

DISSERTATION ABSTRACTS

THE SEED IN GENESIS 3:15: AN EXEGETICAL AND INTERTEXTUAL STUDY

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The Topic

This dissertation seeks to ascertain the meaning and referent of the “seed” and its related pronouns in Gen 3:15.

The Purpose

The meaning and referent of “seed” and its related pronouns in Gen 3:15 have been discussed throughout the history of Jewish and Christian interpretation. This dissertation analyzes Gen 3:15 exegetically and intertextually, tracing the meaning of this “seed” in Genesis, the rest of the OT, and the NT.

The Introduction surveys Jewish and Christian interpretations of Gen 3:15, classifying them into related categories such as literal, naturalistic, historical, political, allegorical, figurative, eschatological, and christological.

Chapter 1 surveys Gen 3:15 and its context. The textual analysis shows that the ancient texts significantly follow the Hebrew text. The literary, structural, linguistic, syntactical, and thematic analyses of the context of Gen 3:15 show vividly that this verse is the center of the message of Gen 3.

There is an intentional narrowing movement in the Hebrew text of Gen 3:15 that reveals the Messianic import of this watershed verse. The clash between the serpent and the woman becomes the long-lasting enmity between their respective plural collective seed which consists of all human beings. This narrows down into a fatal clash between Satan, represented by the singular serpent, and the Messiah, the special, singular, individual, representative Seed of the woman.

Chapter 2 examines the intratextual use of the seed and its related pronouns of Gen 3:15 within the rest of the book of Genesis, beginning from Gen 1:28. The narrowing from the plural collective seed to the singular, individual, representative Seed establishes a pattern for signifying Messianic intention in some of these seed passages, especially Gen 22:17-19 and Gen 24:60. The special Seed is already described as Messianic, royal, and priestly in Genesis.

Chapter 3 shows that the Pentateuch is consistent in its understanding and portrayal of the seed of Gen 3:15. The intertextual study of the seed shows that subsequent authors of the OT and NT recognized and followed the same understanding of the seed.

Chapter 4 examines the similarities and differences between Gen 3:15 and the relevant ancient Near Eastern literature. This illuminates the figurative understanding of some of the expressions in Gen 3:14-15.

Chapter 5 enumerates the theological implications of the seed of Gen 3:15 by showing the major themes and minor motifs.

Conclusions

This dissertation concludes that there is a Messianic intention in Gen 3:15, based on the proven, narrowing phenomenon of the seed in the Hebrew text of this verse. The Seed and the serpent have a fatal and deadly clash, in which the Messiah is eternally victorious on behalf of all the righteous seed.

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD: AN EXEGETICAL STUDY FROM THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES

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The purpose of this dissertation is to develop a theology of the fatherhood of God from the Hebrew Scriptures. Although many studies have explored the topic from the perspective of other disciplines, the actual theology of God's fatherhood, as revealed in the Hebrew Scriptures, has been neglected until now. This has resulted in a dichotomization of the concept of God as presented in the so-called OT and NT.

Because of the tendency to explain God through the lenses of Greek and Roman mythology, chapter 1 surveys ANE thought, showing that the fatherhood-of-God concept precedes it and is more pervasive than the more modern mythologies seem to indicate. However, although similar terms and concepts are found (e.g., creative, salvific, kind, compassionate, merciful), the relationship that the ANE gods enjoyed with humans was not nearly as personal, intimate, or widespread as the relationship that God enjoys with his "children."

The eighteen occurrences of God's fatherhood explicitly mentioned in the Hebrew Scriptures are exegeted in chapter 2. These texts are grouped together in the "Song of Moses" (Deut 32), the "Vision of Nathan" (2 Sam 7; 1 Chron 17; 22; 28; 29), in the Psalms and Wisdom literature (Pss 68; 89; 103; Prov 3), and in the prophets (Isa 63; 64; Jer 3; 31; Mal 1; 2). The theological themes within them are discussed in chapter 3, arriving at a picture of God as one who is passionately involved with his individual children.

One of the main contributions of this dissertation is that it explores God's fatherhood from a theocentric perspective, rather than an anthropocentric one. However, the implications of this view of God impact human experience, since the attributes of God's fatherhood found in the Hebrew Scriptures provide researchers and practitioners in family dynamics a positive, multidimensional role model for human fatherhood.