

**DeRouchie, Jason S. *Delighting in the Old Testament through Christ and for Christ*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2024. 286pp. + 26pp. (front matter) + 50pp. (back matter).**

Jason DeRouchie's volume is a study in how to read the OT as a Christian from the perspective of progressive covenantalism. After an introduction in which he makes the case that the OT is an important part of the canon for Christians to love and read, the book divides into four parts. In the first part DeRouchie argues that the OT writers knew that God was giving them revelation that would become clearer "and more meaningful for those living in the messianic age of restoration," which he takes to include the present era, "than for those living before it" (17). Thus, the OT must be read with the knowledge of the coming of Christ and his accomplishments in the history of salvation if it is to be rightly understood. In part 2, DeRouchie argues for a "redemptive-historical, Christocentric model" in which Christ is seen as the goal of salvation history and the one in whom all the OT promises are fulfilled (73). Part 3 expands on this final point. It "considers why and how *every* promise is 'Yes' in Christ (2 Cor. 1:20)" (132). The fourth part examines the Christian's relation to the Mosaic law. DeRouchie argues, "The Mosaic law does not *directly* bind the Christian in a legal manner, but we treat all the Old Testament laws as profitable and instructive when we read them through the lens of Christ" (193).

This book exhibits several strengths. While making a case that "God gave the Old Testament for *new* covenant believers" (19), DeRouchie notes his agreement with Walter Kaiser that the interpreter should first interpret texts in light of preceding revelation. He also expresses that he is "highly sympathetic" to those who "limited meaning to *human* authorial intent," though he notes that E. D. Hirsch (on whom biblical scholars embracing this position rely) has revised his firm distinction between *meaning* and *significance* (25n14). He does argue that "the full meaning of some Old Testament texts can transcend the human author's understanding . . . because God's purposes often far exceed human understanding (Deut. 29:29; Eccl. 8:16–17; Isa. 55:8–9) and because he was authoring not simply individual books but *a* book (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21) whose parts were 'incomplete' until Jesus 'fulfilled' them by his coming (Matt. 5:17; 11:13; Rom. 10:4)" (25). But when he makes a case for a Christocentric reading of the OT, DeRouchie insists, "Significantly, the redemptive-historical, Christocentric model I am proposing does *not* appeal 'to a hidden divine layer of meaning on top of the biblical writers' intent.'" (73; replying to a charge made by Abner Chou in *TMSJ* 33.2 [2022]: 219).

Part 4's treatment of the law and the Christian is another generally strong point in the book. DeRouchie summarizes this section of the book as follows: "The thesis is this: The Mosaic law does not directly bind the Christian in a legal manner, but we treat all the Old Testament laws as profitable and instructive when we read them through the lens of Christ" (193). In establishing this thesis DeRouchie builds on Brian Rosner's excellent volume, *Paul and the Law*.<sup>1</sup> The law as the Mosaic Covenant is "repudiated" and is "replaced" by "the law of Christ" in the New Covenant. Nonetheless,

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<sup>1</sup> *Paul and the Law: Keeping the Commandments of God*, NSBT (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2013).

Christians “reappropriate” all of the Mosaic law as it testifies to who God is, as it prophesies the person and work of Christ, and as it provides wisdom for Christian living.

DeRouchie also outlines four ways that Christ fulfills the law (208–9). (1) “*Maintains (no extension)*.” This would include laws like those found in the second table of the Decalogue. (2) “*Maintains (with extension)*.” This would include laws in which cultural particularities are taken into account in application or when the principle embodied in a law is extended to a new situation. (3) “*Transforms*.” DeRouchie holds that the Sabbath command is transformed into spiritual rest in the New Covenant era. Certain laws that required capital punishment within Israel are transformed to require excommunication in the church. (4) “*Annuls*.” DeRouchie cites the dietary laws as an example of this category. With this category especially, he emphasizes that these laws still retain a pedagogical value for the believer even though they have been annulled. He helpfully outlines a method for Christian use of the law and provides four case studies that align with each of these four categories.<sup>2</sup>

However, DeRouchie’s treatment of the law includes a few stumbles as well. In an otherwise good critique of theonomy, DeRouchie argues that passages about the nations’ walking according to the law of Yahweh (e.g., Isa 2:2–3) refer to individuals from many nations being brought into the body of Christ in the present age. On this point DeRouchie exemplifies the weakness of progressive covenantalism regarding a biblical theology of the nations. Progressive covenantalists tend to dissolve this biblical teaching on nations into the multiethnic church. The theonomists are not wrong in seeing the conversion of the nations in Isaiah 2; they are wrong in applying a passage about the (pre)millennial reign of Christ to the present age.

DeRouchie also argues that neither the law of Moses nor the law of Christ is the standard for the state. Rather, “the principles of nature (i.e., image bearing and community justice) associated with the Adamic-Noahic covenant” form the standard against which civil laws are measured (226). The Mosaic law, as fulfilled in Christ, remains relevant for the church, not the state. However, if the Mosaic law is, in part, God’s implementation of natural law or creational law to Israel’s cultural context and place in redemptive-history,<sup>3</sup> the neat separation that DeRouchie sees between the Adamic and Noahic Covenants and the Mosaic Covenant is not so neat. Without succumbing to the theonomist error, Christians who are active in the political realm can still learn from God’s implementation of creational law to Israel in their implementation of creational law in their own contexts.

The most significant weakness of this volume is found in the third part. DeRouchie’s thesis for this part of the book is as follows: “Through Jesus, God empowers Christians to appropriate Old Testament promises faithfully without abusing them” (132). His deployment of 2 Corinthians 1:20, “For all the promises of God find their Yes in him,” seems to imply that all the promises of God are for Christians. However, the fact that all the promises of God find their “Yes” in Jesus does not mean that those promises are “Yes” for all believers in the same way. In one place DeRouchie acknowledges this. He notes that Micah’s prophecy that Christ would be born in Bethlehem is fulfilled only in the life of Christ. He also observes that the wisdom promised to Solomon was secured for Solomon (and

<sup>2</sup> For additional assessment of DeRouchie’s categories for applying the OT law, see Ken Casillas, “Evaluating Progressive Covenantalism’s Approach to the Application of the Mosaic Law,” *JBTW* 3, no. 2 (Spring 2023): 30–33.

<sup>3</sup> Albert M. Wolters, *Creation Regained*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 40–41.

only for Solomon) by Christ on the cross. With these two examples DeRouchie implicitly acknowledges that some OT promises have particularities that preclude an ecclesial fulfillment. And yet DeRouchie also argues that the land promises given to Abraham and his seed are transformed in the New Covenant so that God's people, including the Gentiles, will inherit the new creation. This creates a significant theological problem. If a promise is "transformed" so that the actions performed are other than what was promised for someone other than for whom it was promised, then the promise was not kept. Elsewhere DeRouchie acknowledges that "*Christ Maintains Some Old Testament Promises with Extension*" (178). The land promises better fit this category. These promises will be fulfilled for Abraham and believing Israel within the borders promised, *and* the land promise will be extended for believing Gentile nations in the new creation in their own lands (cf. Rev 21:24).<sup>4</sup>

It is evident from this book that Jason DeRouchie delights in the OT and desires for God's people to do so as well. Parts 1, 2, and 4 are generally reliable guides for reading the OT as a Christian.

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<sup>4</sup> Compare Wade Loring Kuhlewind Jr., "I Will Plant Them in This Land': An Analysis and Critique of Peter Gentry and Stephen Wellum's *Kingdom through Covenant* with Special Attention to the Progressive Covenantal Land-Promise View" (PhD diss., Bob Jones University, 2018).