

Klein, George L. *Reclaiming the Prophetic Mantle: Preaching the Old Testament Faithfully*. Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1998 reprint. (315 pp.)

*Reclaiming the Prophetic Mantle (RPM)* is comprised of fourteen essays written by conservative evangelical scholars, most of who teach in Southern Baptists colleges, universities, or Seminaries. The intent of the book is to reclaim the Old Testament as regular preaching material for the modern New Testament Church. One of the important observations presented in *RPM* is that the Old Testament was without question the Scriptures of the early New Testament Church. The Old Testament clearly shaped the way they thought about God, and their calling as believers to love, serve, worship, and glorify Him. Just as important was the way the Old Testament shaped the New Testament doctrines related to the identity and mission of Jesus of Nazareth (p. 132).

*RPM* begins with a brief essay reiterating the need for preaching from the Old Testament in modern churches. The strongest argument in the essay deals with the importance of the Old Testament to developing a proper theological understanding of the teaching of the New Testament apostles (p. 11). The next section consists of five essays explaining how to preach from the different Old Testament genres. While this section is helpful, it should be read alongside other more substantive works. Perhaps the best essay in the group is Bergen's on preaching from the Old Testament Law. He has many helpful insights, and provides a basic framework for dealing with the role of the Law today. One wishes for a clearer statement that the Law in its entirety has been fulfilled, and that believers now live under the Law of Christ, which contains some of the moral precepts that were in the Mosaic Law as well as what Bergen calls the Noachian Law. However, a careful reader will profit much from the essay.

The second section of the book consists of four essays that attempt to relate major theological themes from the Old Testament to the New Testament. Sloan's article on the use of the Old Testament is helpful but overly simplistic. Beasley-Murray's article, "The Kingdom of God in the Old and New Testaments," is perhaps the best written article in the section. However, strong Dispensationalists will take issue with him at certain key points. He does argue for a future literal kingdom for Israel; however, he believes that Jesus inaugurated a form of that kingdom when He was here on earth. Much if not most of the latter part of his essay deals with kingdom applications for the present, and mentions next to nothing of the eschatological implications and realities of that kingdom.

The final section of the book consists of three chapters that attempt to set out a challenge to the contemporary Church by showing what can happen if her preachers return to this section of God's Word. The essays by C. Richard Wells and James Emery White address different ways in which the Old Testament should be applied by contemporary believers to the culture in which they live. White contends that the Old Testament was used by God to instruct Israel in dealing with the social, political, ethical/moral, and spiritual evil of the surrounding pagan cultures, and, consequently, has much to say to the Church when she finds herself in a similar situation.

Overall RPM makes a fine contribution to the literature on this topic. However, much of the material seems to be overly repeated in more than one essay. Additionally, the book seems oriented more to motivating the reader to preach the Old Testament than it is to providing specific help in doing so. There are examples in a few of the chapters, but even when present, they don't engage the reader in a clear step-by-step process in which the principles used to formulate the sermon from the particular genre or passage

are demonstrated. It seems that the editors attempted to do too much in the book. In attempting to address issues of genre, theology, and contemporary relevance in twelve brief essays, they promised more than any one could reasonably expect them to deliver. What they did say in most cases was helpful and accurate, but most readers who have attended seminary or even a Bible college will almost certainly have been through much of the material in the second section of the book (theological relationship to the NT), and probably some of the material in the first section (hermeneutics and genre) as well. However, for those who have not had prior exposure to these areas, the book will provide a helpful introduction to the issues related to preaching from the Old Testament.