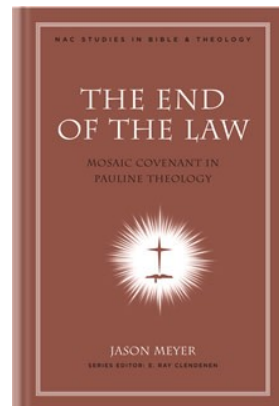


The End of the Law: Mosaic Covenant in Pauline Theology

Book Details:

- Author: Jason C. Meyer
- Category: Theology
- Publisher: B & H Academic (2009)
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- Page count: 331
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- Rating: Highly Recommended



Review:

The nature of how the Mosaic Law relates to the Gospel and the new covenant is a perennially problematic question. Luther and Calvin wrestled over this, and we continue to wrestle over this down to today. Jason C. Meyer picks up his pen to try and tackle this problem in his book *The End of the Law: Mosaic Covenant in Pauline Theology*, as part of the New American Commentary Studies in Bible and Theology from Broadman and Holman.

With such an enormous topic, it is doubtful that Meyer will please everyone. And while I found much that was excellent in his book, there were moments where I thought he didn't handle something well enough and times where I wished he would have dealt with a topic that he passed over. But I can't fault Meyer for not tackling head-on, an important question. He does an able job dealing with this question and his book was truly a joy to read.

Meyer's book presents the problem of how the Mosaic covenant is handled in Paul and then focuses on the old/new antithesis in Paul as the solution to this problem. He studies Paul's epistles to see how Paul himself presents the old vs. the new, and particularly how he talks of the covenant. From this a few key passages are identified and discussed in detail: 2 Corinthians 3-4, Galatians 3-4, and Romans 9-11. Then after dealing with Paul's theology of the old and new, Meyer goes to the Old Testament himself to see if he can harmonize Paul with the Old Testament's own description of the Mosaic covenant, in its own terms.

Meyer's conclusions are that Paul sees a difference between the Old covenant and New Covenant in eschatological terms. The old was ineffectual and is proven so by the presence of the new covenant in the here and now. With the dawn of the new age, the old covenant is seen for how ineffectual it was. The new covenant has the power to create lasting change through the presence of the Spirit in far greater measure than in the old.

Along the way, Meyer offers a masterful analysis of the texts he covers and models a careful, yet thoroughly evangelical approach to Scripture, which focuses on the authorial intent and canonical form of the text. My primary issue with his exegesis is in his making too much of Romans 11 and failing to deal adequately with the fact that in the new covenant we still have those who are visible members but not actual partakers of the covenant. I also wish he would deal more explicitly with the question of Israel and the Church: does the old/new antithesis in Paul imply that the church should be seen as the new and fuller expression of believing Israel? I suspect Meyer would say yes, but he doesn't come right out and address this.

The book makes for a fascinating read, and will be appreciated by lay students as well as pastors and scholars. Knowledge of exegesis and theology will help in being able to appreciate the book more, however. Meyer writes with clarity and has a knack for boiling down complex issues and explaining what other more technical writers are saying. He interacts with the voluminous literature on the topic well, and maintains a thoroughly evangelical approach throughout. This is a refreshing read and I highly recommend it.

Author Info:

Jason C. Meyer is associate professor of New Testament at Bethlehem College and Seminary in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Previously he was assistant professor of religion (New Testament and Greek) at Louisiana College in Pineville, Louisiana. He holds degrees from Oklahoma Wesleyan University (B.S.) and The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (M. Div., Ph. D.).

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