of such diversity there is a coherent biblical message. "This message cuts across time and genres,"

---

<sup>36</sup> Daniel Reid wrote the New Testament section of *God Is a Warrior* (chapters 7–11). Since the focus of this study is warfare and *herem* in the Old Testament, I will refer primarily to Longman's work (chapters 2–6). Reid is a Reference Book Editor for InterVarsity Press, and has worked as an editor on the *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (InterVarsity Press, 1993) and the *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (InterVarsity Press, 2000). He received his Ph.D. from Fuller Theological Seminary and wrote his dissertation on "The Christus Victor Motif in Paul's Theology." (Cf. *God Is a Warrior*, 10, 25).

<sup>37</sup> Some of VanGemeren's other publications include: *The Progress of Redemption: The Story of Salvations from Creation to the New Jerusalem* (Baker Book House, 1988); *Interpreting the Prophetic Word* (Zondervan, 1990); *Double Vision: The Christian Faith and the Pursuit of the American Dream*, VanGemeren ed., et al., (Wolgemutt & Hyatt Publishers, 1990); *Grace in the End* (Zondervan, 1993); *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, VanGemeren, ed., 5 Vols. (Zondervan, 1997).

<sup>38</sup> V. S. Poythress, *Symphonic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1987).

<sup>39</sup> Tremper Longman and Daniel G. Reid, *God Is a Warrior*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 14–16. Cf. "Should I Go to War?" *Streams from Scripture II* (Philadelphia: Westminster Media, 1993), cassette SS205.

<sup>40</sup> Longman and Reid, *God Is a Warrior*, 15. With reference to Longman's use of the Tetragram, see Craigie footnote 109.

<sup>41</sup> Longman and Reid, *God Is a Warrior*, 13.

Longman explains, “so that not only is the Bible composed of many different stories, we may also say it tells a single story.”<sup>42</sup> How can such unity be described without sacrificing the obvious diversity of the Bible? The answer according to Longman, is to be found at least in part, in the major unifying themes of the Bible. Moreover, Longman avers, “the most pervasive of all biblical themes [is] ‘The Divine Warrior.’”<sup>43</sup>

Longman structures his work around five biblical stages or phases of the divine warrior theme that develop in a roughly chronological pattern. They include:<sup>44</sup>

- (1) God Fights for Israel: God appears as a warrior fighting on behalf of Israel against her flesh-and-blood enemies.
- (2) God Fights Against Israel: God fights against his people who have violated the stipulations of the covenant..
- (3) Hope for the Future: the prophetic proclamation of a coming divine warrior.
- (4) Jesus Christ—the Divine Warrior: Christ’s earthly ministry as the work of a conqueror.
- (5) The Coming Day of Christ: the church’s expectation of a divine warrior who will judge the spiritual and human enemies of God.

Longman’s approach is a synthetic one. Rather than reviewing every pertinent passage on the divine warrior or godly warfare, Longman addresses representative examples of the motif and discusses their significance. The author is well aware of previous efforts on his topic (including von Rad, Wellhausen, Schwally, Fredriksson, O. Weber, Smend, Weippert, Gottwald, et al.),<sup>45</sup> and interacts with their writings in the beginning of his book. He is specifically indebted to the work of von Rad who said the Book of Deuteronomy is “thoroughly saturated from the first to the last chapter by an *outspoken war ideology*,”<sup>46</sup> and to Patrick D. Miller who wrote:

The conception of God as a warrior played a fundamental role in the religious and military experiences of Israel. . . . One can only go so far in describing the history of Israel, or its religion, or the theology of the Old Testament without encountering the wars of Yahweh. In prose and poetry, early and later material alike, the view that Yahweh fought for or against his people stands forth prominently. The centrality of that conviction

---

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Longman and Reid, *God Is a Warrior*, 13. Longman holds that this is similar to other seemingly unifying biblical metaphors including Lady Wisdom, the marriage metaphor, the shepherd-sheep image, or the mother-child metaphor, to name a few. Cf. *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, 231–32, et al.

<sup>44</sup> Longman and Reid, *God Is a Warrior*, 17. Cf. Dan B. Allender and Tremper Longman, III, *Bold Love*, (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress Publishing Group, 1992), 111–133; and *Making Sense of the Old Testament: Three Crucial Questions*, 78–86.

<sup>45</sup> Longman explained that the absence of Susan Niditch’s *War in the Hebrew Bible* (1993) from his *God Is a Warrior* (1995) was due to the fact that when her book was published his book was essentially done (Interview by author, November 18, 2001).

<sup>46</sup> Von Rad, *Holy War*, 115 (emphasis mine). Longman maintains that von Rad “brought the theme of Holy War to prominence, and his work in this area continues to have a tremendous influence on present research as well,” cf. “The Divine Warrior: The New Testament Use of an Old Testament Motif,” *WJT* 44 (1982): 290.

and its historic, cultic, literary and theological ramifications can hardly be overestimated.<sup>47</sup>

Moreover, Longman is careful to indicate how his work differs from previous research. In the first place, *God Is a Warrior* concentrates on the image of God as a divine warrior rather than the institution of holy war. Holy war is discussed briefly, but only in connection with the divine warrior motif.<sup>48</sup> Secondly, Longman approaches the Bible as an organic whole:

We do not prejudge the process of composition of biblical books nor deny different theological tendencies within the Old Testament, but in the final analysis we treat the Old Testament, even the Bible as a whole, as a single writing that presents an internally consistent message, including an internally consistent, yet unfolding picture of God as a warrior.<sup>49</sup>

Thus *God Is a Warrior* is the first full-scale exposition of the divine warrior motif in both the Old and New Testaments.

Longman maintains that most biblical readers are unaware of the pervasiveness of the divine warrior theme. He maintains that, “virtually every book of the Bible—Old and New Testaments—and almost every page tells us about God’s warring activity.”<sup>50</sup> The depiction of God as a warrior, however, is but one of the numerous images used to portray God in the Bible. Longman mentions several others (each worthy of extensive review), including, “God is our father, and we are his children”; “God is our mother, and we are her children”; “God is a king, and we are his subjects”; “God is our husband, and we are his wife”; or “God is a shepherd, and we are his sheep.”<sup>51</sup> Like these well-known biblical motifs, the divine warrior theme is an expansive, recurring topic that is central to the biblical story. He maintains that,

God’s people have been at war with the Enemy since the Fall (Genesis 3). The Fall showed clearly that God had an enemy, and ever since that time, all people are on one or the other side of the Battle. As Saint Augustine put it, an individual is either in the City of God or the city of man. In Genesis, we see God’s curse on the serpent clearly delineates the two sides: “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel” (Genesis 3:15). From this point and for the rest of history, there is vicious conflict between God and Satan, and between those who follow God and those who reject Him. Think of Cain and Abel, the line of Lamech and the line of Seth, Moses and the Egyptians, the Israelites and the Philistines, David and Goliath, and Elijah and Ahab. The list could go on and continues to this very day.<sup>52</sup>

---

<sup>47</sup> Patrick D. Miller, *The Divine Warrior in Earliest Israel*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973): 1 (Cited by Longman, “The Divine Warrior,” 307).

<sup>48</sup> “Holy War” is treated similarly in *Bold Love* (117).

<sup>49</sup> Longman and Reid, *God Is a Warrior*, 26.

<sup>50</sup> Allender and Longman, *Bold Love*, 111. (Biographical information on Dan Allender may be found at Mars Hill Graduate School, online: [www.mhgs.net/faculty.html](http://www.mhgs.net/faculty.html).)

<sup>51</sup> Allender and Longman, *Bold Love*, 111.

<sup>52</sup> Allender and Longman, *Bold Love*, 115.

Longman begins his treatment of the divine warrior motif with the first explicit statement of the warlike nature of God:

- <sup>1</sup> I will sing to the LORD,  
for he is highly exalted.  
The horse and its rider  
he has hurled into the sea.
- <sup>2</sup> The LORD is my strength and my song;  
he has become my salvation.  
He is my God, and I will praise him,  
my father's God and I will exalt him.
- <sup>3</sup> The LORD is a warrior;  
the LORD is his name. (Exod 15:1–3; Longman's trans.)

Longman believes that just as the Exodus event and God's actions to deliver his people from Egyptian bondage becomes an important archetype for the biblical tradition, so the warlike actions of God in Exodus 15 serve as an similar model for later biblical writers. Longman perceives the development of this theme along three chronological divisions: (1) activities before a war, (2) behavior during the war, and (3) actions after a battle.<sup>53</sup>

With regard to the first division, "activities before a war," Longman discusses three issues: (1) seeking God's will, (2) spiritual preparation, and (3) ritual cleanness (*sic*) in the war camp.<sup>54</sup> He asserts that holy war was always initiated by the Lord, never Israel. Moreover, there were two ways in which God would direct Israel to wage war: first, on certain occasions the Lord would reveal his intentions to the community leader (or covenant mediator):

- <sup>1</sup> When the LORD your God brings you into the land you are entering to possess and drives out before you many nations—the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, seven nations larger and stronger than you—<sup>2</sup> and when the LORD your God has delivered them over to you and you have defeated them, then you must destroy them totally. Make no treaty with them, and show them no mercy. (Deut 7:1–2)

Alternatively, there were occasions when the community leader would inquire of the Lord via oracular means. Such an incident is preserved in 1 Samuel 23:1–6, where David learned of the Philistine attack against the city of Keilah and sought direction from the Lord as to the proper response. Although the means of inquiry are not specified in this instance, Longman suggests that the ephod (a device worn by the High Priest and used in oracular inquiries) may have been utilized (see 1 Sam 23:6).<sup>55</sup>

As odd as it might seem to modern readers, Longman maintains that battle in the Hebrew Bible is portrayed as an act of worship. Therefore ancient Israel had to be spiritually prepared to

---

<sup>53</sup> Longman and Reid, *God Is a Warrior*, 33; cf. "The Divine Warrior," 274.34; and *Making Sense of the Old Testament: Three Crucial Questions*, 72–78.

<sup>54</sup> Longman and Reid, *God Is a Warrior*, 33–37.

<sup>55</sup> Longman, "Should I Go to War?" *Streams from Scripture II* (Philadelphia: Westminster Media, 1993), cassette SS205; cf. "The Divine Warrior," 292.

engage in battle, just as they would prepare to enter the Temple. This requirement explains many aspects of warfare in the Hebrew Bible, but most importantly, the role of sacrifice. For example, in 1 Samuel 13, King Saul was chided for offering a sacrifice prior to battle. He assumed a priestly duty and acted as only a priest should act. Beyond the issue of who should sacrifice, however, both Saul and Samuel agreed that sacrifice was an essential element of preparation prior to entering any battle.

Another story of spiritual preparation is preserved in Joshua 3:5 where all Israel is called upon to “consecrate yourselves” prior to battle with the inhabitants of Jericho. In this instance, “consecrate yourselves” included circumcision and observance of the Passover before engaging the armies of Jericho. This seemingly unwise physical action prior to battle was necessary as a covenant requirement to ensure divine nearness during battle. Again Longman explains, God’s presence with his people changes after the Garden of Eden story. While in the Garden, God was in close, frequent contact with his people. The story reveals that God “walked in the garden in the cool of the day” (Gen 3:8). After being expelled from the garden, Longman opines, people could only meet God at special times or in special places (most notably, the Tabernacle and the Temple—both of which included the Ark of the Covenant). In warfare the ark represented the presence of God with the army of Israel. Thus “the battlefield [became] holy ground similar to the temple” because God was there.<sup>56</sup> Since the army would “meet God” or “fight with God” on the battlefield, it was imperative for them to be ritually prepared to approach God. Certain things, like circumcision, simply could not be overlooked before battle “because it was a holy event.”<sup>57</sup>

Longman suspects that religious vows taken before several Old Testament battles might also be categorized as part of Israel’s spiritual preparation for war (cf. Num 21:2; Judges 11:36; 1 Sam 14:24). Although the precise status of these vows has not been preserved, and the last two of these vows caused great grief in Israel, Longman notes that God nevertheless honored the vows with a military victory for the armies of Israel.

In line with spiritual preparation, the war camp also had to be ritually clean, especially before battle. Deuteronomy 23:9–14 makes this issue quite clear:

<sup>9</sup> When you are encamped against your enemies, keep away from everything impure. <sup>10</sup> If one of your men is unclean because of a nocturnal emission, he is to go outside the camp and stay there. <sup>11</sup> But as evening approaches he is to wash himself, and at sunset he may return to the camp. <sup>12</sup> Designate a place outside the camp where you can go to relieve yourself. <sup>13</sup> As part of your equipment have something to dig with, and when you relieve yourself, dig a hole and cover up your excrement. <sup>14</sup> For the LORD your God moves about in your camp to protect you and to deliver your enemies to you. Your camp must be holy, so that he will not see among you anything indecent and turn away from you.<sup>58</sup>

Nothing that might compromise the success of the troops engaged in war could be tolerated. Life and death was at stake. Thus all requisite measures were taken to do what the people of Israel could in order to ensure military success. “Sacrifice, circumcision, vows, oracular inquiries,

---

<sup>56</sup> Longman, “Should I Go to War?”.

<sup>57</sup> Longman, “Should I Go to War?”.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Leviticus 15:11–18 for a similar treatment of nocturnal emissions and uncleanness.



ritual cleanness—each of these elements announced Israel’s understanding that God was present with them in battle.”<sup>59</sup>

In addition to “activities before a war,” Longman also understands “behavior during a war” to be a second subcategory of the larger Divine Warrior motif in the Old Testament.<sup>60</sup> Herein Longman identifies at least four elements: (1) numbers and weapons technology, (2) the march into battle, (3) the Ark of the Covenant, and (4) the combatants. One of the more intriguing aspects of warfare in the Old Testament is the relationship between God and the army. Longman suggests that “since God fights for Israel, [the] nation does not have to worry about the number of its troops or its weapons technology.”<sup>61</sup> On the contrary, a large army or advanced weaponry were actually perceived as a liability. Such assets might tempt the people into boasting of their own military exploits rather than in the Lord who gave them victory. Thus it is better to engage in battle with a small, poorly trained army than with a large efficient battle unit. Such are the concerns behind the story of Gideon in Judges 7. His vast fighting force of 32,000 men is pared down via divine directive to a meager 300 carefully chosen troops ready for battle. (The focus of the narrative is not how the troops drank water, as if that would make them better soldiers, but rather that there were too many troops.<sup>62</sup>)

A similar stress on disproportionality may also be seen in the story of David and Goliath. Against the Philistine war hero David “is like Israel in holy war—out numbered and inferior in weaponry, [yet] he expresses the kind of holy war faith that Israel was called upon to exhibit”<sup>63</sup> Longman calls David’s words to his rival “the epitome of holy war language”.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>45</sup> David said to the Philistine, “You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. <sup>46</sup> This day the LORD will hand you over to me, and I’ll strike you down and cut off your head. Today I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. <sup>47</sup> All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the LORD saves; for the battle is the Lord’s, and he will give all of you into our hands.” (1 Sam 17:45–47)

Thus, Israel was “a breed of warrior that is strongest in weakness, . . . a shepherd boy on the battlefields of human history.”<sup>65</sup>

---

<sup>59</sup> Longman and Reid, *God Is a Warrior*, 37.

<sup>60</sup> Longman maintains that the Exodus story and deliverance from Egyptian bondage and Exodus 15 become an archetype or a model for later biblical writers. He perceived this model as developing along three trajectories: 1) activities before a war; 2) behavior during a war; and 3) actions after a battle. The following discussion follows Longman’s analysis of point 2.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Longman, “Should I Go to War?”; cf. “Divine Warrior,” *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery: An Encyclopedia Exploration of the Images, Symbols, Motifs, Metaphors, Figures of Speech, Literary Patterns*, Leland Ryken, James C. Wilhoit, and Tremper Longman, III, eds., (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 211.

<sup>63</sup> Longman and Reid, *God Is a Warrior*, 38.

<sup>64</sup> Longman, “Should I Go to War?”.

<sup>65</sup> Longman, “When God Declares War,” *Christianity Today* 40 (October 1996): 3. Cited 15 March, 2003. Online: <http://newfirstsearch.oclc.org/FSIP>.

Once the army had gathered together and was prepared spiritually, it marched into battle at the Lord's direction. 2 Chronicles 20:20–22 describes the army singing praises to the Lord as they entered into battle:

<sup>20</sup> As they set out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Listen to me, Judah and people of Jerusalem! Have faith in the LORD your God and you will be upheld; have faith in his prophets and you will be successful."<sup>21</sup> After consulting the people, Jehoshaphat appointed men to sing to the LORD and to praise him for the splendor of his holiness as they went out at the head of the army, saying: "Give thanks to the LORD, for his love endures forever."<sup>22</sup> As they began to sing and praise, the LORD set ambushes against the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir who were invading Judah, and they were defeated.<sup>66</sup>

Psalm 149, Longman suggests, may have found its original setting in the march toward battle:

<sup>6</sup> May the praise of God be in their mouths  
and a double-edged sword in their hands;  
<sup>7</sup> to inflict vengeance on the nations  
and punishment on the peoples,  
<sup>8</sup> to bind their kings with fetters,  
their nobles with shackles of iron,  
<sup>9</sup> to carry out the sentence written against them.  
This is the glory of all his saints. ( Ps 149:6–9; Longman's trans.)

God's presence among the people is symbolized variously in the Old Testament. A "smoking firepot with a blazing torch" (Gen 15:17), a burning bush (Exod 3:2), a cloud that filled the inner room of the tabernacle (Exod 40:34), and the Ark of the Covenant (Exod 25) are but a few of the signs of God's presence in the Bible. In connection with biblical warfare, however, no symbol played a more important role than the ark. Longman calls it "a mobile symbol of God's presence."<sup>67</sup> It led the army during the daytime and at night it was placed in the center of the camp (Num 2). Before a march would commence, Moses would say:

Rise up, O Lord!  
May your enemies be scattered;  
May your foes flee before you. (Num 10:35; Longman's trans.)

Each night when the people stopped to rest after a day's journey, Moses would say:

Return, O Lord  
To the countless thousands of Israel. (Num 10:36, Longman's trans.)

---

<sup>66</sup> Longman notes that in the context of battle, the men are singing of God's love (Psalm 98: A Divine Warrior Victory Song," 274.34). See also Longman's, "Psalm 98: Let All the Earth Praise God Our Warrior," *How to Read the Psalms* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 125–131.

<sup>67</sup> Longman and Reid, *God Is a Warrior*, 40. Cf. "When God Declares War," 2.

Although the ark is not mentioned in every military narrative, it seems to have played a prominent role in battle.<sup>68</sup> In the campaign against Jericho, the ark was centrally located in the middle of the army (Josh 6:4–13), and thus the walls fell at the direction of the Lord. Longman holds that the ark “functioned somewhat like the divine standard of the armies of the ancient Near East. It was a tangible representation of a spiritual reality—God’s presence as divine warrior with his people.”<sup>69</sup>

With regard to military combatants, Longman highlights two additional “battle units” that the Bible mentions were at the divine warrior’s disposal: the heavenly army, and creation (or nature) itself. The heavenly army was revealed to Elisha’s servant when they were seemingly trapped in Dothan by the Aramean army. The servant was enabled to see the heavenly host who then struck the attacking army with blindness. Elisha could then lead them away safely. Although the nature of the heavenly army is not specified, it appears in numerous biblical narratives (Exod 12:29; Isa 37:36; Dan 10:21; 12:1; cf. Rev 12:7). Beyond the heavenly host, even nature at times played a role in battle. Numerous accounts of battle record super-ordinary events: “a strong east wind” separated the Red Sea (Exod 14:21); Canaanite cities were destroyed by huge hailstones during the conquest (Josh 10:9–11); and in the same battle, the sun and the moon were stopped in order to give Israel time to finish the battle (Josh 10:1–15). Thus God used more than traditional military means to gain victory for Israel.<sup>70</sup>

Before discussing Longman’s third category of warfare narratives (“after the war”), several additional Old Testament themes addressed by Longman warrant attention. First, the Old Testament repeatedly uses “cloud imagery” in divine warfare passages. In Psalm 18 we read:

- <sup>9</sup> [The LORD] spread out the heavens and came down;  
dark clouds were under his feet.  
<sup>10</sup> He mounted the cherubim and flew;  
he soared on the wings of the wind.  
<sup>11</sup> He made darkness his covering, his canopy around him—  
the dark rain clouds of the sky.  
<sup>12</sup> Out of the brightness of his presence clouds advanced,  
with hailstones and bolts of lightning. (Ps 18:9–12, Longman’s trans.)

Longman cautions that not every appearance of a cloud in the Old Testament should be interpreted as an element of divine warfare, nevertheless similar imagery appears frequently in militaristic passages (e.g., Pss 68:4; 104:1–4; Isa 19:1; Nah 1:3; Deut 33:26; Jer 4:13, Dan 7:13, etc.). The appearance of clouds in military passages is often accompanied by what Longman calls “a common OT theme that, when the Divine Warrior wars, nature languishes, often on a cosmic level.”<sup>71</sup> He cites Isaiah 13:10 and Joel 3:14 as examples of foundering nature. Not only

---

<sup>68</sup> Longman maintains that its absence in some military narratives may be due in part to the temporary capture of the Ark by the Philistines or to the “selective nature of biblical historiography.” (Longman and Reid, *God Is a Warrior*, 41).

<sup>69</sup> Longman and Reid, *God Is a Warrior*, 41.

<sup>70</sup> Longman, “Divine Warrior,” *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery: An Encyclopedia Exploration of the Images, Symbols, Motifs, Metaphors, Figures of Speech, Literary Patterns*, 212. In this context, cf. Judg 5:20; Isa 40:26; and Neh 9:6.

<sup>71</sup> Longman, “Psalm 98: A Divine Warrior Victory Song,” 296.

does nature wince during divine warfare, the Bible records that music ceases (e.g., Isa 24:8).<sup>72</sup> When God goes to war, music, celebration, jubilation desist. After godly victory in war, however, nature is reinvigorated and restored with even greater vitality and musical celebration reappears:

<sup>9</sup> I will sing a new song to you, O God;  
on the ten-stringed lyre I will make music to you,  
<sup>10</sup> To the One who gives victory to kings,  
who delivers his servant David from the deadly sword. (Ps 144:9–10, Longman’s  
trans.)

Similarly, in the historical books victors in battle were greeted with music and celebration upon their return from battle (1 Sam 18:6–7; Judg 11:34; Exod 15:21; etc.).

Thus far Longman has discussed his division of warfare narratives into “activities before a war” (including seeking God’s will, spiritual preparation and ritual cleanness [*sic*] in the war camp), and “behavior during the war” (including numbers and weapons technology, the battle march, and combatants). Longman’s third category of warfare narratives in the Bible is “actions after the war.”<sup>73</sup> Herein he discusses two topics: praise for victory and plunder for the victors. If a battle was initiated by divine directive, the outcome was certain—God would deliver the enemy “into the hands” of Israel (Josh 6:2; 10:8, et al.). The only fitting response of the people was praise, and the primary vehicle preserved for that encomium was song. Longman chooses two well-known passages to illustrate his point: the Song of Miriam (Exod 15:21) and the Song of Deborah (Judg 5:4–5). Numerous Psalms could also be cited as evidence of a hymnic response to military victory (including Pss 7, 91, 98, etc.).<sup>74</sup>

It is in the context of the aftermath of war and the spoils of war, that Longman discusses *herem*.<sup>75</sup> He is well aware of the hermeneutical difficulties of *herem*. He writes,

For many contemporary Bible readers, the stories of divine warfare create a haunting problem. [For example:] “As for the towns of these peoples that the LORD your God is giving you as a inheritance, you must not let anything that breathes remain alive. You shall annihilate them . . . just as the LORD your God has commanded.” (Deut 20:16–17 [Longman’s trans.]) Our eyes run quickly over these familiar episodes, reported in their

---

<sup>72</sup> Longman, “Psalm 98: A Divine Warrior Victory Song,” 270; cf. “The Divine Warrior,” 302.

<sup>73</sup> Longman and Reid, *God Is a Warrior*, 43–47.

<sup>74</sup> Longman, “Psalm 98: A Divine Warrior Victory Song” *JETS* 27 (1984): 267–274. Longman maintains that too often biblical readers simply overlook the language of warfare in the Psalms or readily spiritualize it and thereby miss the possible military provenance of the psalm. His categories of military warfare are also evident in the Psalms: including “before the war,” Ps 7; “during the war,” Ps 91; and “after the war,” Ps 98 (cf. “Should I Go to War?”). Longman is convinced that the phrase “new song” which appears in three biblical books (Isa 42:10; Pss 33:3; 40:3; 96:1; 98:1; 144:9; 149:1; and Rev 5:9; 14:3) is a technical term for a military victory song. Each “new song” reference appears in what he calls “holy war context” (“Psalm 98: A Divine Warrior Song,” 269; in this regard cf. “The Divine Warrior,” 300–302). A “new song,” then, would celebrate the new situation (perhaps freedom) that was the result of God’s warfare against Israel’s enemies. Cf. *God Is a Warrior*, 45; and *How to Read the Psalms* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 40–42.

<sup>75</sup> The author acknowledges Dr. Longman for allowing him to review a pre-publication draft of his chapter on *herem* (“The Case for Spiritual Continuity”) in *Show Them No Mercy: 4 Views on God and Canaanite Genocide* (forthcoming from Zondervan). The article informed the following discussion of *herem*.

spare narrative style. “Then they devoted to destruction by the edge of the sword all in the city, both men and women, young and old, oxen, sheep, and donkeys.” (Josh 6:21 [Longman’s trans.]) If we pause we wince at the R-rated scenes of violence cast upon our mental screens. Was this annihilation truly God’s will? Perhaps Israel misheard God. If God required this of Israel, how can followers of the Prince of Peace condone these stories and teach them to our children? What comfort and moral direction can we find in a God of Warfare?<sup>76</sup>

Longman also notes that the use of *herem* in biblical warfare is not unique in the ancient Near East. Destruction of one’s enemies for a deity was not an exclusively Israelite notion, but was practiced by at least some of ancient Israel’s neighbors. For example, in the ninth century BCE, king Mesha of Moab commissioned an inscription memorializing his *herem* against Israel. Citing a directive from his god, Chemosh, Mesha took the town of Nebo from the Israelites and slew “seven thousand men, boys, women, girls, and maid-servants.” They were “devoted to destruction for Ashtar-Chemosh” (Longman’s trans.).<sup>77</sup> Longman suggests that with the biblical use of *herem*, the God of Israel in some way “reshaped a convention of contemporary warfare for his own redemptive purposes.”<sup>78</sup>

As victory in war belonged to the Lord, so too the spoils of war belonged to the Lord. This can be seen most readily in the conclusion to the battle for Jericho, “They [the armies of Israel] burned the whole city and everything that was in it, but they put the silver and the gold and the articles of bronze and iron into the treasury of the LORD’s house” (Josh 6:24, Longman’s trans.). Achan, on the other hand, tried to keep some of the plunder for himself and as a consequence, the host of Israel was defeated in their very next battle at Ai. Defeat indicated that something was wrong in the military camp, and God quickly revealed the deceptive actions of Achan to the leaders of Israel. Elsewhere, when booty was being divided among the troops who went into battle and those who remained in camp, the rationale given for equitable distribution of spoil was that it belonged to the Lord and thus was not subject to competing interpretations of distribution (1 Sam 30:23–25).

Plunder in holy war, according to Longman, directly refers to the concept of *herem*. He explains that *herem* is translated variously as “banned” or “devoted things” and that it indicates those plundered items and people who were captured during holy war.<sup>79</sup> In such wars, God was present with his people, and thus the victory and everything related to it (including plunder) belonged to the Lord. The aftermath of the battle of Jericho illustrates this point: “[Israel] devoted the city to the LORD and destroyed with the sword every living thing in it—men and women, young and old, cattle, sheep, and donkeys” (Josh 6:21). Any consequence of military victory was the Lord’s. The converse to the conclusion of the Jericho battle, however, is found in 1 Samuel 15 where King Saul ignored the dictates of *herem*. He retained people (most notably king Agag) and some of the choice plunder of battle for his own use, ostensibly for some type of sacrifice. When his intentions were exposed by the prophet, rather than acknowledging his misdeeds, he attempted to cover his misdeeds by saying he had kept selected people and things

---

<sup>76</sup> Longman, “When God Declares War,” 2. Cf. “Should I Go to War?”

<sup>77</sup> Longman, “When God Declares War,” 2.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid. Longman does not elaborate how he thinks the ancient military convention was reshaped in the Bible.

<sup>79</sup> Longman and Reid, *God Is a Warrior*, 47.

in order to sacrifice them to the Lord (1 Sam 15:15, 20–21). Because of the king’s presumptive disobedience to the directives of the Lord, despite explicit *herem* directives in 15:2–3, his days of being king over Israel were numbered. Longman perceives in this verse an indication of a growing rift between “the kings who turned away from God and his commands concerning holy war [and *herem*] and the prophets who became the primary bearers of holy war tradition” (see below)<sup>80</sup>

Longman suggests that in holy war the vanquished becomes something of a sacrifice devoted to God. He suggests that this convergence of sacrifice and warfare is reminiscent of Jeremiah who said, “The sword shall devour and be sated, and drink its fill of their blood. For the LORD God of Hosts holds a sacrifice” (Jer 46:10 [Longman’s trans.]), and Isaiah who similarly said, “When my sword has drunk its fill in the heavens, lo, it will descend upon Edom” (Isa 34:5 [Longman’s trans.]). Longman responds,

The sword of the Lord sated with blood and gorged with the fat of his enemies, yields the grisly image of a sacrificial offering to the Lord. The underlying point seems to be that these enemies pay with their lives for the sins for which no other sacrifice on their horizon can atone.<sup>81</sup>

Only *herem* could pay for the sins of the enemy. It is as if the time of judgment had arrived for certain nations. Citing Genesis 15:16 and the sins of the Amorites reaching completion, Longman opines that the conquest of the Land of Canaan, with its use of *herem*, is

A boldly enacted parable of the Day of the Lord that will one day dawn on every nation. There is justice in this war, though we may not fully comprehend its dimensions. The instruction to execute judgment against a whole nation, annihilating women, children, and nursing babies, evokes our revulsion and taxes our comprehension of the dimensions of human sin and guilt. Yet we must be reminded that the earthly life is God’s to give and to take. And more important, in his mercy, God’s eternal judgment of individuals does not operate on the same plane as his corporal judgment in these “wars of the Lord.”<sup>82</sup>

Longman concludes his chapter on “God Is a Warrior: The Wars of Faithful Israel,” noting that not every battle reflects the exact patterns he discerns, namely, preparations before a war, actions during a war, and behavior after a war. He notes along with Gottwald, that “there apparently was not a cultic or ritual pattern followed each time holy war was waged.”<sup>83</sup> Moreover, it is difficult to determine whether the differences in war narratives are “a variation of practice that evolved over time,” or “a function of the selectivity of biblical history writing.”<sup>84</sup> He suspects that both may be involved.

These passages and others like them describe what Longman calls “normative holy war.” He writes:

---

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Longman, “When God Declares War,” 3.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Longman, “The Divine Warrior,” 292.8. Here Longman builds upon Gottwald’s remarks in “Holy War,” *IDBSup*, 942–44, especially “Conduct of holy war: Uniformity of practice,” 942.

<sup>84</sup> Longman and Reid, *God Is a Warrior*, 47.

The central principle is that God is present in the battle with his people as a warrior. This is the origin of the divine-warrior theme, the experience of God's presence in battle. He wins the victory for his faithful people. This normative tradition applies throughout the Old Testament period, but primarily in the early history. As kings grow distant from God, matters change. Warfare is no longer on behalf of Israel, but against Israel.<sup>85</sup>

Longman holds that behind the concept of the divine warrior lies the covenant between Israel and her God. On the one hand, the Lord promised to protect the nation and to deliver them from their enemies:

<sup>1</sup> If you fully obey the LORD your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations on earth. <sup>2</sup> All these blessings will come upon you and accompany you if you obey the LORD your God: . . . <sup>7</sup> The LORD will grant that the enemies who rise up against you will be defeated before you. They will come at you from one direction but flee from you in seven. (Deut 28:1–2, 7)

On the other hand, if Israel did not follow the stipulations of the covenant it would suffer divine judgment which could take the form of enemy attack:

<sup>15</sup> However, if you do not obey the LORD your God and do not carefully follow all his commands and decrees I am giving you today, all these curses will come upon you and overtake you: . . . <sup>25</sup> The LORD will cause you to be defeated before your enemies. You will come at them from one direction but flee from them in seven, and you will become a thing of horror to all the kingdoms on earth. (Deut 28:15, 25)

If the covenant stipulations were broken the Bible records that God would actually go to battle against his people.<sup>86</sup> This topic is considered in Longman's chapter on "God as an Enemy: The Wars Against Unfaithful Israel." Therein he discusses the misplaced hope in the ark to defend them against their enemies, as if it were some type of talisman that had no connection to the covenant.<sup>87</sup> Devoid of covenant fidelity, ancient Israel would become prey for her neighbors:

<sup>25</sup> The Lord will cause you to be defeated before your enemies. You will come at them from one direction but flee from them in seven, and you will become a thing of horror to all the nations of the earth. <sup>26</sup> Your carcasses will be food for all the birds of the air and the beasts of the field, and there will be no one to frighten them away. (Deut 28:25–26, Longman's trans.)

---

<sup>85</sup> Longman and Reid, *God Is a Warrior*, 47.

<sup>86</sup> Yochanan Muffs develops a similar argument in "Agent of the Lord, Warrior for the People: The Prophet's Paradox," *Bible Review* 18 (2002): 20–27, 56 (especially 27).

<sup>87</sup> Longman, "When God Declares War," 3.

Despite their best hopes for military victory, Israel succumbed in battle not once, but twice to the Philistines and the ark fell into foreign hands (1 Sam 4).<sup>88</sup> This was not a result of divine inability to lead Israel to victory over the Philistines. On the contrary, while the ark was on foreign soil, the Philistine god, Dagon, mysteriously fell over and broke into pieces (1 Sam 5:2–5), and the Philistines also suffered from a plague reminiscent of those in Egypt (1 Sam 5:6–8). Even when they moved the ark to other towns, the plagues would move with it (1 Sam 5:8–12). Israel’s failure to defeat the Philistines was a result of divine unwillingness to fight for Israel. “God would not fight on behalf of an apostate Israel. Indeed, he would become its enemy.”<sup>89</sup> Longman also considers other themes of divine warfare against Israel, including “divine abandonment” during the exile or “divine hostility” as recorded in Lamentations:

The Lord is like an enemy;  
he has swallowed up Israel.  
He has swallowed up her palaces  
and destroyed her strongholds.  
He has multiplied mourning and lamentation  
for the Daughter of Judah. (2:5)

For Longman, the Exile is the culmination and most fearsome expression of what he calls “reverse holy war.”<sup>90</sup> Here God fought against his people in order to punish them for covenant infidelity.

Drawing on von Rad, Longman also maintains that the prophets saw themselves as “custodian of the patriarchal order of holy war.”<sup>91</sup> Thus when a king turned against the Lord and the stipulations of the covenant between God and Israel, it was the prophet and not the king who executed holy war—“Holy War transferred to a more verbal plane.”<sup>92</sup> Israel thus became the recipient of God’s warring activities. For example, when Saul refused to execute Agag according to the dictates of *herem*, Samuel took it upon himself to slay the foreign king and thereby fulfill divine directives. Similarly, God fought against king Ahab and the prophets of Baal through Elisha (1 Kgs 18). Numerous other examples could be listed, but these are sufficient to show that, as Longman maintains, “during times of royal apostasy God turned against the king and the people who [previously] followed him as divine warrior and toward the prophets and his [God’s] faithful followers.”<sup>93</sup>

The other stages of Longman’s development of divine warfare in the Bible include a post-exilic voice that anticipates future deliverance from enemy oppression (Dan 7:1–14; Zech 14), Christ’s earthly ministry as the work of a conqueror and the accompanying spiritual warfare and victory motifs throughout the New Testament (e.g., Matt 10:34; 26:52–54; Col 2:15; Eph

---

<sup>88</sup> Longman, “Divine Warrior,” *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery: An Encyclopedia Exploration of the Images, Symbols, Motifs, Metaphors, Figures of Speech, Literary Patterns*, 212.

<sup>89</sup> Longman and Reid, *God Is a Warrior*, 52. Cf. Allender and Longman, *Bold Love*, 117–118.

<sup>90</sup> Longman and Reid, *God Is a Warrior*, 55. Cf. “Divine Warrior,” *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery: An Encyclopedia Exploration of the Images, Symbols, Motifs, Metaphors, Figures of Speech, Literary Patterns*, 212.

<sup>91</sup> Longman and Reid, *God Is a Warrior*, 57, quoting von Rad, *Holy War in Ancient Israel*, 97. Cf. Robert P. Carroll, “War,” *What the Bible Really Says* (Buffalo: Prometheus Press, 1989), 158.

<sup>92</sup> Raymond B. Dillard, and Tremper Longman, III, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 389.

<sup>93</sup> Longman and Reid, *God Is a Warrior*, 57. Cf. Longman, “Should I Go to War?”



6:12–17; Heb 4:12; Rev 1:16; et al.),<sup>94</sup> and the church’s expectation of a divine warrior who will judge the spiritual and human enemies of God.<sup>95</sup> For example:

<sup>11</sup> I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. <sup>12</sup> His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. <sup>13</sup> He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. <sup>14</sup> The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. <sup>15</sup> Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. “He will rule them with an iron scepter.” He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. <sup>16</sup> On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. (Rev 19)

Longman maintains that stage five (the biblical anticipation of a divine warrior who will judge the spiritual and human enemies of God at the end of the age) may shed some interpretative light on stage one (“God Fights for Israel”), the plunder, and the *herem*. For Longman, divine mandates for Israel in battle against the Canaanites serve as a “preview of the final judgment” found in the Book of Revelation.<sup>96</sup> Divine dictates to eradicate the Canaanites were not simply to produce *Lebensraum* for ancient Israel, but rather to bring judgment because of the sin of Canaan (Gen 15:16). Building on the work of Meredith Kline,<sup>97</sup> who explains such harsh judgment on the inhabitants of Canaan as “an intrusion of consummation ethics [Kline’s

---

<sup>94</sup> For a corroborating perspective see Gregory A. Boyd’s thorough discussion of warfare in the Bible in *God at War: The Bible and Spiritual Conflict* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997). Here Boyd maintains that “the thematic unity of Christ’s ministry (as well as that of his disciples and the early postapostolic church) becomes fully intelligible only against the backdrop of a warfare worldview” (19; cf. 215).

<sup>95</sup> Longman believes that New Testament writers utilized the Old Testament divine warrior theme in four ways. They include: (1) The Day of the Lord; (2) Jesus Christ as a cloud rider; (3) Christ the Divine Warrior in Revelation; and (4) a New Song (“The Divine Warrior”; 291; “Evangelicals and the Comparative Method,” 34. Longman maintains that Christians live in phase four, but eagerly await phase five. Their fight is against the spiritual forces of evil in the world yet they look forward to a day when the battle will be over for good. Thus Christians “live in the period after Jesus Christ won the victory on the cross, but before the mop-up operations are completed at the Second Coming” (Allender and Longman, *Bold Love*, 123). Ephesians 6:10–18 describes what Longman calls “the Christian’s holy war” (e.g., “Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the Devil’s schemes” [6:11], or “take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one” [6:16]). Thus unlike the battles of the Old Testament against pagan neighbors, the battles of the Christian are against three fronts: (1) forces of evil that emanate from both institutions and people; (2) the fight to win souls via conversion to Christianity; and (3) the ensuing battle of the new person (as a result of conversion) versus the old person who is attracted to a previous lifestyle (Longman compares this to civil war). Cf. Allender and Longman, *Bold Love*, 123–133; *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, 116–17.

<sup>96</sup> Longman, “Should I Go to War?”.

<sup>97</sup> Meredith G. Kline was born in 1922 and attended Gordon College (A.B., 1944), Westminster Theological Seminary (Th.B. and Th.M., 1947), and Dropsie College (Ph.D. in Assyriology and Egyptology, 1956). He is currently an Emeritus Faculty member of Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary. Some of his books include: *By Oath Consigned: A Reinterpretation of the Covenant Signs of Circumcision and Baptism* (Eerdmans, 1968); *The Structure of Biblical Authority* (Eerdmans, 1972 [reprinted by Wipf & Stock Publishers, 1997]), *Images of the Spirit* (Wipf & Stock, 1999); *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal World View* (Two Age Press, 2000); *The Genesis Debate: Three Views on the Days of Creation*, David G. Hagopian, ed., (Crux Press, 2001); *Glory in Our Midst: A Biblical-Theological Reading of Zechariah’s Night Visions* (Two Age Press, 2001). Online: [www.gcts.edu/facl.index.html](http://www.gcts.edu/facl.index.html); <http://infotrac.galenet.com/menu>.

term is ‘Intrusion Ethics’] back into the period of common grace,” Longman calls the *herem* “a temporal judgment against a wicked nation, in essence becoming a mini-preview of the horrors that await the unbeliever in phase five,” or the final judgment of the world.<sup>98</sup>

Since Longman follows Kline’s lead closely here, a brief review of Kline’s position is warranted. With regard to *herem*, Kline maintains that the concept of Intrusion Ethics helps to explain this problematic portion of the Old Testament. He acknowledges that if Israel’s actions during the conquest against its enemies were to be adjudicated before an assembly of nations according to typical laws of human interaction, the conquest would be “condemned as unprovoked aggression and, more over, an aggression carried out in barbarous violation of the [biblical] requirement to show all possible mercy even in the proper execution of justice.”<sup>99</sup> He goes further and says,

It would not avail the counsel for the defense to claim that by a divine promise originally made to Abraham and afterwards reiterated to his descendants the land was rightfully Israel’s, nor to insist that the iniquity of the Amorites was full and cried to heaven for judgment, nor to advise the court that the conquest was undertaken and waged according to specific directions of Israel’s God to Moses and Joshua. Such facts would have not legal significance for [an] international tribunal.<sup>100</sup>

The only credible explanation for Kline, then, is that typical ethical standards were temporarily suspended and the ethical principles of the last judgment intruded, as it were, into the present historical moment. “Only so,” Kline asserts, “can the conquest be justified and seen as it was in truth—not murder, but the hosts of the Almighty visiting upon the rebels against [God’s] righteous throne their just desserts—not robbery, but the meek inheriting the earth.”<sup>101</sup> Although he does not hazard a suggestion as to why and when such intrusions occurred, he does maintain that to disobey a *herem* directive would not be an act of mercy toward certain Canaanites, “it would have been falling, through lack of faith, into the abyss of disobedience.”<sup>102</sup>

---

<sup>98</sup> Longman, “Should I Go to War?” (cf. interview by author, November 18, 2001). Similarly, Longman speaks of the rejoicing of creation in hopeful anticipation of future judgment in Psalm 98 as an Old Testament prelude of the New Testament era, specifically Romans 8:18–27 where the world is depicted as eagerly expecting future blessings because creation itself will benefit from divine judgment of the world (cf. “Psalm 98: A Divine Warrior Victory Song,” 271). For another perspective on Kline’s “Intrusion Ethics,” cf. Longman’s review of W. Kaiser’s *Toward Old Testament Ethics* (1983), where he criticizes Kaiser for not utilizing Kline’s work “in order to elucidate such difficult questions as holy war, imprecation, lying and so forth” (504). Thus “intrusion ethics” is obviously an important means of ameliorating the difficulties of *herem* for Longman. Note also that Longman wrote “Evangelicals and the Comparative Method.” See also, Longman, interview by author, November 18, 2001.

<sup>99</sup> Meredith G. Kline, *The Structure of Biblical Authority*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 163. See also, “The Intrusion of the Decalogue,” *WTJ* 16 (1953): 1–22.

<sup>100</sup> Kline, “The Intrusion of the Decalogue,” 15. With these words Kline addresses the three of the most frequently recurring attempts to explain the use of *herem* in the Old Testament: (1) the land belonged to Israel by divine proclamation and the Canaanites were of necessity to be eliminated; (2) the iniquity of the Amorites was so egregious that nothing but death would bring a stop to it; or (3) since God directed Moses and Joshua to wage war it was unnecessary to ask questions because the directives came from God.

<sup>101</sup> Kline, *The Structure of Biblical Authority*, 163.

<sup>102</sup> Kline, “The Intrusion and the Decalogue,” *WTS* 16 (1953): 16.

For Longman, then, the conundrum of *herem* may be explained at least in part by Kline's perspective. Longman asserts that "intrusion ethics" hooks "into the holiness of God and ultimate judgment. It reminds us that [*herem*] isn't an arbitrary thing."<sup>103</sup>

To the question, "Is *herem* moral?", Longman replied in an interview with this author with an unqualified affirmative. "Yes," he said. "By definition it was moral. I may struggle with it, but God defines morality, that is, what is right and what is wrong. If it is initiated and directed by God, it is moral. God defines morality."<sup>104</sup> To the query, "Did *herem* actually happen?" he said, "Yes and no. It happened sporadically, but not consistently. Even when Samuel slew Agag with his own sword (when Saul refused to do it), descendants of the king survived somehow and the story of Agag's people continues into the time of Esther and Haman."<sup>105</sup> Thus for Longman, *herem* is moral because it is initiated only by God in the Bible, nevertheless, it was pursued only halfheartedly—an oversight which caused the Israelites much pain and suffering in later years.

May the church utilize the passages of the Old Testament to justify the use of violent means to advance the kingdom of God on earth? Longman again replied in an interview with this author with an unqualified negative. "The church as 'the church' may not use violent means to further the Kingdom of God."<sup>106</sup> Moreover, the holy war passages may not be used by Christians to justify joining the state to go to war.

Jesus explicitly cuts off from the church Holy War activity similar to that of the Israelites. At the moment of crisis, when the soldiers arrested him, Peter according to John 18:11 drew his sword and struck the high priest's servant. Christ's response is "Put your sword away. Shall I not drink of the cup the father has given me?" Thus on the basis of this and other passages as well, Jesus turns from the role of Divine Warrior directed toward the unbeliever. His command is not to slay but to convert. (Matt 28:16)<sup>107</sup>

Elsewhere Longman cites Luke 9:54 as evidence that the early disciples rightly perceived the military nature of Jesus mission, but wrongly perceived his strategy and were rebuked by Jesus.<sup>108</sup>

<sup>51</sup> As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. <sup>52</sup> And he sent messengers on ahead, who went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him; <sup>53</sup> but the people there did not welcome him, because he was heading for Jerusalem. <sup>54</sup> When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, "Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?" <sup>55</sup> But Jesus turned and rebuked them, <sup>56</sup> and they went to another village. (Luke 9:51–56)

For Longman, the *herem* passages do not speak to the military needs of the modern period because they are rooted in a different epoch when God's people were directed to act as a nation

---

<sup>103</sup> Longman, interview by author, November 18, 2001.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Longman, "Should I Go to War?". See also, "When God Declares War," 7.

<sup>107</sup> Longman, "The Divine Warrior," 303. Longman continues his discussion of this passage in Matthew to address Christ's dual role to convert unbelievers and to wage Holy War against the ultimate enemy, Satan.

<sup>108</sup> Longman, "When God Declares War," 1.

for their God. Today the people of God are spread across the globe throughout the nations and can not act as a single nation.<sup>109</sup>

Longman continues, since the church finds itself in phase four (Jesus Christ—the Divine Warrior) it is constantly at war against the ultimate enemy, Satan. In this context, Longman mentions Ephesians 6:10–17, the church’s “holy war manifesto”:<sup>110</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. <sup>11</sup> Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. <sup>12</sup> For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. <sup>13</sup> Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. <sup>14</sup> Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, <sup>15</sup> and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. <sup>16</sup> In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. <sup>17</sup> Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Longman posits that this passage should be read in the context of the Old Testament divine warrior motif. Although the church may not use physical weaponry to advance the kingdom, it wields spiritual weapons (e.g., faith, hope, love, prayer, etc.) that are much stronger than any mere physical implement. Moreover, warfare in the New Testament (or phase four) is threefold: (1) standing firm against the evil of the world (Eph 6:10–17); (2) extending the boundaries of the kingdom via evangelism; and (3) becoming more like Christ through personal sanctification (internal struggles against the human propensity to sin, e.g., 2 Cor 10:4–6). Yet, the focus of the church is not just the struggles of the present era, but the anticipation of phase five, the final return of Christ and his ultimate victory over evil.

Longman’s work has shown that the Divine Warrior motif is indeed a predominant biblical theme found from Genesis to Revelation. In the Old Testament, God fights against those who would destroy Israel, as well as, against Israel itself when the people ignored the stipulations of the covenant agreement with God. The Old Testament also anticipates the coming of a mighty divine warrior in the future who will obliterate oppression, while one of the ways that the New Testament presents the ministry of Jesus is as a victorious conqueror. The church is directed to do battle against the spiritual forces arrayed against it, and ultimately anticipate a great climatic battle that will occur at the end of the age when the forces of evil will succumb to the power of God. To say that the Divine Warrior motif is a “pervasive biblical theme” is indeed an understatement.

---

<sup>109</sup> Also see, “The Task of the Old Testament Scholar at the End of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century,” Cassette tape, (Philadelphia: Westminster Media, 1993).

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

## Lingering Questions

The list of Tremper Longman's publications, on both academic and popular levels, is impressive. With regard to only one topic, the "divine warrior," Longman has published no less than five articles, one book-length review (another chapter in a forthcoming book is due soon from Zondervan<sup>111</sup>), and the subject appears repeatedly in his other writings. Thus he has proffered a substantive study of both the divine warrior motif and the conundrum of *herem*. In so doing, he has addressed an issue that many biblical commentators have chosen to avoid or to which they have suggested only facile reviews. Without disputing his explanations of this topic, several unanswered questions remain:

(1) Longman makes no distinction between *herem* and "holy war" anywhere in his writings. He uses the terms interchangeably, and thus in Longman's work *herem* and "holy war" should be understood as synonymous. This assumption, however, is far from the scholarly consensus which makes a clear demarcation among the terms. He was certainly aware of the discussion about terminology, specifically referring to it repeatedly in his work,<sup>112</sup> yet it is unclear why he chose to ignore it.<sup>113</sup> The lack of a clear working definition about what is and is not "holy war" renders his writing on this topic fuzzy, and although his work moves well beyond word definitions, the reader must repeatedly question the designation of important terms. Other scholars take great exception to imprecise definition of nomenclature, especially with regard to holy war and *herem*, and this oversight on the part of Longman is unfortunate.

(2) Although Longman writes about *sebaot* (the "Hosts" or "Armies" of the LORD) elsewhere,<sup>114</sup> he does not even mention the "Hosts" in his book *God Is a Warrior*. Is this not a warrior term? This oversight seems odd when in his discussion about the "Combatants of Holy War," he includes an important review of Elijah's prayer for the eyes of his servant to be opened in order to see the "horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha" arrayed against the enemy at Dothan (2 Kgs 2:17).<sup>115</sup> Although *sebaot* is not employed in this story, Longman does indicate that it is "logical to think that the army [in question] was composed of angelic beings who belonged to the divine counsel."<sup>116</sup> Moreover, numerous passages could have been adduced that explicitly refer to *sebaot*. This is a curious omission in the context of Longman's larger discussion about the battles of ancient Israel, presence of the Ark of the Covenant in battles, and the occasional involvement of the forces of nature as an active participant in those battles. Since *sebaot* appears frequently in the Old Testament (Longman notes that *sebaot* occurs 279 times in

---

<sup>111</sup> Longman, interview by author, November 18, 2001. Cf. "The Case for Spiritual Continuity" in *Show Them No Mercy: 4 Views on God and Canaanite Genocide* (forthcoming from Zondervan).

<sup>112</sup> Cf. "The Divine Warrior," 292.9; *God Is a Warrior*, 19–26; "Psalm 98: A Divine Warrior Victory Song," 268.6.

<sup>113</sup> Longman also ignores the issue in his discussion of holy war in *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, 114.

<sup>114</sup> "צבא," *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*, Vol. 3, Willem A. VanGemeren, Tremper Longman, et al., eds., (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1997), 733–735); and "Divine Warrior," *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery: An Encyclopedia Exploration of the Images, Symbols, Motifs, Metaphors, Figures of Speech, Literary Patterns*, 211 (Longman comments about *sebaot* are terse).

<sup>115</sup> Longman, *God Is a Warrior*, 42.

<sup>116</sup> Longman, *God Is a Warrior*, 42.

the Hebrew Bible as part of a divine title), a review of *sebaot* would seem to be essential in *God Is a Warrior*.<sup>117</sup>

(3) Longman offers no discussion of the modern revulsion to *herem* in *God Is a Warrior*. This is a glaring omission for which he has been criticized repeatedly.<sup>118</sup> Moreover, it is a point of distinction between his study of warfare and *herem* in the Bible and the work of Walter Kaiser and Peter Craigie. Representing the reaction of scholars who have observed this oversight, R. W. L. Moberly says,

There is no discussion whatever of the sheer difficulty most modern readers have with this aspect of scripture. People who want to believe in the authority of scripture regularly stumble here. It is hardly a sign of unfaith to ask “How could the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ sponsor *herem* in which non-combatant women, children and animals are to be put to death?” To ignore the question, and thus perhaps imply that it is not a real question, is surely to encourage the common reaction of people to overthrow the authority of the scripture (and often abandon faith) altogether. To fail to provide help here is a dereliction of duty.<sup>119</sup>

When asked in an interview with this author about why he would neglect this issue, Longman replied that his book was “an exercise in biblical theology, not ethics.”<sup>120</sup>

Longman has also been criticized because he devoted barely three paragraphs to a discussion of *herem* itself (*God Is a Warrior* 46–47). Moreover, in the *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, of which Longman is an editor, it is not even mentioned and although Longman was also an editor (along with Willem A. VanGemeren, et al.) of the *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, Longman did not write the article on *herem*.<sup>121</sup> Moreover, he only briefly addresses this issue in his article in *Christianity Today*, “When God Declares War.” With regard to *God Is a Warrior*, Chisholm remarks,

The treatments of *herem* . . . are too sketchy, and more needs to be said about the justification of genocide in relation to holy war. After all, most modern readers of the Old Testament are troubled by Yahweh’s attitude toward the Canaanites, which could be summarized as, “The only good Canaanite is a dead Canaanite.”<sup>122</sup>

These concerns have cried out for attention for centuries and Longman simply overlooks them. In an interview with this author Longman replied to this lacuna by saying that “*herem* is only a

---

<sup>117</sup> Longman, “צבא,” *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*, 3:734. Cf. Bill Cotton, “God Is a Warrior,” *Evangel: The British Evangelical Review* 14 (1996): 89.

<sup>118</sup> Robert B. Chisholm, “God Is a Warrior,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 153 (1996): 497; R. W. L. Moberly, “Book Reviews,” *Ashland Theological Journal* 29 (1997): 127; Bob Fyall, “God Is a Warrior,” *Biblical Studies* 13 (1996): 165–66; Cyril S. Rodd, *Glimpses of a Strange Land*, 200.

<sup>119</sup> Moberly, 127.

<sup>120</sup> Longman, interview by author, November 18, 2001.

<sup>121</sup> The article was written by Jackie A. Naudé of The University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, Republic of South Africa (2:276–77).

<sup>122</sup> Chisholm, 497.

part or the larger issue of holy war. [Nevertheless, I] probably should have dealt with it more fully.”<sup>123</sup>

These repeated oversights or scanty treatments of various issues of concern most likely are the result of the overall anatomy of *God Is a Warrior*. One gets the distinct impression that Longman wanted to get beyond the Old Testament foundational issues and into the real matters at hand, namely, how Old Testament themes are developed in the New Testament. Elsewhere Longman criticizes Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. for not moving into a discussion of New Testament usage of Old Testament themes quickly enough in his *Toward Old Testament Ethics*. Longman says that one of the structural difficulties of Kaiser’s book is his “decision to relate OT ethics to the NT Church in the last chapter [of his book] and also to make his treatment so short. The relevance of his entire book depends on how the OT bears on the modern church.”<sup>124</sup> Longman seems to have rectified the problem with Kaiser by making the “New Testament application section” of his work extensive. This does his book a disservice, however, by rendering his treatment of vitally important Old Testament themes superficial, not addressing the concerns of both scholarly and popular readers, and by compromising his own hermeneutical guidelines (mentioned above) by moving into New Testament application of Old Testament motifs before adequately dealing with the Old Testament itself.

(4) With regard to the use of *herem* in modern warfare, Longman maintains a categorical “no.” He says that the *herem* passages do not speak to the military needs of the modern period because they were originally directed to the people of God as the nation of God. Since such an arrangement no longer exists and the people of God are dispersed throughout the world, such action is impossible. His reply, however, leaves open the possibility that if there were indeed a Christian nation, could it invoke *herem* against its enemies?

(5) Longman’s discussion of the divine warrior motif and the *herem* builds upon the work of Meredith G. Kline (see above). Kline explains *herem* as an intrusion of end-of-time ethics into an earlier biblical period. Thus *herem* for Kline, is as if the final judgment in Revelation had intruded proleptically into the battle stories of Deuteronomy, Joshua, and elsewhere. Nevertheless, Kline offers no explicit biblical support for this theory. Even Longman notes that this idea is in need of refinement when he wrote, “Kline only partially develops his ideas in ‘The Intrusion and the Decalogue.’”<sup>125</sup> It does not explain why “normative ethics” are suspended in favor of some temporary type of divinely initiated “intrusion ethics.” Moreover, it says nothing of why or when the theoretical intrusion might occur. Ultimately, Kline’s proposal does not compel assent. By building on Kline’s work, Longman attempts to answer some questions about

---

<sup>123</sup> Longman, interview by author, November 18, 2001.

<sup>124</sup> “Toward Old Testament Ethics,” *JETS* 27:1984:503–504. Elsewhere Longman criticizes Craigie for a similar issue: not dealing sufficiently with the transition from OT warfare to NT spiritual warfare (interview by author, November 18, 2001).

<sup>125</sup> “Toward Old Testament Ethics,” 504.

*herem*, but this theory raises yet other questions that remain unanswered. Thus the enigma of *herem* continues.



## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

The goal of this study has been to locate the work of Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., Peter C. Craigie, and Tremper Longman, III vis-à-vis the work of other scholars in the ongoing discussion of *herem*. Kaiser's work on *herem* is found dispersed throughout several monographs and articles, but primarily in *Toward Old Testament Ethics* (1983) and *Hard Sayings of the Bible* (1996). Craigie and Longman, on the other hand, devote monographs to the topic of warfare in the Old Testament. Yet Kaiser gives more attention to *herem* than either Craigie or Longman. This is understandable to a certain extent with Longman, who wrote *God Is a Warrior* (1995), not in order to focus on *herem*, but because he wanted to show that the "Divine Warrior" motif is a central biblical theme in both the Old and New Testaments. It is unclear why Craigie, who wrote *The Problem of War in the Old Testament* (1978) in response to queries about Old Testament stories of battle, would not devote more attention to *herem*. It should be noted, however, that in the eleven reviews of Craigie's book that I consulted from a wide spectrum of journals, no reviewer even mentioned that Craigie neglected to give *herem* some type of sustained critical analysis. It seems that scholars were simply not interested in *herem* and the interpretative problems it presents at the time Craigie was writing (1978).<sup>1</sup> When scholars began to review Longman's *God Is a Warrior*, however, they repeatedly commented on Longman's lack of attention to *herem*. Apparently the mood and concerns of scholars had changed by this time (1995) and Longman simply did not address them.<sup>2</sup>

This study, comparing and contrasting the efforts of Kaiser, Craigie, and Longman with regard to warfare in the Hebrew Bible and *herem*, is an exercise in the history of biblical interpretation examining how they read and interpret the Bible within both the academy and their confessional communities. In this conclusion their work will be reviewed in comparison to one

---

<sup>1</sup> Reviews of Craigie's, *Problem of War*, include: Anthony J. Petrotta, *TSF Bulletin* 4 (1980): 21; Duane L. Christensen, *CBQ* 42 (1980): 94–95; Jared J. Jackson, *Interpretation* 34 (1980): 88–90; John Sandys-Wunsch, *SR* 9 (1980): 90–91; John T. Willis, *Restoration Quarterly* 24 (1981): 111–112; Leo G. Purdue, *JBL* 99 (1980): 446–448; Millard C. Lind, *Sojourners* 9 (1980): 31–33; Ronald G. Goetz, *Theology Today* 36 (1980): 598–600; Trent C. Butler, *JSOT* 15(1980): 64–65; William Keeney, *Mennonite Life* 35 (1980): 26–27.

<sup>2</sup> Reviews consulted include: R. W. L. Moberly, "Book Reviews" *Ashland Theological Journal* 29 (1997): 126–28; Eric W. Bolger, review of Tremper Longman, III, *God Is a Warrior*, *JETS* 40 (1997): 689; Robert B. Chisholm, review of Tremper Longman, III, "God Is a Warrior," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 153 (1996): 496–97; Bill Cotton, review of Tremper Longman, III, "God Is a Warrior," *Evangel: The British Evangelical Review* 14 (1996): 88–89; Bob Fyall, review of Tremper Longman, III, "God Is a Warrior," *Biblical Studies* 13 (1996): 165–66; Richard Hess, "God is a Warrior: Studies in Old Testament Biblical Theology" (review of Tremper Longman, III), *Themelios* 22 (1996): 53–54; David C. Deuel, review of Tremper Longman, III, *God is a Warrior*, *The Master's Seminary Journal* 6 (1995): 252–54.

another and when appropriate to other scholars. Also considered will be strategies they share for interpreting *herem*, other strategies they shun, and still others that are unique to each scholar.

## Strategies Shared

All three of the scholars in question reconstruct the history of the biblical text similarly—with rare exception they accept the biblical accounts and descriptions of ancient history as a true description of what indeed happened. Not all scholars, however, are so inclined. For example, for the sake of this study the historical presuppositions of biblical scholars may be classified into at least three categories. They include:

- (1) “Skepticism”: very little of what is found in the Bible may be understood as “reliable historical depictions” of antiquity.
- (2) “Historical core”: at least some of the details in the historical narratives of the Bible are accurate. The job of the scholar, then, is to determine which of the details are correct historical depictions and which are later literary embellishments.
- (3) “Reliable historical text”: most, but not necessarily all, of the historical details of the Bible are true and reliable.

Kaiser, Craigie, and Longman belong to the third category and thus work with the assumption that the Bible is to a large extent a credible historical document. Although not necessarily a strategy for dealing with *herem*, per se, nevertheless it is a type of strategy in that it governs the way in which these evangelical scholars approach the text. Thus when they read the Bible, they read it and interpret it as a historical document.

Since they share similar historical assumptions about the Bible, it is not surprising that their work intersects on several issues. For example, to the query, “Is *herem* just or moral?” each scholar replies with an unqualified affirmative. It is just, they say, because it was God who initiated *herem* and it is God who defines what is moral and just. When asked about the morality of *herem*, Longman replied in an interview with this author, “Yes, by definition it was moral. I may struggle with it, but God defines morality, that is, what is right and what is wrong. If it is initiated and directed by God, it is moral. God defines morality.”<sup>3</sup> Kaiser holds a similar position, “the Old Testament does uphold the justice and righteousness of God even in this command to eradicate the Canaanites.”<sup>4</sup> By way of demonstrating the justice of *herem*, all three scholars highlight the fact that when Israel was unjust and transgressed the stipulations of the covenant, God made Israel the focus of *herem*.<sup>5</sup> For example, Longman calls the desperate situation found in Jeremiah 21:3–6 “reverse Holy War.”<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Longman, interview by author, November 18, 2001.

<sup>4</sup> Kaiser, *Toward Old Testament Ethics*, 267.

<sup>5</sup> E.g., Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, 57.

<sup>6</sup> Longman, *God Is a Warrior*, 55. Here Longman is drawing upon W. L. Moran, “The End of the Unholy War and the Anti-Exodus,” *Bib* 44 (1963): 333–42. Cf. Robert P. Carroll, “War,” *What the Bible Really Says* (Buffalo: Prometheus Press, 1989), 157.

<sup>4</sup> This is what the LORD, the God of Israel says: I am about to turn against you the weapons of war that are in your hands, which you are using to fight the king of Babylon and the Babylonians who are outside the wall besieging you. And I will gather them inside this city. <sup>5</sup> I myself will fight against you with an outstretched hand and a mighty arm in anger and fury and great wrath. <sup>6</sup> I will strike down those who live in this city—both men and animals—and they will die of a terrible plague.

Reflecting on this passage and others like it, Longman writes,

[Jeremiah 21] goes beyond divine abandonment and points to divine hostility, God's acting against Israel in warfare. Language that in other places was used in support of Israel is here applied against them. . . . [In the exile the reader is faced with] the most fearsome expression of what might be called "reverse holy war." God wars against his own people to punish them for their disobedience.<sup>7</sup>

Although each scholar understands *herem* to be moral and just, they do not overlook the Old Testament mandate for peace. This is an additional strategy for addressing the problems of *herem*. For example, in *Toward Old Testament Ethics*, Kaiser writes:

What then of "peace?" In the biblical sense, peace begins in that security, order, and prosperity that comes from reconciliation to God and from being restored to living under God once again. *Shalom* occurs over 250 times [in the Old Testament] in 213 separate verses. In its basic root meaning, *Shalom* means more than just "peace"; it comes from the root meaning "to be whole" and hence speaks of "wholeness," "soundness," "health," and "well-being." It is peace as opposed to war, concord as opposed to strife. . . .

Peace does not come merely with the cessation of hostilities; it aims instead at wholeness and a state of unimpaired relationships with others at all levels beginning with God. These can be the absence of overt strife while deep down the soul and body are constantly agitated and rankled because there is no wholeness and health there. Only with holiness can there come wholeness in this area as well.<sup>8</sup>

The Hebrew Bible is not all warfare and destruction and the writing of these scholars reflects that fact. All three scholars go a step further. They suggest that, in addition to studying the biblical call for peace, the Old Testament "narratives of defeat"<sup>9</sup> (Longman calls these the "Wars Against Unfaithful Israel"<sup>10</sup>) are all too easily overlooked and that the lessons to be learned in defeat are thus forgotten. This is yet another strategy for interpreting the biblical *herem*. Craigie maintains that ignoring the Old Testament "narratives of defeat" certainly contributed to the crusader mentality of the Middle Ages.

---

<sup>7</sup> Longman, *God Is a Warrior*, 54–55.

<sup>8</sup> Kaiser, *Toward Old Testament Ethics*, 179. Cf. Craigie, *Problem of War*, 85.

<sup>9</sup> Craigie, *Problem of War*, 81, 97.

<sup>10</sup> Longman, *God Is a Warrior*, 48–60.

The Old Testament must be read and understood as a whole if its message is to be understood; this approach is particularly important with respect to the theme of war. [This] warning concerns the implicit danger, for example, in reading parts of the Old Testament, such as the “conquest narratives,” and understanding them without the benefit of the latter part of the story, the “defeat narratives.” To a large extent, a procedure such as this [lead to the Crusade mentality of the Middle Ages]. Any Christian doctrine of “Crusade,” insofar as it is based on the narratives of the conquering “Wars of the Lord,” is illegitimate and reflects a failure to understand the message of the Old Testament taken as a whole.<sup>11</sup>

Thus all three scholars agree that the entire corpus of Old Testament war literature must be studied as a whole lest its message be truncated or misconstrued.

One final strategy that all three scholars agree upon when addressing *herem* is that since life belongs to God, it is his to give and his to withdraw if it becomes necessary. This strategy approximates the attitude of Job when he tore his robe and shaved his head in horror over what had happened to his family and fortune, “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I will depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised” (Job 1:21). These scholars understand God to be sovereign over every aspect of human life, including its cessation. Longman says:

The instruction to execute judgment against a whole nation, annihilating women, children, and nursing babies, evokes our revulsion and taxes our comprehension of the dimensions of human sin and guilt. Yet we must be reminded that the earthly life is God’s to give and to take.<sup>12</sup>

Similarly, Craigie wrote, “God, the Giver of all life, has certainly the right to withdraw life or to command that it be withdrawn.”<sup>13</sup> Likewise, elsewhere he explains, “theoretically, it may be said that God, the giver of all life, has the absolute and only authority to withdraw life, or to command war in which it will be withdrawn.”<sup>14</sup> This seems to be a recurrent but important sub-theme underlying the writings of these scholars. They maintain that only God, the giver of life, has the authority to initiate *herem*.<sup>15</sup> It should be noted, however, that none of these scholars would suggest that *herem* could be an acceptable modern military convention. Rather, each is adamant that *herem* is a thing of the past. It would never be acceptable, nor should it even be contemplated, in the modern world.<sup>16</sup> When asked in an interview if *herem* could be justified via

---

<sup>11</sup> Craigie, *Problem of War*, 97.

<sup>12</sup> Longman, “When God Declares War,” 3. Here Longman is building on the thoughts of Kline, who when writing of the Imprecatory Psalms said, “it is necessary to point out that the welfare of man is not the chief end of man; that we sinful creatures have no inherent rights which our holy Maker must respect; that accordingly, God may, without violating any obligation, take any man’s life at any time and in any way” (*The Structure of Biblical Authority*, 161).

<sup>13</sup> Craigie, *Problem of War*, 60. Kaiser approximates this position in his discussion of the sanctity of life in *Toward Old Testament Ethics*, 90-92.

<sup>14</sup> Craigie, *Problem of War*, 42.

<sup>15</sup> For a similar position see, James Barr, *The Future of Biblical Faith and Natural Theology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 209. See also Ezek 18:3-4.

<sup>16</sup> Kaiser, interview by author, November 19, 2000; Craigie, *Problem of War*, 48-50; Longman, “Should I Go to War?” Cf. Longman, “When God Declares War,” 7; “The Divine Warrior,” 303.

some type of divine direction and applied today, Kaiser replied to this author, “No. It would require direct, divine revelation. Moreover, *herem* is always connected to the land of promise. Without the land, there is no need for *herem*.”<sup>17</sup> Longman holds an equivalent position, “the church as ‘the church’ may not use violent means to further the Kingdom of God.”<sup>18</sup> Moreover, he adds, the holy war passages may not be used by Christians to justify joining the state to go to war.

Jesus explicitly cuts off from the church Holy War activity similar to that of the Israelites. At the moment of crisis, when the soldiers arrested him, Peter according to John 18:11 drew his sword and struck the high priest’s servant. Christ’s response is ‘Put your sword away. Shall I not drink of the cup the father has given me?’ Thus on the basis of this and other passages as well, Jesus turns from the role of Divine Warrior directed toward the unbeliever. His command is not to slay but to convert. (Matt 28:16)<sup>19</sup>

In summary then, Kaiser, Craigie, and Longman share the following strategies for addressing the difficulties associated with *herem*: (1) *herem* should be viewed as a morally responsible wartime convention in the Bible when, and only when, it is initiated and directed by God; (2) the Old Testament mandate for peace should not be neglected when reviewing biblical war narratives; (3) the “narratives of defeat” are essential to understanding the full spectrum of victory and defeat in the biblical story; and (4) as the source and giver of life, God may also take life (or require that it be withdrawn) if necessary. Each strategy is important for an adequate grasp of Old Testament war narratives.

## Strategies Rejected

In addition to strategies shared by Kaiser, Craigie, and Longman, there are other tactics for dealing with *herem* that they unanimously shun. Since they stress the historical credibility of the biblical narratives, there is no hint in any of the three scholars’ work on *herem* of what might be called “spiritualizing”<sup>20</sup> *herem*. By this I mean that they do not ignore the historical nature of the biblical text (“did *herem* really happen?”—a query to which all three scholars reply in the affirmative) and treat this ancient military tactic as if it were only some sort of devotional guide to modern readers (e.g., treat sin as if it were the enemy, “you must totally destroy [*herem*] it”). On the contrary, without denying the spiritual lessons that may be gleaned from the stories of warfare in the Hebrew Bible, each scholar rejects facile spiritualization of the *herem* passages—an allegorical hermeneutic that ignores any historical sense of the text. For example, Craigie

---

<sup>17</sup> Kaiser, interview by author, November 19, 2000.

<sup>18</sup> Longman, “Should I Go to War?”. Cf. *When God Declares War*, 7.

<sup>19</sup> Longman, “The Divine Warrior,” 303. Longman continues his discussion of this passage in Matthew to address Christ’s dual role to convert unbelievers and to wage Holy War against the ultimate enemy, Satan.

<sup>20</sup> “Spiritualizing” and “spiritualization” appear in the writings of all three scholars and thus it is used intentionally here (e.g., Kaiser, *The Old Testament in Contemporary Preaching*, 13; Craigie, *Problem of War*, 10; Longman, “Psalm 98: A Divine Warrior Victory Song, *JETS* 27 [1984]: 269). Commenting on the same topic, Millard C. Lind notes that Craigie “rip[s] off the spiritualization with which many Christians read the war stories of the Old Testament (“States and Swords: Warfare in the Old Testament,” [review of Peter C. Craigie, *Problem of War*], *Sojourners* 9 [1980], 31).

notes that there are some Christians who would “spiritualize” Old Testament stories of war and thereby remove or at least neuter any offensive material. Thus the battle and ultimate victory for those arrayed against Jericho speaks of the victory in store for those who totally commit themselves to the Lord and are willing to enter into the battle against sin. Craigie does not dispute the spiritual implications in such biblical stories, but he does not want to ignore the reality of battle in the story—“the literal slaughter of men *and* women, young *and* old, all in the name of obedience to God.”<sup>21</sup> For Craigie, spiritual application of biblical stories should not come from a historically denuded biblical narrative. Kaiser and Longman hold equivalent positions.<sup>22</sup>

In addition to eschewing “spiritualizing” strategies for addressing the problems of *herem*, all three of the scholars under review do not attempt to ameliorate the offensive aspects of *herem* in the Bible by positing some type of “ancient barbaric military practice” explanation.<sup>23</sup> This too is a tactic some scholars employ for dealing with *herem*. Without denying that the Israelites were indeed operating within a common military convention of their day,<sup>24</sup> they nevertheless do not offer this explanation as a means for excusing what modern readers of the Bible find excessive or offensive in *herem*. The consensus among the scholars in review is that *herem*, as a military practice in ancient Israel, is similar to *herem* as a military practice in the surrounding ancient Near Eastern cultures. Studying those cultures and their military conventions informs modern biblical study, but it does not provide an excuse (e.g., “multiple armies used *herem*”) for what modern readers perceive as the excesses of *herem*.

Kaiser, Craigie, and Longman are also unanimous in rejecting yet another strategy for dealing with *herem*, they eschew any dismissal of the Old Testament as somewhat inferior to the New Testament. Kaiser calls this “Marcionitism,” and will have none of it.

I think the greatest problem is this: Is the God of the Old Testament a different one from the God of the New? . . . Somewhere around AD 114–124, a shipping magnate named Marcion was very influential in the early Christian church. Marcion was one of the first who really took major exception to the Old Testament, and so today, within the church, we speak of all those who have a fear of or objections to the Old Testament as having Marcionite tendencies. Marcion spoke of the God of the Old Testament as being a demiurge—a lesser god—a god who created the world, but certainly one who was different and separate from the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He felt that this strange-acting god of the Old Testament couldn’t possibly be linked with the God of the New Testament. There could be no contradiction between the two. Macron’s teaching forces us to come to terms with this problem of the Old Testament as *the* master problem of theology.

---

<sup>21</sup> Craigie, *Problem of War*, 11. In this regard see Millard C. Lind, “States and Swords: Warfare in the Old Testament,” (review of Peter C. Craigie, *The Problem of War in the Old Testament*), *Sojourners* 9 (1980), 31.

<sup>22</sup> Kaiser, *The Old Testament in Contemporary Preaching*, 13; Longman, “Psalm 98: A Divine Warrior Victory Song,” 267–274. For a different perspective of “spiritualization” see Rodd, 205.

<sup>23</sup> Patrick D. Miller calls this strategy “a useless and embarrassing ‘primitivism’” (“God the Warrior,” *Interpretation* 19 [1965]): 41.

<sup>24</sup> Abraham Malamat, “The Ban in Mari and the Bible,” 40–49; and Philip D. Stern, *The Biblical Herem: A Window on Israel’s Religious Experience*, 67–88.

My response to Marcion is to turn to Scripture itself. In Hebrews 1:1 we learn that God spoke to our forefathers by the prophets many times and in many and various ways. “But in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he has appointed as heir of all things” (1:2). As far as the writer of Hebrews is concerned, it is the same Lord, the same God, who is speaking in both epochs. The God who spoke by the prophets to our forefathers and to those in the Jewish community is the same Lord who spoke to us through his Son.<sup>25</sup>

Craigie and Longman are similarly careful to disallow the rejection of the Old Testament in favor of a “kinder, gentler” New Testament reading devoid of the military excesses of the Old Testament.<sup>26</sup>

Yet another interpretative strategy for dealing with the problems of *herem* evinced by these scholars is the complete rejection of what some have called a “canon within a canon” approach to the Bible.<sup>27</sup> Despite Lyle Eslinger’s suggestion that Peter C. Craigie’s solution to the problem of war in the Bible is “the hazardous road of positing a canon within a canon,”<sup>28</sup> there is no approximation of this position in any of the writings of these scholars, including Craigie. On the contrary, this is precisely why these scholars have chosen to write on warfare in the first place. They do not want to relegate the Old Testament (or some part of it) to a second rate, substandard, testament—a lesser text of a lesser god. For them, the Old Testament (and in this case *herem*) is holy writ, and is as biblical as the New Testament.

Thus Kaiser, Craigie, and Longman are agreed that the following strategies are insufficient to explain the difficulties of *herem*: (1) a-historical spiritualizing, (2) “ancient military practice” explanation, (3) “Marcionese” dismissal of the Old Testament narratives, and (4) a “canon within a canon” reduction of some biblical passages to a secondary status in the Bible.

## Strategies Unique to Each Scholar and Lingering Questions

Beyond hermeneutical strategies that are either shared or rejected by Kaiser, Craigie, and Longman, there are other tactics for addressing *herem* that are unique to each scholar. Walter Kaiser, for example, conceives of his approach to the hermeneutical conundrum of *herem* as standing within the time-honored discipline of answering difficult biblical questions. Hence the titles of his books, *Hard Sayings of the Old Testament* (1988) and *More Hard Sayings of the Old Testament* (1992).<sup>29</sup> He mentions multiple predecessors who for centuries have attempted to resolve biblical difficulties and thus he understands his work to be following in their footsteps. Some of the previous scholars he mentions include: Johannes Thaddaeus and Thomas Man, *The*

---

<sup>25</sup> Kaiser, *The Christian and the “Old” Testament*, 6–7; cf. *Toward Old Testament Ethics*, 32.

<sup>26</sup> Craigie, *Problem of War*, 34; Longman, “When God Declares War,” 1.

<sup>27</sup> “Canon within a canon” may be described as the practice of identifying selected portions of the Bible as substandard and thus less than “authoritative for life and practice” than other passages.

<sup>28</sup> Lyle Eslinger, “Peter C. Craigie,” *Bible Interpreters of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century: A Selection of Evangelical Voices*, 420.

<sup>29</sup> These books were bound together into one volume along with *Hard Sayings of Jesus* (F. F. Bruce, 1983), *Hard Sayings of Paul* (Manfred T. Baruch and Peter H. Davids, 1989), *More Hard Sayings of the New Testament* (Manfred T. Baruch and Peter H. Davids, 1991) in 1996 as *Hard Sayings of the Bible*.

*Reconciler of the Bible Enlarged* [sic] (London, 1662); Oliver St. John Cooper, *Four Hundred Texts of Holy Scripture with their Corresponding Passages Explained* (London, 1791); Samuel Davidson, *Sacred Hermeneutics, Developed and Applied* (Edinburgh, 1843); and John W. Haley, *An Examination of the Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible* (Andover, MS, 1874 [reprinted Whitaker House, 1992]).<sup>30</sup> Four representative questions will serve to illustrate Kaiser’s approach to resolving biblical difficulties in general, and *herem* in particular. (1) “Why does the Bible judge the Amalekites so harshly?” In short, one of the explanations Kaiser adduces is that the Amalekites were the first to attack Israel after they left Egypt, attacking the weak, sick, and elderly at the end of the traveling nascent nation. In an interview Kaiser explained to this author, “as a consequence of this initial encounter between Israel and the Amalekites, every subsequent meeting between the two nations in the Bible is marred by hostility.”<sup>31</sup> (2) “Why bring judgment upon the entire Amalekite nation?” Kaiser maintains that the Bible suggests that everything that belongs to a nation is tainted by sin and is thus under the judgment of God. By way of illustration, Kaiser mentions Eden. “Even the ground was cursed in the Garden of Eden. Was the soil culpable for the actions of the first humans? In similar fashion, entire nations and all that they possess were subject to *herem*.”<sup>32</sup> (3) “What about non-combatants and *herem*?” Kaiser suggests that just as all family members share in the larger benefits and burdens of family life, so members of any given nation similarly share in any national rewards and punishments. Sometimes the reward is good and everyone benefits. At other times, as with *herem*, it is bad and all suffer.<sup>33</sup> (4) “Why not utilize some other means of judgment?” Again Kaiser replied in an interview by saying, “God could have used hurricanes, pestilence, famines, diseases or a host of other ‘natural’ judgments on the Canaanites. In this case, however, he chose to reveal his power directly to both the Canaanites and the Israelites.”<sup>34</sup> In like manner Kaiser responds to dozens of queries in his work. The question and answer format, unique to Kaiser among the scholars reviewed in this study, provides an efficient and effective strategy that offers a sustained and thought-provoking review of his perspective on difficult biblical problems like *herem*.

Peter Craigie’s hermeneutical strategy differs from the others when he hazards a reply to the query, “What can be learned from the Old Testament narratives of war?” He maintains that the war narratives preserved in the Old Testament serve as,

A massive and solemn warning. If war is to be waged at all, it must be done thoroughly. There are no half-measures in war; it is not a game to be played casually. Just because a war may be carried out within the perspectives of religion does not mean that the war will somehow be “nicer” and not quite so horrifying as secular warfare. The theory and practice of war in ancient Israel destroy any illusions that we may have about war being “not all that bad,” a kind of sport played by gentlemen.<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>30</sup> This text cites 42 works from the Reformation and Post-Reformation eras that address the topic of Bible difficulties (437–442 reprint).

<sup>31</sup> Kaiser, interview by author, November 19, 2000.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Kaiser, *Hard Sayings of the Bible*, 207.

<sup>34</sup> Kaiser, interview by author, November 19, 2000. Kaiser never posits a theory to explain why “natural disasters” were used to execute divine judgment elsewhere in the Bible and why *herem* is employed here.

<sup>35</sup> Craigie, *Problem of War*, 53.



For Craigie, the modern world ignores the warnings of the warfare stories in the Hebrew Bible to its own peril.

Craigie is also unique in stressing that the experience of divine interaction within human history can only be expressed in human anthropomorphic terms. This includes the “Divine Warrior” and *herem*. This thought is important for Craigie’s writing on warfare in the Bible. To call God a warrior is to use human terminology to describe a transcendent being. He explains:

To call God a Warrior is to use anthropomorphic language, the language of immanence. Like all human language it is limited and from a theological perspective it points to a truth about God which is greater than the language itself. Thus the conception of God as Warrior contains theological insight, but it points to a truth greater than the words which convey it. We must look further at the words expressing that truth if we are to understand it.<sup>36</sup>

Craigie’s point is that anthropomorphic language only approximates the actions of God; it does not make him a warrior. By discussing the anthropomorphic language of the Bible at this point in his writings, Craigie offers a way out of the dilemma of divine participation in human warfare or even the “divine call to arms” for his readers. What seems to be godly involvement in warfare is rather human attempts to express the role of God in the battle against evil. Craigie maintains that from a human perspective, God is engaged in the military affairs of his people, but ultimately God remains above all human affairs and expression. Longman suspects that Craigie uses “anthropomorphic” in this context “to move away a bit from the violence of *herem*, or soften its impact.”<sup>37</sup> Does Craigie’s “anthropomorphic language argument” provide an adequate means of explaining *herem*? Can God call for and direct battles including those involving *herem* and yet remain untainted by what modern readers consider to be the ultimate in excesses?

Like Kaiser and Craigie, Tremper Longman also offers his own distinctive interpretative strategies for addressing the problems of the warfare passages of the Bible. He is distinct from Kaiser and Craigie when he traces the development of the “Divine Warrior” motif (a prominent Old Testament theme) into the New Testament as well.<sup>38</sup> He pursues a five-step development of this theme:<sup>39</sup>

- (1) God Fights for Israel: God appears as a warrior fighting on behalf of Israel against her flesh-and-blood enemies.
- (2) God Fights Against Israel: God fights against his people who have violated the stipulations of the covenant.
- (3) Hope for the Future: the prophetic proclamation of a coming divine warrior.
- (4) Jesus Christ—the Divine Warrior: Christ’s earthly ministry as the work of a conqueror.

---

<sup>36</sup> Craigie, *Problem of War*, 40–41.

<sup>37</sup> Interview by author, November 18, 2001.

<sup>38</sup> Longman and Reid, *God Is a Warrior*, 17; “The Divine Warrior,” 291; “Evangelicals and the Comparative Method,” 34. Although Reid was responsible for the New Testament portion of *God Is a Warrior*, Longman nevertheless dedicates a substantial portion of his work in this book to explaining how Old Testament motifs and images cross-over into the New Testament.

<sup>39</sup> Longman and Reid, *God Is a Warrior*, 17. Cf. Dan B. Allender and Tremper Longman, III, *Bold Love*, (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress Publishing Group, 1992), 111–133.

- (5) The Coming Day of Christ: the church's expectation of a divine warrior who will judge the spiritual and human enemies of God.

Kaiser and Craigie are not unaware of the New Testament significance of this Old Testament motif, but it is Longman who develops it fully in his writings. In so doing, Longman documents the inter-connectedness of the Testaments and deals a death blow to any lingering Marcionese reading of the Old Testament.

In addition to highlighting the "Divine Warrior" motif in both Testaments, following the lead of Meredith Kline, Longman suggests another interpretative tactic for understanding *herem*. Longman maintains that *herem* acts as a preview of what may be considered the ultimate divine judgment at the end of the age; a foreshadowing of final judgment. Longman explains, *herem* is "an intrusion of consummation ethics [or 'final judgment' ethics] back into the period of common grace."<sup>40</sup> Thus the divine judgment represented by *herem* bulges proleptically from the end of time back into earlier periods of history. Longman calls *herem* "a temporal judgment against a wicked nation, in essence becoming a mini-preview of the horrors that await the unbeliever" at the end of the age.<sup>41</sup> When asked in an interview with this author if the concept of "Consummation Ethics" made *herem* easier to accept, Longman replied in the affirmative, saying,

It hooks *herem* into the holiness of God and ultimate judgment, and it reminds us that this isn't an arbitrary thing. Remember Genesis 15:16, "In the fourth generation your descendants will come back here, for the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure?" God knew that these people were wicked and that the time would come when great judgment would be brought against them as a people.<sup>42</sup>

With "consummation ethics" Longman moves the discussion of *herem* to another plane. It is one thing to say that *herem* is moral because God has initiated and directed it (see above under, "Strategies They Share"). It is another thing altogether to explain why it is moral. Is it plausible that God would bring an "end-time-type" judgment into an earlier time period?

In addition to hermeneutical strategies that are unique to each of the scholars in question, Kaiser, Craigie, and Longman also have at least one strategy for explaining *herem* where they disagree, that is, on the issue of "Holy War." Can Old Testament warfare in general, and *herem* in particular, be holy as some scholars suggest? It is more than an issue of nomenclature (e.g., "Holy War," "YHWH War," or "Wars of the LORD"). For Peter Craigie, war is always and everywhere evil and could never be considered as something "holy." Evil can not be good.

Did God's command and God's presence transform something essentially evil into a holy act? Can the ruthless requirement for the extermination of the enemy—men, women, and children—in any way be regarded as holy? I think that it can not!<sup>43</sup>

Kaiser reflects a similar sentiment in *Toward Old Testament Ethics*.

---

<sup>40</sup> Longman, "Should I Go to War?" (cf. interview by author, November 18, 2001).

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Interview by author, November 18, 2001.

<sup>43</sup> Craigie, *Problem of War*, 48–49, 53–54.

It must be said forthrightly that God is never the author of evil or involved in what is unethical: he remains the “Holy One of Israel.” The ethics of war in the Old Testament are never approved in a blanket manner, for many wars and methods of carrying them out receive the stern rebuke and threat of punishment from God because of their violent disregard for the all-seeing eye of God even in warfare (cf. Isa 10:15–19 and Hab 2:6–19). [For example,] Amos strongly protested and firmly denounced a ruthless, pitiless, scorched earth policy in warfare (Amos 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 13, 2:1).

For Longman, however, military engagement at God’s behest is a holy event. It is portrayed as an act of worship. He cites several issues about ancient Israelite warfare in support of his position, including (1) preparation before war (e.g., including seeking God’s will, certain spiritual preparation, and ritual cleanness in the war camp); (2) behavior during war (e.g., including numbers and weapons technology, the battle march—at times with the Ark of the Covenant, and the combatants); and (3) actions after the war (e.g., praise for victory and plunder for the victors). In this regard Longman echoes the positions of early modern era biblical scholars (e.g., Wellhausen, Schwally, and von Rad) and approximates Susan Niditch’s “The Ban as God’s Portion” when he suggests that war can actually be holy and that *herem* may be something of a sacrifice.<sup>44</sup> Is it correct to consider, along with von Rad, Niditch, Longman, and others that war can be “holy?” Or does von Rad’s “holy war” nomenclature warrant nuancing? Is *herem* worship? Following Gottwald’s lead, Longman notes that that “there apparently was not a cultic or ritual pattern followed each time holy war was waged.”<sup>45</sup> He adds that it is difficult to determine whether the differences in war narratives are “a variation of practice that evolved over time,” or “a function of the selectivity of biblical history writing.”<sup>46</sup> He suspects that both may be involved. If there is no perceptible pattern, is it worship?<sup>47</sup> Did ancient Israel distinguish between the so-called “holy war” and non-holy war?<sup>48</sup> If there were such a distinction, when did one apply rather than the other; when was one battle a holy war and another a profane war?

Although clearly sharing a common interpretative tradition,<sup>49</sup> this study has shown that each scholar represents a distinctive way of negotiating the simultaneous demands of historical criticism and contemporary evangelical theology. Moreover, it demonstrates that there is no one, monolithic evangelical approach to interpreting this problematic military convention, but rather, the work of Kaiser, Craigie, and Longman indicates that there is a multiplicity of approaches to resolving perplexing biblical passages within evangelical Old Testament scholarship.

Kaiser, Craigie, and Longman have attempted to make some sense out of what seems senseless to modern readers. This is a daunting task at best. In the end, Job’s admission of ignorance at the Lord’s response to him from the storm seems apt:

---

<sup>44</sup> Longman, *God Is a Warrior*, 47. Cf. Niditch, 28–55.

<sup>45</sup> Longman, “The Divine Warrior,” 292.8. Here Longman builds upon Gottwald’s remarks in “Holy War,” *IDBSup*, 942–44, especially “Conduct of holy war: Uniformity of practice,” 942.

<sup>46</sup> Longman and Reid, *God Is a Warrior*, 47.

<sup>47</sup> Robert P. Carroll, “War,” 156.

<sup>48</sup> In this regard, see John Howard Yoder, “‘To Your Tents, O Israel:’ The Legacy of Israel’s Experience of Holy War,” *SR* 18 (1989): 348.10.

<sup>49</sup> On this matter, the writings of Gerald Bray, *Biblical Interpretation: Past & Present*, Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996, 539; and Osborne, “Evangelical Biblical Interpretation,” 357, are informative.

<sup>3</sup> Then Job answered the LORD:  
<sup>4</sup> “I am unworthy—how can I reply to you?  
I put my hand over my mouth.  
<sup>5</sup> I spoke once, but I have no answer—  
twice, but I will say no more. (Job 40:3–5)

It has been said that scholarship is as much about the questions it raises as the answers it supplies. In cases where answers are not readily forthcoming, as with *herem*, there is no substitute for time; time for learned inquiry and discussion; time for reflection and re-evaluation.

## APPENDIX A

### ***HEREM* IN DEUTERONOMY**

(References to *herem* in the following verses are indicated in bold. Italics are original to the specific translation.)

#### **Deuteronomy 2:34**

וּנְלָכְדוּ אֶת־כָּל־עָרָיו בְּעֵת הַהוּא וַיַּחַרְם אֶת־כָּל־עִיר מֵתָם  
וְהַנָּשִׁים וְהַטָּף לֹא הִשְׁאֲרָנוּ שְׂרִיד:

<b>KJV</b> <sup>1</sup>	And we took all his cities at that time, and <b>utterly destroyed</b> the men, and the women, and the little ones, of every city, we left none to remain
<b>NIV</b> <sup>2</sup>	At that time we took all his towns and <b>completely destroyed</b> them—men, women and children. We left no survivors.
<b>NASB</b> <sup>3</sup>	So we captured all his cities at that time and <b>utterly destroyed</b> the men, women and children of every city. We left no survivor.
<b>NRS</b> <sup>4</sup>	At that time we captured all his towns, and in each town we <b>utterly destroyed</b> men, women, and children. We left not a single survivor.
<b>NJB</b> <sup>5</sup>	We captured all his towns and <b>laid</b> all these towns <b>under the curse of destruction</b> : men, women and children, we left no survivors.
<b>JPS</b> <sup>6</sup>	At that time we captured all his towns, and we <b>doomed</b> every town—men, women, and children—leaving no survivor.

---

<sup>1</sup> King James Version (1611, 1769).

<sup>2</sup> New International Version (1984).

<sup>3</sup> New American Standard Bible (1995).

<sup>4</sup> New Revised Standard Version (1989).

<sup>5</sup> New Jerusalem Bible (1985).

<sup>6</sup> Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures. Jewish Publication Society (1985).

### Deuteronomy 3:6

וַנַּחֲרֵם אוֹתָם כַּאֲשֶׁר עָשִׂינוּ לְסִיחֹן מֶלֶךְ חֶשְׁבוֹן הַחָרֵם כָּל-עִיר  
מֵתָם הַנָּשִׁים וְהַטָּף:

<b>KJV</b>	And we <b>utterly destroyed</b> them, as we did unto Sihon king of Heshbon, <b>utterly destroying</b> the men, women, and children, of every city.
<b>NIV</b>	We <b>completely destroyed</b> them, as we had done with Sihon king of Heshbon, <b>destroying</b> every city—men, women and children.
<b>NASB</b>	We <b>utterly destroyed</b> them, as we did to Sihon king of Heshbon, <b>utterly destroying</b> the men, women and children of every city.
<b>NRS</b>	And we <b>utterly destroyed</b> them, as we had done to King Sihon of Heshbon, in each city <b>utterly destroying</b> men, women, and children.
<b>NJB</b>	We <b>laid</b> them <b>under the curse of destruction</b> as we had done Sihon king of Heshbon, <b>laying</b> all these towns <b>under the curse of destruction</b> : men, women and children
<b>JPS</b>	We <b>doomed</b> them as we had done in the case of King Sihon of Heshbon; we <b>doomed</b> every town—men, women, and children.

### Deuteronomy 7:2

וַיִּנְתְּנֶם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְפָנַיִךְ וְהִפִּיתֶם הַחָרֵם תַּחְרִים אֹתָם  
לֹא-תִכְרַת לָהֶם בְּרִית וְלֹא תַחֲנָם:

<b>KJV</b>	And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, <i>and</i> <b>utterly destroy</b> them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them.
<b>NIV</b>	And when the LORD your God has delivered them over to you and you have defeated them, then you must <b>destroy them totally</b> . Make no treaty with them, and show them no mercy.
<b>NASB</b>	And when the LORD your God delivers them before you and you defeat them, then you shall <b>utterly destroy</b> them. You shall make no covenant with them and show no favor to them.
<b>NRS</b>	And when the LORD your God gives them over to you and you defeat them, then you must <b>utterly destroy</b> them. Make no covenant with them and show them no mercy.
<b>NJB</b>	Yahweh your God will put them at your mercy and you will conquer them. You must <b>put</b> them <b>under the curse of destruction</b> . You must not make any treaty with them or show them any pity.
<b>JPS</b>	And the LORD your God delivers them to you and you defeat them, you must <b>doom</b> them <b>to destruction</b> : grant them no terms and give them no quarter.

## Deuteronomy 7:26

וְלֹא־תָבִיא תוֹעֵבָה אֶל־בֵּיתְךָ וְהָיִיתָ חֲרָם כְּמַהוּ שֶׁקֶץ תִּשְׁקָצְנוּ  
וְתַעֲב תִּתְעַבְנוּ כִּי־חֲרָם הוּא:

<b>KJV</b>	Neither shalt thou bring an abomination into thine house, lest thou <b>be a cursed thing</b> like it: <i>but</i> thou shalt utterly detest it, and thou shalt utterly abhor it; for it <i>is</i> <b>a cursed thing</b> .
<b>NIV</b>	Do not bring a detestable thing into your house or you, like it, will <b>be set apart for destruction</b> . Utterly abhor and detest it, for it is <b>set apart for destruction</b> .
<b>NASB</b>	You shall not bring an abomination into your house, and like it <b>come under the ban</b> ; you shall utterly detest it and you shall utterly abhor it, for it is <b>something banned</b> .
<b>NRS</b>	Do not bring an abhorrent thing into your house, or you will be <b>set apart for destruction</b> like it. You must utterly detest and abhor it, for it is <b>set apart for destruction</b> .
<b>NJB</b>	You must not bring any detestable thing into your house: or you, like it, will <b>come under the curse of destruction</b> . You must regard them as unclean and loathsome, for they are <b>under the curse of destruction</b> .
<b>JPS</b>	You must not bring an abhorrent thing into your house, or you will be <b>proscribed</b> like it; you must reject it as abominable and abhorrent, for it is <b>proscribed</b> .

## Deuteronomy 13:15, 17

<sup>16</sup> הִכָּה תִּכֶּה אֶת־יֹשְׁבֵי הָעִיר הַהוּא לְפִי־חֶרֶב  
 הַחֶרֶם אֹתָהּ וְאֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־בָּהּ וְאֶת־בְּהֵמָתָהּ לְפִי־חֶרֶב:  
<sup>18</sup> וְלֹא־יִדְבֹק בְּיָדְךָ מֵאוֹמָה מִן־הַחֶרֶם לְמַעַן יָשׁוּב יְהוָה  
 מִחֶרֶן אָפוֹ וְנִתְּן־לְךָ רַחֲמִים וְרַחֲמֶךָ וְהִרְבֶּךָ כַּאֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַע לְאַבְתָּיִךְ:

<b>KJV</b>	<sup>15</sup> Thou shalt surely smite the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, <b>destroying it utterly</b> , and all that <i>is</i> therein, and the cattle thereof, with the edge of the sword. . . . <sup>17</sup> And there shall cleave nought of <b>the cursed thing</b> to thine hand: that the LORD may turn from the fierceness of his anger, and shew thee mercy, and have compassion upon thee, and multiply thee, as he hath sworn unto thy fathers.
<b>NIV</b>	<sup>15</sup> You must certainly put to the sword all who live in that town. <b>Destroy it completely</b> , both its people and its livestock. . . . <sup>17</sup> None of those <b>condemned things</b> shall be found in your hands, so that the LORD will turn from his fierce anger; he will show you mercy, have compassion on you, and increase your numbers, as he promised on oath to your forefathers.
<b>NASB</b>	<sup>15</sup> You shall surely strike the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, <b>utterly destroying</b> it and all that is in it and its cattle with the edge of the sword. . . . <sup>17</sup> Nothing from that which is <b>put under the ban</b> shall cling to your hand, in order that the LORD may turn from His burning anger and show mercy to you, and have compassion on you and make you increase, just as He has sworn to your fathers.
<b>NRS</b>	<sup>15</sup> You shall put the inhabitants of that town to the sword, <b>utterly destroying</b> it and everything in it—even putting its livestock to the sword. . . . <sup>17</sup> Do not let anything <b>devoted to destruction</b> stick to your hand, so that the LORD may turn from his fierce anger and show you compassion, and in his compassion multiply you, as he swore to your ancestors.
<b>NJB</b>	<sup>16</sup> You must put the inhabitants of that town to the sword; you must <b>lay it under the curse of destruction</b> —the town and everything in it. . . . <sup>18</sup> From what is thus put <b>under the curse of destruction</b> you must keep nothing back, so that Yahweh may turn from the ferocity of his anger and show you mercy, and have pity on you and increase your numbers, as he swore he would to your ancestors. <sup>7</sup>
<b>JPS</b>	<sup>16</sup> Put the inhabitants of that town to the sword and put its cattle to the sword. <b>Doom</b> it and all that is in it <b>to destruction</b> . . . . <sup>18</sup> Let nothing that has been <b>doomed</b> stick to your hand, in order that the LORD may turn from His blazing anger and show you compassion, and in his compassion increase you as He promised your forefathers on oath.

<sup>7</sup> The NJB follows the Hebrew Bible verse numbers.



## Deuteronomy 20:17

כִּי־הִחָרֵם תִּחְרַיִם הַחִתִּי וְהָאֱמֹרִי הַכְּנַעֲנִי וְהַפְּרִזִּי תַחֲוֵי וְהַיְבוּסִי  
כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ:

<b>KJV</b>	But thou shalt <b>utterly destroy</b> them; <i>namely</i> , the Hittites, and the Amorites, the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee.
<b>NIV</b>	<b>Completely destroy</b> them—he Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites—as the LORD your God has commanded you.
<b>NASB</b>	But you shall <b>utterly destroy</b> them, the Hittite and the Amorite, the Canaanite and the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite, as the LORD your God has commanded you.
<b>NRS</b>	You shall <b>annihilate</b> them—he Hittites and the Amorites, the Canaanites and the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites—just as the LORD your God has commanded.
<b>NJB</b>	Instead, you must <b>lay</b> them <b>under the curse of destruction</b> : Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites, as Yahweh your God has commanded.
<b>JPS</b>	No, you must <b>proscribe</b> them—the Hittites and the Amorites, the Canaanites and the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites—as the LORD your God has commanded you.

## APPENDIX B

### ***HEREM* IN THE HEBREW BIBLE<sup>1</sup>**

#### **Verbal *Herem*<sup>2</sup>**

Exod 22:20	Whoever sacrifices to any god other than the LORD must be destroyed.
Lev 27:28–29	<sup>28</sup> Nothing that a man owns and devotes to the LORD—whether man or animal or family land—may be sold or redeemed; everything so devoted is most holy to the LORD. <sup>29</sup> No person devoted to destruction may be ransomed; he must be put to death.
Num 21:2	<sup>2</sup> Then Israel made this vow to the LORD: “If you will deliver these people into our hands, we will totally destroy their cities.” <sup>3</sup> The Lord listened to Israel's plea and gave the Canaanites over to them. They completely destroyed them and their towns; so the place was named Hormah.
Deut 2:34	At that time we took all his towns and completely destroyed them—men, women and children. We left no survivors.
3:6	We completely destroyed them, as we had done with Sihon king of Heshbon, destroying every city—men, women and children.
7:2	And when the LORD your God has delivered them over to you and you have defeated them, then you must destroy them totally. Make no treaty with them, and show them no mercy.
13:15 [H 16]	You must certainly put to the sword all who live in that town. Destroy it completely, both its people and its livestock.

---

<sup>1</sup> The appearance of *herem* in the Old Testament is listed chronologically according to the chapter arrangement of the NIV listing first verbal and then nominal usage. All translations are from the NIV in accordance with the rest of the dissertation (see “Introduction,” footnote 1).

<sup>2</sup> The verbal *herem* also appears with a different nuance in Lev 21:18, “No man who has any defect may come near: no man who is blind or lame, *disfigured* or deformed” (italics mine). BDB reads this passage as, “a man blind or lame or mutilated in the face, or too long in a limb” (356–57).

Josh 2:10	We have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to Sihon and Og, the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan, whom you completely destroyed.
6:18	But keep away from the devoted things, so that you will not bring about your own destruction by taking any of them. Otherwise you will make the camp of Israel liable to destruction and bring trouble on it.
Josh 6:21	They devoted the city to the LORD and destroyed with the sword every living thing in it—men and women, young and old, cattle, sheep and donkeys.
8:26	For Joshua did not draw back the hand that held out his javelin until he had destroyed all who lived in Ai.
10:1	Now Adoni-Zedek king of Jerusalem heard that Joshua had taken Ai and totally destroyed it, doing to Ai and its king as he had done to Jericho and its king, and that the people of Gibeon had made a treaty of peace with Israel and were living near them.
10:28	That day Joshua took Makkedah. He put the city and its king to the sword and totally destroyed everyone in it. He left no survivors. And he did to the king of Makkedah as he had done to the king of Jericho.
10:35, 37	<sup>35</sup> They captured it that same day and put it to the sword and totally destroyed everyone in it, just as they had done to Lachish. . . . <sup>37</sup> They took the city and put it to the sword, together with its king, its villages and everyone in it. They left no survivors. Just as at Eglon, they totally destroyed it and everyone in it.
10:39–40	<sup>39</sup> They took the city, its king and its villages, and put them to the sword. Everyone in it they totally destroyed. They left no survivors. They did to Debir and its king as they had done to Libnah and its king and to Hebron. <sup>40</sup> So Joshua subdued the whole region, including the hill country, the Negev, the western foothills and the mountain slopes, together with all their kings. He left no survivors. He totally destroyed all who breathed, just as the LORD, the God of Israel, had commanded.
11:11–12	<sup>11</sup> Everyone in it they put to the sword. They totally destroyed them, not sparing anything that breathed, and he burned up Hazor itself. <sup>12</sup> Joshua took all these royal cities and their kings and put them to the sword. He totally destroyed them, as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded.

11:20–21	<sup>20</sup> For it was the LORD himself who hardened their hearts to wage war against Israel, so that he might destroy them totally, exterminating them without mercy, as the LORD had commanded Moses. <sup>21</sup> At that time Joshua went and destroyed the Anakites from the hill country: from Hebron, Debir and Anab, from all the hill country of Judah, and from all the hill country of Israel. Joshua totally destroyed them and their towns.
Judg 1:17	Then the men of Judah went with the Simeonites their brothers and attacked the Canaanites living in Zephath, and they totally destroyed the city. Therefore it was called Hormah.
21:11	“This is what you are to do,” they said. “Kill every male and every woman who is not a virgin.”
1 Sam 15:3	Now go, attack the Amalekites and totally destroy everything that belongs to them. Do not spare them; put to death men and women, children and infants, cattle and sheep, camels and donkeys.
15:8–9	<sup>8</sup> He took Agag king of the Amalekites alive, and all his people he totally destroyed with the sword. <sup>9</sup> But Saul and the army spared Agag and the best of the sheep and cattle, the fat calves and lambs—everything that was good. These they were unwilling to destroy completely, but everything that was despised and weak they totally destroyed.
15:15	The soldiers brought them from the Amalekites; they spared the best of the sheep and cattle to sacrifice to the LORD your God, but we totally destroyed the rest.
15:18	And he sent you on a mission, saying, “Go and completely destroy those wicked people, the Amalekites; make war on them until you have wiped them out.”
15:20	“But I did obey the LORD,” Saul said. “I went on the mission the LORD assigned me. I completely destroyed the Amalekites and brought back Agag their king.”
1 Kgs 9:21	Their descendants remaining in the land, whom the Israelites could not exterminate—these Solomon conscripted for his slave labor force, as it is to this day.
2 Kgs 19:11	Surely you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all the countries, destroying them completely. And will you be delivered?
1 Chr 4:41	The men whose names were listed came in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah. They attacked the Hamites in their dwellings and also the Meunites who were there and completely destroyed them, as is evident to this day. Then they settled in their place, because there was pasture for their flocks.
2 Chr 20:23	The men of Ammon and Moab rose up against the men from Mount Seir to destroy and annihilate them. After they finished

	slaughtering the men from Seir, they helped to destroy one another.
32:14	But Manasseh led Judah and the people of Jerusalem astray, so that they did more evil than the nations the LORD had destroyed before the Israelites.
Ezra 10:8	Anyone who failed to appear within three days would forfeit all his property, in accordance with the decision of the officials and elders, and would himself be expelled from the assembly of the exiles.
Isa 11:15	The LORD will dry up the gulf of the Egyptian sea; with a scorching wind he will sweep his hand over the Euphrates River. He will break it up into seven streams so that men can cross over in sandals.
34:2	The LORD is angry with all nations; his wrath is upon all their armies. He will totally destroy them, he will give them over to slaughter.
37:11	Surely you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all the countries, destroying them completely. And will you be delivered?
Jer 25:9	“I will summon all the peoples of the north and my servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon,” declares the LORD, “and I will bring them against this land and its inhabitants and against all the surrounding nations. I will completely destroy them and make them an object of horror and scorn, and an everlasting ruin.”
50:21	“Attack the land of Merathaim and those who live in Pekod. Pursue, kill and completely destroy them” [the Babylonians], declares the LORD. “Do everything I have commanded you.”
50:26	Come against her from afar. Break open her granaries; pile her up like heaps of grain. Completely destroy her [Babylon] and leave her no remnant.
51:3	Let not the archer string his bow, nor let him put on his armor. Do not spare her [Babylon] young men; completely destroy her army.
Dan 11:44	But reports from the east and the north will alarm him, and he will set out in a great rage to destroy and annihilate many.
Mic 4:13	Rise and thresh, O Daughter of Zion, for I will give you horns of iron; I will give you hoofs of bronze and you will break to pieces many nations. You will devote their ill-gotten gains to the LORD, their wealth to the Lord of all the earth.

### Nominal *Herem*<sup>3</sup>

Lev 27:21	When the field is released in the Jubilee, it will become holy, like a field devoted to the LORD; it will become the property of the priests.
27:28–29	<sup>28</sup> But nothing that a man owns and devotes to the LORD—whether man or animal or family land—may be sold or redeemed; everything so devoted is most holy to the LORD. <sup>29</sup> No person devoted to destruction may be ransomed; he must be put to death.
Num 18:14	Everything in Israel that is devoted to the LORD is yours [priests and Levites].
Deut 7:26	Do not bring a detestable thing into your house or you, like it, will be set apart for destruction. Utterly abhor and detest it, for it is set apart for destruction.
13:17	None of those condemned things shall be found in your hands, so that the LORD will turn from his fierce anger; he will show you mercy, have compassion on you, and increase your numbers, as he promised on oath to your forefathers.
Josh 6:17–18	<sup>17</sup> The city and all that is in it are to be devoted to the LORD. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall be spared, because she hid the spies we sent. <sup>18</sup> But keep away from the devoted things, so that you will not bring about your own destruction by taking any of them. Otherwise you will make the camp of Israel liable to destruction and bring trouble on it.
7:1	But the Israelites acted unfaithfully in regard to the devoted things; Achan son of Carmi, the son of Zimri, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took some of them. So the LORD's anger burned against Israel.
7:11	11 Israel has sinned; they have violated my covenant, which I commanded them to keep. They have taken some of the devoted things; they have stolen, they have lied, they have put them with their own possessions. 12 That is why the Israelites cannot stand against their enemies; they turn their backs and run because they have been made liable to destruction. I will not be with you anymore unless you destroy whatever among you is devoted to destruction.

<sup>3</sup> In a few passages, the nominal *herem* is translated as “net” (e.g., a hunter’s or fisherman’s net; BDB 357). See Eccl 7:26; Ezek 26:5, 14; 32:3; 47:10; Mic 7:2; and Hab 1:15, 16, 17. These references are not included in this Appendix.

7:13, 15	<sup>13</sup> “Go, consecrate the people. Tell them, ‘Consecrate yourselves in preparation for tomorrow; for this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: That which is devoted is among you, O Israel. You cannot stand against your enemies until you remove it. . . . <sup>15</sup> He who is caught with the devoted things shall be destroyed by fire, along with all that belongs to him. He has violated the covenant of the LORD and has done a disgraceful thing in Israel!’”
22:20	When Achan son of Zerah acted unfaithfully regarding the devoted things, did not wrath come upon the whole community of Israel? He was not the only one who died for his sin.
1 Sam 15:21	The soldiers took sheep and cattle from the plunder, the best of what was devoted to God, in order to sacrifice them to the LORD your God at Gilgal.
1 Kgs 20:42	He said to the king, “This is what the LORD says: ‘You have set free a man I had determined should die. Therefore it is your life for his life, your people for his people.’”
1 Chr 2:7	The son of Carmi: Achar, who brought trouble on Israel by violating the ban on taking devoted things.
Isa 34:5	My sword has drunk its fill in the heavens; see, it descends in judgment on Edom, the people I have totally destroyed.
43:28	So I will disgrace the dignitaries of your temple, and I will consign Jacob to destruction and Israel to scorn.
Ezek 44:29	They will eat the grain offerings, the sin offerings and the guilt offerings; and everything in Israel devoted to the LORD will belong to them.
Zech 14:11	It will be inhabited; never again will it be destroyed. Jerusalem will be secure
Mal 4:6 [H 3:24]	He [Elijah] will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse.

## APPENDIX C

### ***HEREM* IN THE LXX AND DEUTERONOMY**

The Septuagint translates Hebrew root **חרם** in Deuteronomy variously, including:<sup>1</sup>

- (1) εἰς ἀφανισμόν (2:34; 3:6 [2x]; cf. Exod 22:20 [H 19])
- (2) ἀνάθεμα; ἀνάθεμα τι; ἀνάθεμα τι εἶπε (7:26; 13:15; 20:17)
- (3) ἀφανισμῶς ἀφανισμῶν (7:2)

Deuteronomy 2:34 and 3:6 have εἰς ἀφανισμόν "to root out" or "destroy" for *herem*. The verb is modified in 2:34 with "every city in succession." Thus it reads, "we utterly destroyed every city in succession," and following the Hebrew, "we left no survivors," it concludes, "we did not leave any to remain alive." (It should be noted that Aquilla translates *herem* as ἀνάθεμα τι ἀφανισμόν "we anathematized" both here and in 3:6.) Do the multiple words used for translating **חרם** indicate some discomfort with the word or do they indicate that early translators struggled with the precise word that would convey what they conceived to be the true nuance of *herem*? Or is the variation simply due to semantic range of meaning? It is difficult to tell.

The phrase **החרם תחרים** in 7:2 is translated by ἀφανισμῶς ἀφανισμῶν in the LXX meaning "to render unseen" and thus in this context, "obliterate."<sup>2</sup> J. W. Wevers translates the Greek phrase as, "you must thoroughly wipe out,"<sup>3</sup> and Weinfeld likewise translates it, "you shall utterly destroy them."<sup>4</sup> The Greek rendition of the Hebrew is most unusual. It only occurs twice elsewhere as a rendering of **חרם** (Jer. 27:21; 28:3). In view of the following phrases in the Hebrew Bible (maintained in the LXX), "make no treaty with them," and "show them no mercy," the Septuagint's selection of words to translate the Hebrew certainly highlights the idea of separation, i.e., keeping the people separate from association with the non-Israelites as much as possible.

---

<sup>1</sup> εἰς ἀφανισμόν is the common translation of **חרם** outside the Pentateuch (8 times in Job and 7 times in 1 Kings) where the connotation of "extermination by ban" is often ignored. Moreover, ἀνάθεμα τι ζω occurs in the Pentateuch outside Deuteronomy 13 and 20 only twice in Numbers 21:2 and 3 as a rendition of **חרם** (Wevers 46).

<sup>2</sup> John William Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Deuteronomy*, (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 128.

<sup>3</sup> Wevers, 129.

<sup>4</sup> Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1-11*, 359.



In contrast to 7:2, 7:26 uses a different word for *herem*, namely, a *ḥa qema* "what is set up" as a votive offering in the temple.<sup>5</sup> Verse 26 maintains that one should not bring an abominable thing (*bdeʿuga*) into one's home lest that person become a *ḥa qema* like the abominable thing. Wevers mentions that the Greek term means "something devoted to deity," and that in the LXX it is a calque<sup>6</sup> for *חרם* (its unique equivalent, used only to translate it and nothing else).<sup>7</sup> The LXX then continues in a rather close reading of the strong words of the Hebrew Bible, "Utterly abhor and detest it, for it is set apart for destruction." Such a thing should never be brought near one's residence.

*Herem* appears again in Deuteronomy 13:15 [H 16] and 17 [H 18]. Like 7:26, verse 15 is translated with words derived from a *ḥa qema*: a *ḥa qema ti a ḥa qema ti ei ʿe*. This phrase follows the Hebrew Bible in using the second person, "you must totally destroy," but whereas the Hebrew Bible simply has the singular imperative *החרם*, the LXX not only changes the imperative to a plural, it also adds a dative cognate noun before it. It thus reads, "with an anathema, anathematize it [the city]."<sup>8</sup> It is impossible to know just why the LXX changed the singular to a plural and added the additional cognate, especially when the following verbs in verse 16 are all singular (e.g., gather, burn, etc.). Verse 17 simply has a *ḥa qema toʿ* for *herem*.

The final appearance of *herem* in Deuteronomy is in 20:17 and is translated by the LXX as a *ḥa qema ti a ḥa qema ti ei ʿe*. Wevers translates the LXX phrase, "you shall actually anathematize them."<sup>9</sup> It is difficult to tell whether this is a significant alteration of the Hebrew text.

This brief review of *herem* in Deuteronomy of the LXX has shown that the various translations of the Hebrew term derive either from a wide semantic range of meaning (and thus translators had several options from which to choose), or were utilized as a device for the intensification or elaboration of a passage in the Hebrew Bible. In either case, clarification for Greek readers of the Bible seems to be the motivating factor behind the translations. The translators of the LXX readily translate the Hebrew text without attempting to "soften" the impact of *herem* on their readers. They could have easily ignored it or ameliorated their translation for their Alexandrian audience. With regard to *herem* in Deuteronomy, however, there is no indication that this was their goal. Did the ancient translators sense that the issue at

---

<sup>5</sup> a *ḥa qema*, "what is placed" or "set up" as a votive offering is set up in the temple (Liddell and Scott 104-05). Lohfink translates a *ḥa qema* as "a votive offering placed in the temple" (182).

<sup>6</sup> A "calque" is a word in one language that is given (or adopts) the meaning of another word in a different language. Here Wevers holds that a *ḥa qema* has assumed the meaning *חרם* in the LXX.

<sup>7</sup> Wevers, 143.

<sup>8</sup> Wevers, 236.

<sup>9</sup> Wevers, 329.

hand for ancient Israel in these passages was national security and that the continued vitality of the people could be at risk? It is difficult to be certain about such things, but it is clear that the translators of the LXX chose vocabulary that they deemed appropriate to convey to their readers what they understood as the utter non-negotiability of *herem*—“you must totally destroy them.”

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Books and Articles by Walter C. Kaiser, Jr.

Kaiser, Walter C., Jr. *The Old Testament Documents: Are they Reliable & Relevant?* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Mission in the Old Testament: Israel as a Light to the Nations*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Christian and the "Old" Testament*. Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library Publishers, 1998.

\_\_\_\_\_. *A History of Israel: From the Bronze Age Through the Jewish Wars*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1998.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Messiah in the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Biblical Theology of the Old Testament." *Foundation for Biblical Interpretation*. David S. Dockery, Kenneth A. Matthews, and Robert R. Sloan, eds. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Leviticus." Vol. 1 in *The New Interpreter's Bible*. Leander C. Keck, ed., et al. 12 vols. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994.

\_\_\_\_\_. *More Hard Sayings of the Old Testament*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Doctrine of Scripture and the Autographa." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, Northwest Region, March 16, 1991.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Exodus*. Vol. 2 in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*. Frank E. Gaebelin, ed., et al. 12 vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990. [Kaiser also served as an Old Testament Consulting Editor for the *EBC*.]

\_\_\_\_\_. *Back to the Future: Hints for Interpreting Biblical Prophecy*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1989.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Hard Sayings of the Old Testament*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988.

- \_\_\_\_\_. "Old Testament Theology." *New Dictionary of Theology*. Sinclair B. Ferguson and David F. Wright, eds. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Toward Rediscovering the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Uses of the Old Testament in the New*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1985.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Toward Old Testament Ethics*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Toward an Exegetical Theology: Biblical Exegesis for Teaching and Preaching*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981, 1998.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Ecclesiastes: Total Life*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1979.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Theology of the Old Testament." Pages 285–305 in "Introductory Articles." Edited by Frank E. Gaebelein, et al. Vol. 1 in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Toward an Old Testament Theology*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978, 1991. [Translated into Japanese, 1983.]
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Wisdom Theology and the Centre of Old Testament Theology." *Evangelical Quarterly* 50 (1978): 132–46.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Centre of Old Testament Theology: The Promise." *Themelios*, 10, (1974), 1–10.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Old Testament in Contemporary Preaching*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1973.
- Kaiser, Walter C., Jr., ed. *Classical Evangelical Essays in Old Testament Interpretation*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1972.
- Bahnsen, Greg L., Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., and Douglas Moo, eds. *Counterpoint: Five Views of Law and Gospel*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996.
- Gaebelein, Frank E., ed. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*. 12 vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976–1992. [Kaiser served as an Old Testament Consulting Editor for the *EBC*.]
- Kaiser, Walter C., Jr., and Moisés Silva. *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics: The Search for Meaning*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994.
- Kaiser, Walter C., Jr., and Ronald F. Youngblood, eds. *A Tribute to Gleason Archer*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1986.

Kaiser, Walter C., Jr., Peter H. Davids, F. F. Bruce, and Manfred T. Baruch, eds. *Hard Sayings of the Bible*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996.

VanGemeren, Willem A., Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., et al., eds. *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1997.

Youngblood, Ronald F., and Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., trans. and notes. "Exodus." *The Holy Bible: New International Version*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978.

Yourcenar, Marguerite. *The Mighty Sculptor, Time*. Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., trans. New York: Farrar, Straus, & Cudahy, 1992.

\_\_\_\_\_. *A Coin in Nine Hands: A Novel*. Dori Katz and Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., trans. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994 (reprint).

\_\_\_\_\_. *Two Lives and a Dream*. Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., trans. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994 (reprint).

### **Books and Articles by Peter C. Craigie**

Craigie, Peter C., Kelly H. Page, and Joel Drinkard. *Jeremiah 1–25. Word Biblical Commentary*. Vol. 26. Dallas: Word, 1992 (published posthumously).

Craigie, Peter C. "Foreword." *Israel's Apostasy and Restoration: Essays in Honor of Roland K. Harrison*. Avraham Gileadi, ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1988.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Old Testament: Its Background Growth, and Content*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1986 (published posthumously).

\_\_\_\_\_. "War, Religion, and Scripture." *Bulletin of the Canadian Society of Biblical Studies* 46 (1986): 3–14 (published posthumously).

\_\_\_\_\_. *Twelve Prophets. Daily Bible Study Series*. 2 vols. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1984–85.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Ezekiel. Daily Bible Study Series*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Psalms 1–50. Word Biblical Commentary*. Vol. 19. Waco: Word, 1983.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Ugarit and the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983.

\_\_\_\_\_. Review of Millard C. Lind, *Yahweh is a Warrior: The Theology of Warfare in Ancient Israel*. *Interpretation* 36 (1982): 306.

- \_\_\_\_\_. "War and Peace" (review of Vernard Eller, *War and Peace from Genesis to Revelation*). *Christianity Today* 26.1 (1982): 74.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Role and Relevance of Biblical Research." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 18 (1980): 19–31.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Idea of War." Pages 1018–1021 in vol. 4 of the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*. Edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley, et al. 4 vols. Grand Rapids, 1979–1988.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Bible and Ugaritic Studies: A Critical Assessment of Current Research." *Religious Studies in the Pacific*. John C. Hinchcliff, Jack Lewis, and Kapil Tiwar, eds. Auckland, New Zealand: Colloquium Publishers, 1978.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Influence of Spinoza in the Higher Criticism of the Old Testament." *Evangelical Quarterly* 50 (1978): 23–32.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Problem of War in the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Review of John Ferguson, *War and Peace in the World's Religions*. *The Canadian Churchman* 104.4 (1978): 20.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Book of Deuteronomy. The New International Commentary on the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Hiroshima After Thirty Years: Reflections on the Politics of Omnipotence." *The Chelsea Journal* 1.4 (1975): 163–66.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Religion, War, and Peace." *CALUM* [Alumni Magazine, University of Calgary] 7.2 (1975): 8.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Psalm XXIX in the Hebrew Poetic Tradition." *Vetus Testamentum* 22 (1972): 143–51.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Hebrew thought about God and Nature and its Contemporary Significance." *Canadian Journal of Theology* 16 (1970): 3–14.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Conquest and Early Hebrew Poetry." *Tyndale Bulletin* 20 (1969): 76–94.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Yahweh is a Man of Wars." *Scottish Journal of Theology* 22 (1969): 183–188.
- Craigie, Peter. C., ed. *Newsletter for Ugaritic Studies* (vols. 1–33, April 1972–April 1985).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Ugaritic Studies I: 1972–1976*. Calgary, AB: Canadian Society of Biblical Studies—Society of Biblical Literature, 1976 (= *Newsletter for Ugaritic Studies* 1–10 [with indices]).

\_\_\_\_\_. *Ugaritic Studies II: 1976–1979*. Calgary, AB: Canadian Society of Biblical Studies—Society of Biblical Literature, 1980 (=Newsletter for *Ugaritic Studies* 11–20 [with indices]).

\_\_\_\_\_. *Ugaritic Studies III: 1980–1983*. Calgary, AB: Canadian Society of Biblical Studies—Society of Biblical Literature, 1983 (=Newsletter for *Ugaritic Studies* 21–30 [with indices]).

### **Books and Articles by Tremper Longman, III**

Longman, Tremper, III. “Accuracy and Readability: Warring Impulses in Evangelical Translation Tradition.” *Biblical Translation in Context*. Frederick W. Knoblock, ed. Bethesda, MD: University Press of Maryland, 2002.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Song of Songs*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001. *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament*. R. K. Harrison and Robert L. Hubbard, Jr., eds. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001.

\_\_\_\_\_. “Evangelicals and the Comparative Method.” *Creator, Redeemer, Consummator: A Festschrift for Meredith G. Kline*. Howard Griffith and John R. Muether, eds. Greenville, SC: Reformed Academic Press, 2000.

\_\_\_\_\_. “When God Declares War.” *Christianity Today* 40 (October 1996): 14–21. Cited 15 March, 2003. Online: <http://newfirstsearch.oclc.org/FSIP>.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Daniel. The NIV Application Commentary*. Terry Muck, Tremper Longman, III, John H. Walton, Robert Hubbard, and Andrew Dearman, eds. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1999.

\_\_\_\_\_. “Literary Approaches to Old Testament Study.” *The Face of Old Testament Studies: A Survey of Contemporary Approaches*. David W. Baker, and Bill T. Arnold, eds. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Book of Ecclesiastes*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998. *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament. The New International Commentary on the Old Testament*. R. K. Harrison and Robert L. Hubbard, Jr., eds. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Making Sense of the Old Testament: Three Crucial Questions*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998.

\_\_\_\_\_. “Reading the Bible Postmodernly.” *Mars Hill Review* 12 (1998): 23–30.

\_\_\_\_\_. “Literature, Interpretation, and Theology: Literary Approaches and Interpretation.” *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*. Vol. 1. Willem A. VanGemeren, ed., et al. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1997.

- \_\_\_\_\_. *Reading the Bible with Heart and Mind*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress Publishing Group, 1997.
- \_\_\_\_\_. “צבא.” *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*. Vol. 3. Willem A. VanGemeren, Tremper Longman, et al., eds. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1997.
- \_\_\_\_\_. “Lament.” *Cracking Old Testament Codes*. Brent D. Sandy, and Ronald L. Giese, eds. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Old Testament Commentary Survey*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995 [first published in 1991].
- \_\_\_\_\_. “Should I Go to War?” *Streams from Scripture II*. Philadelphia: Westminster Media, 1993. Cassette SS205.
- \_\_\_\_\_. “The Task of the Old Testament Scholar at the End of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.” Cassette tape. Philadelphia: Westminster Media, 1993.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Fictional Akkadian Autobiography: A Generic and Comparative Study*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1991.
- \_\_\_\_\_. “What I Mean by Historical-Grammatical Exegesis—Why I Am Not a Literalist.” *Grace Theological Journal* 11(1990): 137–155.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *How to Read the Psalms*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988.
- \_\_\_\_\_. “Storytellers and Poets in the Bible: Can Literary Artifice Be True?” *Inerrancy and Hermeneutic: A Tradition, A Challenge, A Debate*. Harvie M. Conn, ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1988.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Literary Approaches to Biblical Interpretation*. Vol. 3, *Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation*. Moisés Silva, ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1987.
- \_\_\_\_\_. “Psalm 98: A Divine Warrior Victory Song.” *JETS* 27 (1984): 267–274.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Review of Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Toward Old Testament Ethics*. *JETS* 27 (1984): 503–04.
- \_\_\_\_\_. “The Divine Warrior: The New Testament Use of an Old Testament Motif.” *WJT* (1982): 290–307.



- \_\_\_\_\_. "Traits of Modern Versions of the New Testament: A Study Project." *The New Testament and Bible Translation*. Vol. 4. John K. Skilton and Curtiss A. Ladley, eds. Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1978.
- Allender, Dan. B., and Tremper Longman, III. *Bold Purpose: Exchanging Counterfeit Happiness*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1998.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Intimate Allies*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1995.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Cry of the Soul: How Our Emotions Reveal Our Deepest Questions about God*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress Publishing, 1994.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Bold Love*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress Publishing Group, 1992.
- Balchin, John F., David H. Field, and Tremper Longman, III, eds. *The Complete Bible Study Tool Kit*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1991.
- Dillard, Raymond B., and Tremper Longman, III. *An Introduction to the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994.
- Long, V. Phillips, Tremper Longman, III, Richard Miller, Vern S. Poythress, Moisés Silva, eds. *Foundations of Contemporary Interpretation*. Moisés Silva, general ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996.
- Longman, Tremper, III. and Daniel G. Reid. *God Is a Warrior*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995.
- Longman, Tremper, III, August Kinkel, and Al Wolters. "Job." *The New Living Translation*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1996.
- Longman, Tremper, III, Daniel Fredericks, and David Hubbard. "Ecclesiastes." *The New Living Translation*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1996.
- Longman, Tremper, III, ed., et al. *The New Living Translation*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1996.
- Ryken, Leland, and Tremper Longman, III, eds. *A Complete Literary Guide to the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1993.
- Ryken, Leland, James C. Wilhoit, and Tremper Longman, III, eds. *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery: An Encyclopedia Exploration of the Images, Symbols, Motifs, Metaphors, Figures of Speech, Literary Patterns*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998.

VanGemeren, Willem A., Tremper Longman, III, et al., eds. *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*. 5 Vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1997.

## General Bibliography

- Ackroyd, Peter. R. Review of Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Classical Evangelical Essays in Old Testament Interpretation*. *SJT* 28 (1975): 81–82.
- Albright, William F. “Some Excavation Reports and Synthesis.” *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*. 186 (1967): 53–54.
- Ammerman, Nancy T. “North American Protestant Fundamentalism.” *Fundamentalisms Observed*. Vol. 1. *The Fundamentalism Project*. Martin E. Marty, and R. Scott Abbleby, eds. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991.
- “A(nton) Berkeley Mickelsen.” 1–2. Cited 15 March, 2003. *Contemporary Authors Online*. The Gale Group: Biography and Genealogy Master Index, 2003. Online: <http://galenet.gale.com/a/acp/db/bgmi/index.html>.
- Ballard, Harold Wayne, Jr. *The Divine Warrior in the Psalms*. North Richland Hills, TX: Bibal Press, 1999.
- Barr, James. *Biblical Faith and Natural Theology*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993.
- Bauer, Johannes B., ed. “Ban.” *Sacramentum Verbi: An Encyclopedia of Biblical Theology*. Vol. 1. New York: Herder & Herder, 1970.
- Beaman, Lori G. *Shared Beliefs, Different Lives: Women’s Identities in Evangelical Context*. St. Louis: Chalice Press, 1999.
- Bebbington, D. W. “Evangelicalism: Britain.” *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Modern Christian Thought*. Alister E. McGrath, ed. Oxford: Blackwell, 1993: 184–187.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s*. London: Unwin Hyman, 1989.
- Beecher, Willis Judson. *The Prophets and the Prophets*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1963 [reprint].
- Behm, Johannes. “Anathema.” *TDNT* 1. 10 vols. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965.
- Bolger, Eric W. Review of Tremper Longman, III, *God Is a Warrior*. *JETS* 40 (1997): 689.

- Boyd, Gregory A. *God at War: The Bible and Spiritual Conflict*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997.
- Bray, Gerald. *Biblical Interpretation: Past & Present*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996.
- Brueggemann, Walter. *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997.
- Butler, Trent C. Review of Peter C. Craigie, *The Problem of War in the Old Testament*. *JSOT* 15 (1980): 64–65.
- Carmichael, Calum M. *The Laws of Deuteronomy*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974.
- Carroll, Robert P. “War.” *What the Bible Really Says*. Morton Smith and R. Joseph Hoffman, eds. Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1989 (147–170).
- Chisholm, Robert B. Review of Tremper Longman, III, *God Is a Warrior*. *Bibliotheca Sacra* 153 (1996): 496–97.
- Christ, Carol P. “Feminist Liberation Theology and Yahweh as Holy Warrior: An Analysis of Symbol.” *Women’s Spirit Bonding*. Janet Kalven and Mary I. Buckley, eds. New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1984 (202–212).
- Christiansen, Duane L. *Deuteronomy 1–11*. *WBC 6<sup>a</sup>*. D. A. Hubbard, et al., eds. Dallas: Word Books, 1991.
- \_\_\_\_\_. “Num 21:14–15 and The Book of the Wars of Yahweh.” *CBQ* 36 (1974): 359–60.
- Combs, Eugene, ed. *Modernity and Responsibility: Essays for George Grant*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983.
- Cotton, Bill. Review of Tremper Longman, III, *God Is a Warrior*. *Evangel: The British Evangelical Review* 14 (1996): 88–89.
- Coward, Harold. “Academic Biography of Peter C. Craigie.” *Ascribe to the Lord: Biblical and Other Studies in Memory of Peter C. Craigie*. Lyle Eslinger and Glen Taylor, eds. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1988.
- “The Craigie Lecture.” Cited 15 March, 2003. *Canadian Society of Biblical Studies*. Online: <http://www.ccsr.ca/csbs/CraigieLecture.html>.
- Cross, Frank Moore. *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973.

- Deuel, David C. Review of Tremper Longman, III, *God is a Warrior. The Master's Seminary Journal* 6 (1995): 252–54.
- Dozeman, Thomas B. *Power in the Exodus Tradition*. New York: Oxford, 1996.
- Driver, S. R. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Deuteronomy. ICC* 5. C. A. Briggs, S. R. Driver, and A Plummer, eds. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1902.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Hebrew Homonyms." *VTSup* 16 (1967): 50–64.
- Elwell, Walter A., and J. D. Weaver, eds. *Bible Interpretation in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century: A Selection of Evangelical Voices*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House Company, 1999.
- Erickson, Millard J. "Evangelicalism: USA." *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Modern Christian Thought*. Alister E. McGrath, ed. Oxford: Blackwell, 1993: 187–192.
- Eslinger, Lyle. "Peter C. Craigie." *Bible Interpreters of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century: A Selection of Evangelical Voices*. Walter A. Elwell and J. D. Weaver, eds. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999.
- Eslinger, Lyle, and Glen Taylor, eds. *Ascribe to the Lord: Biblical and Other Studies in Memory of Peter C. Craigie*. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1988.
- "Eugene Combs." 1–2. Cited 15 March, 2003. *Contemporary Authors Online*. The Gale Group: Biography and Genealogy Master Index, 2003. Online: <http://galenet.gale.com/a/acp/db/bgmi/index.html>.
- Feinberg, John S. "Salvation in the Old Testament." In *Tradition and Testament: Essays in Honor of Charles Lee Feinberg*. John S. Feinberg and Paul D. Feinberg, eds. Chicago: Moody Press, 1981.
- Fishbane, Michael. *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985.
- Fyall, Bob. Review of Tremper Longman, III, *God Is a Warrior. Biblical Studies* 13 (1996): 165–66.
- "George (Parkin) Grant." 1. Cited 15 March, 2003. *Contemporary Authors Online*. The Gale Group: Biography and Genealogy Master Index, 2003. Online: <http://galenet.gale.com/a/acp/db/bgmi/index.html>.
- "Gerhard Franz Hasel." 1–3. Cited 15 March, 2003. *Contemporary Authors Online*. The Gale Group: Biography and Genealogy Master Index, 2003. Online: <http://galenet.gale.com/a/acp/db/bgmi/index.html>.

- Gesenius, William. *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Edward Robinson, trans. Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, eds. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977.
- Goetz, Ronald G. Review of Peter C. Craigie, *The Problem of War in the Old Testament*. *Theology Today* 36 (1980): 598–600.
- \_\_\_\_\_. “Joshua, Calvin, and Genocide.” *ThTo* 32 (1975): 262–274.
- Goldstein, Jonathan. *Peoples of an Almighty God: Competing Religions in the Ancient World*. New York: Doubleday, 2002.
- Gordon, Cyrus H. *A Scholar’s Odyssey*. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000.
- Gottwald, Norman K. “‘Holy War’ in Deuteronomy: Analysis and Critique.” *RevExp* 61 (1961): 296–310.
- Greenberg, Moshe, and Haim Cohn. “*Herem*.” Vol. 8. In *EncJud*. Cecil Roth, and Geoffrey Wigoder, eds. 16 vols. Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1972, (344–355).
- Greene, William Benton, Jr. “Ethics of the Old Testament.” *Classical Evangelical Essays in Old Testament Interpretation*. Walter Kaiser, ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1972. [Originally published in *Princeton Theological Review* 29 (1929): 313–66.]
- “Harold G. Coward.” 1–2. Cited 15 March, 2003. *Contemporary Authors Online*. The Gale Group: Biography and Genealogy Master Index, 2003. Online: <http://galenet.gale.com/a/acp/db/bgmi/index.html>.
- Hasel, Gerhard F. *Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (revised and expanded). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991. [1<sup>st</sup> ed. 1972.]
- Henderson, Stephen K. “A Critical Evaluation of the Contribution of the Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., to Old Testament Theology.” Master’s Thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, 1980.
- Hengstenberg, Ernst Wilhelm. *Christology of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1970.
- “Hengstenberg, Ernst Wilhelm.” 1. Cited 15 March 15, 2003. *Contemporary Authors Online*. The Gale Group: Biography and Genealogy Master Index, 2003. Online: <http://galenet.gale.com/a/acp/db/bgmi/index.html>.
- Hess, Richard. “God is a Warrior: Studies in Old Testament Biblical Theology” (review of Tremper Longman, III). *Themelios* 22 (1996): 53–54.
- Hobbs, T. R. *A Time for War: A Study of Warfare in the Old Testament*. Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, 1989.

- Horbury, William. "Extripation and Excommunication." *VT* 25 (1985): 13–38.
- Hylson-Smith, Kenneth. *Evangelicals in the Church of England: 1734–1983*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988.
- Idestrom, Rebecca G. S. Interview by author, 18 November 2001. Denver, CO. Annual Meetings of the American Academy of Religion and the Society of Biblical Literature.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Personal correspondence. November 06, 2001.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Some Aspects of Peter C. Craigie's Approach to the Old Testament." *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 23 (1994): 457–67.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Peter C. Craigie and the Old Testament." Master's Thesis, Wycliffe College, Toronto School of Theology, University of Toronto, 1990.
- Idestrom, Rebecca G. S., and J. Glen Taylor. "Addendum to the Bibliography of Peter C. Craigie." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 51 (1991): 115–17.
- Jackson, Jared J. Review of Peter C. Craigie, *The Problem of War in the Old Testament*. *Interpretation* 34 (1980): 88–90.
- Janzen, Waldemar. "God as Warrior and Lord: A Conversation with G. E. Wright." *BASOR* 220 (1975): 73–75.
- Jones, G. H. "'Holy' War or 'Yahweh' War?" *VT* 25 (1975): 642–658.
- Kang, Sa-Moon. *Divine War in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East*. New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1989.
- Kawamura, Leslie. "In Memoriam." *The University of Calgary Gazette*. October 9, 1985, 4–5.
- Kitchen, Kenneth A. "The Old Testament in Its Context: 6." *TSF Bulletin* 64 (1972): 2–10.
- Kline, Meredith G. "The Intrusion and the Decalogue." *WTJ* 16 (1953): 1–22.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Structure of Biblical Authority*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972.
- Liddell, Henry George, and Robert Scott. *A Greek-English Lexicon*. 9<sup>th</sup> ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953.
- Lind, Millard C. *Yahweh is a Warrior: The Theology of Warfare in Ancient Israel*. Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1980.

\_\_\_\_\_. "States and Swords: Warfare in the Old Testament" (review of Peter C. Craigie, *The Problem of War in the Old Testament*). *Sojourners* 9 (1980): 31–33.

Lohfink, N. "חרם." Vol. 5. *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. 9 vols. Johannes G. Botterwick, Helmer Ringgren, and H. Fabry, eds. David E. Green, trans. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977–1998 (180–199).

Lüdemann, Gerd. *The Unholy in Holy Scripture: The Dark Side of the Bible*. John Bowden, trans. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996.

Lyons, William L. Review of Lori G. Beaman, *Shared Beliefs, Different Lives: Women's Identities in Evangelical Context*. *Journal of Religion and Society* 2 (2000). Cited 15 March, 2003. Online: <http://moses.creighton.edu/JRS/2000/2000-r22.html>.

Malamat, Abraham. "The Ban in Mari and the Bible." In the *Proceedings of the Ninth Meeting of the Die Ou-Testamentiese Werkgemeenskap in Suid-Afrika*. The University of Stellenbosch, 1966, (40–49).

Marrs, Rick R. "Craigie, Peter Campbell (1938–85)." *Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation*. 2 vols. John H. Hayes, ed. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999.

"Mars Hill Graduate School." Cited 15 March, 2003. Mars Hill Graduate School as Western Seminary. Online: <http://www.mhgs.net/faculty.html>.

Marsden, George M. *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Religion and American Culture*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1990.

\_\_\_\_\_. "Fundamentalism as an American Phenomenon, A Comparison with English Evangelicalism." *Church History* 46 (1977): 215–232.

Marsden, George M., ed. *Evangelicalism and Modern America*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984.

McGrath, Alister E. *Christian Theology: An Introduction*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Evangelicalism & the Future of Christianity*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995.

Miller, Patrick D. *Deuteronomy*. In *Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*. Louisville: John Knox Press, 1990.

\_\_\_\_\_. *The Warrior in Early Israel*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972.

- \_\_\_\_\_. "God the Warrior: A Problem in Biblical Interpretation and Apologetics." *Int* 19 (1965): 39–46.
- "Milton Spenser Terry." 1–3. Cited 15 March 15, 2003. *Contemporary Authors Online*. The Gale Group: Biography and Genealogy Master Index, 2003. Online: <http://galenet.gale.com/a/acp/db/bgmi/index.html>.
- Moberly, R. W. L. "Book Reviews" (review of Tremper Longman, III). *Ashland Theological Journal* 29 (1997): 126–28.
- Moir, John S. *A History of Biblical Studies in Canada: A Sense of Proportion*. Chico: Scholars Press, 1982.
- Moran, W. L. "The End of Unholy War and the Anti-Exodus." *Bib* 44 (1963): 333–42.
- Naudé, Jackie A. "חרם." *NIDOTTE* 2. 5 vols. Willem A. VanGemeren, Tremper Longman, et al., eds. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1997 (276–77).
- Nicholson, E. W. "Once More Moses and Deuteronomy." *The Expository Times* 89 (Feb. 1978): 152–53.
- Niditch, Susan. *War in the Hebrew Bible: A Study in the Ethics of Violence*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.
- Noll, Mark A. *Between Faith and Criticism: Evangelicals, Scholarship, and the Bible in America*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 1998. [1<sup>st</sup> ed., Harper & Row, 1986; 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Baker Book House, 1991; this ed. is a reproduction of the Baker ed.]
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Evangelical Mind in America." *Should God Get Tenure? Essays on Religion and Higher Education*. David W. Gill, ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Minding the Evangelical Mind." *First Things*. 109 (January 2001): 14–17.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994.
- Olbricht, Thomas H. "Biblical Interpretation in North America in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century." *Historical Handbook of Major Biblical Interpreters*. Donald K. McKim, ed. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998.
- Ollenburger, Ben C. "Introduction: Gerhard von Rad's Theory of Holy War." *Holy War in Ancient Israel*. Marva J. Dawn, trans. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991 (originally published as *Der heilige Krieg im alten Israel* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1951]).
- Osborne, Grant R. "Evangelical Biblical Interpretation." *Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation*. John H. Hayes, ed. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1999, 357–361.



- \_\_\_\_\_. "Evangelical Interpretation of Scripture: The Background to Contemporary Evangelical Exposition." *The Bible in the Churches: How Various Churches Interpret the Scriptures*. Kenneth Hagen, ed. Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 1994.
- Ostling, Richard N. 1–5. Cited 15 March, 2003. "Scriptural Differences Found in Scrolls." *Society of Biblical Literature*. Online: [http://www.sbl-site.org/Newsletter/01\\_2001/ScripturalDifferences.htm](http://www.sbl-site.org/Newsletter/01_2001/ScripturalDifferences.htm).
- "Part Time and Emeritus Faculty." Cited 15 March, 2003. Westminster Theological Seminary. Online: <http://www.wts.edu/general/facultyparttimefp.html>.
- Pedersen, Johannes. *Israel: Its Life and Culture*. London: Oxford University Press, 1963 (originally published 1940).
- "Peter Campbell Craigie." 1–2. Cited 15 March, 2003. *Contemporary Authors Online*. The Gale Group: Biography and Genealogy Master Index, 2003. Online: <http://galenet.gale.com/a/acp/db/bgmi/index.html>.
- Purdue, Leo G. Review of Peter C. Craigie, *The Problem of War in the Old Testament*. *JBL* 99 (1980): 446–448.
- Rad, Gerhard von. *Deuteronomy: A Commentary*. In *The Old Testament Library*. G. E. Wright, J. Bright, J. Barr, and P. Ackroyd, eds. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1966.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Theology of the Old Testament*. 2. Vols. D. M. G Stalker, trans. New York: Harper & Row, 1965.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Holy War in Ancient Israel*, Marva J. Dawn, trans. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991; originally published as *Der heilige Krieg im alten Israel* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1951]).
- Robertson, Alan, ed. "A Memorial for Peter Craigie." *The University of Calgary Gazette*. October 9, 1985, 4–5.
- Rodd, Cyril S. *Glimpses of a Strange Land: Studies in Old Testament Ethics*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2001.
- Sailhamer, John H. "Walter C. Kaiser, Jr." *Bible Interpreters of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century: A Selection of Evangelical Voices*. Walter A. Elwell and J. D. Weaver, eds. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999.
- Sanderson, Judith E. "War, Peace, and Justice in the Hebrew Bible: A Representative Bibliography." *Holy War in Ancient Israel*. Marva J. Dawn, trans. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans,

- 1991 (originally published as *Der heilige Krieg im alten Israel* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1951]).
- Sandys-Wunsch, John. Review of Peter C. Craigie, *The Problem of War in the Old Testament*. *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 9 (1980): 90–91.
- Sauer, G. “Die Ugaritistik und die Psalmenforschung.” *Ugarit-Forschung* 6 (1974): 401–06.
- Schmid, H. H. “Heiliger Krieg und Gottesfrieden im alten Testament.” *Altorientalische Welt in der Alttestamentlichen Theologie*. Zurich: Theologische Verlag, 1972, 91–120.
- “The Scholars.” 1–2. Cited 15 March, 2003. *The New Living Translation*. Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers. Online: <http://www.newlivingtranslation.com/>.
- Schwally, Friedrich. *Der heilige Krieg im alten Israel*. Leipzig: Deiterich, 1901.
- Shanks, Hershel, ed. *Who's Who in Biblical Studies and Archaeology*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Washington: Biblical Archaeology Society, 1993.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Who's Who in Biblical Studies and Archaeology*. 1<sup>st</sup> ed. Washington: Biblical Archaeology Society, 1987.
- Sherlock, Charles. *The God Who Fights: The War Tradition in Holy Scripture*. Lewiston: Rutherford House, 1993.
- Smend, Rudolf. *Yahweh War and Yahweh War and Tribal Confederation: Reflections upon Israel's Earliest History*. M. G. Rogers, trans. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970 (first published 1963).
- Stern, Philip D. *The Biblical Herem: A Window on Israel's Religious Experience*. Atlanta: Scholar's Press, 1991.
- Stolz, Fritz. *Jahwes und Israels Krieg*. Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments 60. Zurich: Theologischer Verlag, 1972.
- Taylor, J. Glen. “Bibliography of Peter C. Craigie.” *Ascribe to the Lord: Biblical and Other Studies in Memory of Peter C. Craigie*. Lyle Eslinger and Glen Taylor, eds. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1988.
- Taylor, Marion Ann. “William Henry Green.” *Bible Interpreters of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century: A Selection of Evangelical Voices*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House Company, 1999.
- “Terrence M. Penelhum.” 1–2. Cited 15 March, 2003. *Contemporary Authors Online*. The Gale Group: Biography and Genealogy Master Index, 2003. Online: <http://galenet.gale.com/a/acp/db/bgmi/index.html>.

- Terry, Milton Spencer. *Biblical Hermeneutics: A Treatise on the Interpretation of the Old and New Testaments*. New York: Hunt & Eaton, 1890.
- Tigay, Jeffrey H. *Deuteronomy*. In *The JPS Torah Commentary*. Nahum M. Sarna, ed. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication society, 1996.
- Toombs, L. E. "War, Ideas of." *IDB* 4: 787–98.
- Tremper Longman, III. Interview by author, 18 November 2001. Denver, CO. Annual Meetings of the American Academy of Religion and the Society of Biblical Literature.
- "Tremper Longman, III." 1–4. Cited 15 March, 2003. *Contemporary Authors Online*. The Gale Group: Biography and Genealogy Master Index, 2003. Online: <http://galenet.gale.com/a/acp/db/bgmi/index.html>.
- Vasquez, Manuel A. "Tracking Global Evangelical Christianity." *AAR* 71 (2003): 157–173.
- Yadin, Yigael. *The Art of Warfare in Biblical Lands*. New York: McGraw Hill: 1963.
- Yoder, John Howard. "'To Your Tents, O Israel:' The Legacy of Israel's Experience of Holy War." *SR* 18 (1989): 345–362.
- Wagner, Norman. "Reflections: A Memorial Service for Peter Craigie." *Ascribe to the Lord: Biblical and Other Studies in Memory of Peter C. Craigie*. Lyle Eslinger and Glen Taylor, eds. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1988.
- Waldow, H. Eberhard von. "The Concept of War in the Old Testament." *HBT* 6 (1984): 27–48.
- Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. Interview by author, 19 November 2000. Nashville, TN. Annual Meetings of the American Academy of Religion and the Society of Biblical Literature.
- "Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. Ph.D." 1–2. Cited 15 March 15, 2003. *Faculty: Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary*. Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. Online: <http://www.gcts.edu/fac/kaiser.html>.
- "Walter Christian Kaiser, Jr." 1–4. Cited 15 March, 2003. *Contemporary Authors Online*. The Gale Group: Biography and Genealogy Master Index, 2003. Online: <http://galenet.gale.com/a/acp/db/bgmi/index.html>.
- Walzer, Michael. "Exodus 32 and the Theory of Holy War: The History of a Citation." *THR* 61 (1968): 1–14.
- Weber, Max. *Ancient Judaism*. Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1952.

- Weippert, Manfred. “‘Heiliger Krieg’ in Israel und Assyrien.” *ZAW* 84 (1972): 460–93.
- Weinfeld, Moshe. *Deuteronomy 1–11: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. Vol. 5 in *The Anchor Bible*. New York: Doubleday, 1991.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School*. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1972.
- Wellhausen, Julius. *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel*. Glouster, MA: Peter Smith, 1983.
- Wevers, John Williams. *Notes on the Greek Text of Deuteronomy*. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995.
- “William Henry Green.” 1–3. Cited 15 March, 2003. *Contemporary Authors Online*. The Gale Group: Biography and Genealogy Master Index, 2003. Online: <http://galenet.gale.com/a/acp/db/bgmi/index.html>.
- Wilson, Stephen G. “Peter Campbell Craigie, 1938–1985: In Memoriam.” *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 14 (1985): 233.
- \_\_\_\_\_. “Peter Campbell Craigie Dies.” *Biblical Archaeology Review*. 12 (1986): 8–9.
- Wolfe, Alan. “The Opening of the Evangelical Mind.” 1–11; 1–8; 1–9; 1–8. Cited 15 March, 2003. *The Atlantic Online*. Online: <http://www.theatlantic.com/issues/2000/10/wolfe.htm>
- Wood, Leon J. “חֶרֶם.” *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* 1. 2 vols. R. Laird Harris, ed., et al. Chicago: Moody Press, 1890.
- Wright, David F. “Soundings in the Doctrine of Scripture in British Evangelicalism in the First Half of the Twentieth Century.” *Tyndale Bulletin* 31 (1980): 87–106.
- Wright, G. Ernest. *God Who Acts: Biblical Theology as Recital*. London: SCM: 1952.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Old Testament and Theology*. New York: Harper & Row, 1969.

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

William L. Lyons was born in Philadelphia, PA, and was reared in eastern Pennsylvania and northeastern Ohio. He is married to Patricia Howard Lyons and has two sons, Samuel and Joseph. William went to Oral Roberts University after high school and earned a B.A. (Biblical Literature, 1979) and an M.A. (Biblical Literature: Old Testament, 1984). He then moved to Wisconsin to study in the Department of Hebrew Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (M.A. Hebrew and Semitic Languages, 1989). Before matriculating at Florida State University (Ph.D. 2003) he taught in a Bible school and served as an Associate Pastor. While at FSU, William received a "University Dissertation Research Grant" (2000) and was recognized with the "Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award" (2000). In addition to teaching at FSU, he has also had a number of opportunities to develop and teach adult education courses in community settings.

William's research interests focus on the history of Jewish and Christian biblical interpretation, emphasizing both pre-critical hermeneutics and modern biblical interpretation. Building on his previous work on Philo, Josephus, and the early church fathers on *herem*, William plans to examine the role of women and children in "holy war" biblical narratives and in subsequent traditions. Additionally, he has extensive training in traditional historical-critical scholarship and plans to continue that emphasis in the areas of Wisdom Literature and Psalms.

### Research and Publications

Review of C. S. Cowles, Eugene H. Merrill, Daniel L. Gard, and Tremper Longman, III, *Show Them No Mercy: 4 Views on God and Canaanite Genocide*. *Review of Biblical Literature Online* [forthcoming].

"Between History and Theology: The Problem of *Herem* in Modern Evangelical Biblical Scholarship." Paper presented at the FSU 2003 Graduate Symposium: Religion and Society. Tallahassee, FL, March 2003.

"Rahab and Her Interpreters: A Study of the History of Christian Interpretation of Rahab." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Southeastern Region of the AAR/SBL. Charlotte, NC, March 2001.

Review of Katherine Dell, *Get Wisdom, Get Insight: An Introduction to Israel's Wisdom Literature*. *Journal of Religion and Society* 3 (2001):  
<http://moses.creighton.edu/JRS/2001/2001-r1.html>.

Review of Walter A. Elwell and J. D. Weaver, eds., *Bible Interpreters of the 20th Century*. *Review of Biblical Literature Online* 10-30-00:  
<http://www.bookreviews.org/bookdetail.asp?TitleId=640&CodePage=640>.

Review of Lori G. Beaman, *Shared Beliefs, Different Lives: Women's Identities in Evangelical Context*. *Journal of Religion and Society* 2 (2000):  
<http://moses.creighton.edu/JRS/2000/2000-r22.html>.