

Introduction to the Essays - “What Qualifies a Psalm as Messianic?”

In the summer of 2014 the International Reference Library for Biblical Research (IRLBR) in conjunction with the Institute for Biblical Research (IBR) sponsored a Young Scholars Summit that took place at Tyndale House in Cambridge, England. Both IRLBR and IBR intentionally foster biblical scholarship for the sake of the church. The YSS was created to encourage newer scholars to engage in work that would be of benefit to the church. It was held at Tyndale House, which also has a long history of excellent scholarship, community, and conversation. The atmosphere of excellent scholarship with access to the best resources available in biblical studies alongside the commitment to study and dissemination for the church was an important element of the work undertaken by those who participated in the YSS.

The Summit was organized and overseen by the chair of the IRLBR board, Dr. Dan Fredricks from Belhaven University. Two senior scholars led the Summit. One scholar from each testament was chosen. Dr. Rick Taylor is an Old Testament scholar from Dallas Theological Seminary, who also served on the board of IRLBR at the time. Dr. Ruth Anne Reese is a New Testament scholar from Asbury Theological Seminary who was serving on the board of IBR. In addition, four recent PhD recipients in both Old and New Testament were chosen for a week long conversation around the question “What Qualifies a Psalm as Messianic?” Rather than allowing the conversation to range over the whole Psalter, four Psalms were chosen for examination. These were Psalms 2, 22, 45, 110.

Each participant prepared to lead a full day of discussion covering each of the Psalms that were engaged from a different perspective. However, we were clear from the outset that the purpose of the meeting was to present notes and discussion questions and to engage in conversation rather than coming to the meeting with completed papers. The goal was to foster dialogue and inquiry and then allow papers to develop out of the resulting conversation and the study that had taken place beforehand. The participants came from a variety of viewpoints that included representation from both Old and New Testament as well as methods ranging from historical to literary to theological. After a week spent in discussion over books, notes, meals, and walks, the participants agreed on a set of shared headings and questions to guide their work during the coming months. Each junior scholar was asked to provide an introduction that laid out the methodological lens through which they were reading the text and then to engage with the following discussion points: 1) a summary of the historical and literary setting and exegetical issues of the psalm in the OT; 2) a summary of the historical and literary setting and exegetical issues of the psalm in the NT; 3) a discussion of the hermeneutical process by which the NT uses the OT in reference to the particular

Psalm under discussion; and 4) the contemporary relevance of this discussion for the church today. The essays that are before you are the result of both the individual research of the scholars represented as well as hours of conversation and engagement over the course of our time together. We are grateful to the *Crucible Journal* for the opportunity to present all four essays together in one issue. This is the culmination of a process of study and preparation, discussion and further research, and writing, revision, and editing following our time together.

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