



By

Mark McGee

Biblical Theology: How The Church Faithfully Teaches The Gospel (Crossway, 2018) by Nick Roark and Robert Cline is part of the 9Marks series that looks at building healthy churches.

The authors begin with a strong statement that it is the responsibility of every Christian to help build a healthy church. That is the basic premise of the 9Marks series.

In *Biblical Theology*, Roark and Cline look first at the need for Biblical Theology, then explain what it is, the Bible's "big story," and how Biblical Theology shapes both a church's teaching and mission.

"Simply put, you won't understand the story of the Bible unless you see that it's all about Jesus! From Genesis to Revelation, Jesus is the Hero and the point of the story. What's more, you won't understand who Jesus is unless you understand the larger story that's all about him! Jesus is the interpretative key to the Bible, which means a careful Bible reader will find him

in the beginning, middle, and end of this story.”
Biblical Theology, p 17

The authors also believe, as do I, that Biblical theology helps guard the church and guide it into evangelistic outreach. It also helps Christians “read, understand, and teach the Bible way Jesus said we should.”

Two of the **major** problems in the Church today are false gospels and false teachers. Roark and Cline list several of the primary offenders including “The Prosperity-Gospel Church” and “The Civil-Gospel Church.”

The solution is simple and direct –

“Biblical theology provides that framework because it guides our reading of the Bible and therefore guards against bad interpretation. Biblical theology is an approach to reading the whole story of the Bible while keeping our focus on the main point of Scripture, Jesus Christ. In other words, biblical theology is the scriptural road map that leads us to Jesus.” p 23

“The prosperity gospel and other false messages make the Bible all about us, when in reality it’s all about Christ.” p 123

I love the tone of the book in addition to the content. Both authors have a solid understanding of Biblical theology.

“If we’re reading the road map of Scripture correctly, it should always lead us to Jesus and who we are as his people.” p 30

“The very heart of the Bible’s message is the good and right reign of God over all his people and over all his creation.¹ The story of Scripture, then, is the story of God the King, and his loving and gracious purposes of saving a people for himself to delight in his glorious presence forever. Understanding this story brings us to the center of all reality. Come soon, King Jesus.” p 74

I highly recommend *Biblical Theology: How The Church Faithfully Teaches The Gospel* to you, your family, friends, and teachers and pastors at your church. The authors share many **Preaching and Teaching Tips** pastors and teachers will find helpful in ensuring the accuracy of their message.

“... biblical theology helps guide preachers and teachers toward evangelistic, Christ-centered exposition that emphasizes the glorious Hero of the whole story, Jesus Christ.” p 75

The Authors

Nick Roark is pastor of Franconia Baptist Church in Alexandria, Virginia.

Robert Cline is the managing director for training content and curriculum at the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Publisher Description

“How does the church guard against false gospels?”

Every week, many churches around the world read the Bible but miss the main point—and end up teaching false gospels week in and week out. One of the most important safeguards against this danger is an understanding of biblical theology: reading the Bible in light of its main message, culminating in Jesus Christ.

Starting with a framework for understanding the storyline of the Bible and then explaining basic principles for prioritizing the teaching of this message, this book aims to help churches guard the truth of the gospel.”

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Reviews

“This little book packs a big punch. Absorb its contents, and feel its effect for years to come.” Constantine R. Campbell, Associate Professor of New Testament, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

“Faithful preaching and teaching not only zooms in on a particular text but also zooms out and considers the storyline of the whole Bible. Nick Roark and Robert Cline show how biblical theology is essential for the church, for preaching, and for living. They survey the big picture of the Scriptures and show us some wrong turns that are commonly made. A very helpful resource for pastors, teachers, and laypeople.” Thomas R. Schreiner, James Buchanan Harrison Professor of New Testament Interpretation and Professor of Biblical Theology, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

“I love biblical theology, but I don’t always love biblical theology books. Too often, they are so technically written that they miss the majority of believers. This book is an exception. The authors not only define, defend, and describe biblical theology but also do so in a way that is accessible to all believers. This book is simple while addressing complex ideas, short but packed with information, and theoretical yet filled with practical examples of doing biblical theology. It is both a call to do biblical theology and a handbook for doing it well. I finished it with a deeper desire to see Jesus in the Word and to help my church members do the same.” Chuck Lawless, Dean of Doctoral Studies and Vice President for Spiritual Formation, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary; author, *Spiritual Warfare: Biblical Truth for Victory and Putting on the Armor*

“There is not a single effective biblical expositor today who does not employ biblical theology to make sense of his text and to deliver its Christ-centered message. Roark and Cline explain in a very clear and direct way how biblical theology helps the church and pastors to understand and proclaim the big story from Scriptures.” Augustus Lopes, Pastor, First Presbyterian Church, Goiânia, Brazil

“Wow—this short book bundles a library of wisdom for grasping God’s biblical storyline and faithfully teaching the Word! The authors have done us all a great favor by distilling heavy biblical concepts and making them simple, user-friendly, and transferable. This is the kind of book you want to hand out to a Sunday school teacher, an aspiring pastor, or a missionary candidate. Well-meaning Bible teachers often take the easy path of proof texting to make a ‘practical lesson,’ but miss the larger theme, the glorious centerpiece of the passage. A wonderful tool for keeping me on track as a missionary and for teaching new converts how to study and teach the Word, this small book should be translated into many languages!” David L. Frazier,

Executive Director, Equipping Servants International;
author, Mission Smart

“This brief book explains important theological concepts in a clear, faithful, simple way. It is perfect for those in the church who might find an in-depth academic book a challenge, but who want to understand sound theology and grasp the biblical concepts needed in order to teach the gospel well. This is an excellent resource, and I can’t wait to recommend it to my women’s ministry team.” Abi Byrd, former missionary to the Balkans; Bible Instructor, The Simeon Trust; Deacon of Women’s Ministry, Loudoun Valley Baptist Church, Purcellville, Virginia

“A believer is measured by faithfulness, and it is imperative that a believer know how to be faithful to the Word of God, our one timeless authority. Through explanation and example, Nick and Robert’s book simply and helpfully instructs believers on how to rightly understand individual biblical passages while always keeping in mind the big picture that Christ is the goal and end of all Scripture. I highly recommend it as an invaluable companion for any

believer desiring to hear the words, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant.’” Ndagi Job Goshi, international bivocational church planter

“Biblical theology is a frequently ignored subject, despite being indispensable to understanding the entire Bible. The authors of this excellent book realize the importance of this topic for comprehending the storyline of redemptive history. If you are looking for a resource that explains and applies biblical theology well, this is your book. It is biblical, well written, easy to understand, practical, brief yet not superficial, full of information, and extremely helpful for preaching and pastoral ministry. I’m amazed at how much solid instruction was put into such a short book.” Miguel Núñez, Senior Pastor, International Baptist Church of Santo Domingo; President and Founder, Wisdom and Integrity Ministries

“As an elder of a church located in one of the major global crossroads of the world, I long to equip Christians who will return to challenging places where they often face persecution and false teaching. Biblical theology is a critical tool to help Christians protect and proclaim the gospel. I am immensely grateful for this book and excited to see it used to strengthen the global church. It strikes the perfect balance of breadth and depth, easily translates across cultural and language backgrounds, and will help all Christians better see, celebrate, and communicate the gospel.” Andrew Gizinski, Elder, RAK Evangelical Church, Ras Al Khaimah, United Arab Emirates

“Nick and Robert have accomplished something rare in a field this broad. They have succinctly clarified the core of biblical theology without oversimplifying the process. Every Christian will benefit from the numerous examples of how an informed biblical theology transforms how we read, apply, and teach the Bible. This is a trustworthy map down the Emmaus road, where the discovery of Christ in all the Scriptures delights the heart.” Chip Bugnar, author, *Grace Beyond the Veil*

“In this book full of powerful, illuminating illustrations, Roark and Cline argue convincingly that seeing how the storyline of the Bible is all about Jesus Christ equips every believer to serve him in line with the purpose of God. Read this book and see for yourself! The phrase biblical theology may give you the impression that this is a textbook only for Bible colleges or pastoral training. But here is a must-read book for every Christian because we are all meant to be stewards of the church of Christ.” Conrad Mbewe, Pastor, Kabwata Baptist Church; Chancellor, The African Christian University, Lusaka, Zambia

“Trying to put together the various historical epochs and literary genres of the sixty-six books of Scripture into one consistent whole can seem like a daunting task. In this eminently readable and practical book, Roark and Cline help us to see that this difficult task might not be so hard after all; for, as Jesus says, all Scripture points to him. The authors are to be commended for writing a book to help Bible teacher and student alike to understand the point of God’s Word and protect us from applying it in wrong ways to our lives and our churches.” Shawn D. Wright, Professor

of Church History, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary; Pastor of Leadership Development, Clifton Baptist Church, Louisville

“As a pastor I’m often asked for a brief book that provides the Bible’s storyline and unity, centered on the crucified and risen Lord Jesus Christ. From now on, this book is my answer. But this work does more than describe biblical theology; it shows the reader how this often neglected discipline can guard us against numerous errors—in both our interpretation of Scripture and the practice of the church.” Lee Tankersley, Pastor, Cornerstone Community Church, Jackson, Tennessee

“I have been on the lookout for a book on biblical theology that I could confidently hand to any person in my church. I have finally found it. This book is an answer to prayer.” Jason Meyer, Pastor for Preaching and Vision, Bethlehem Baptist Church, Minneapolis

Biblical Theology: How The Church Faithfully Teaches The Gospel (Crossway, 2018, 160 pages)

[We received an electronic review copy from Crossway]

“Scripture taken from the New King James Version.
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permission. All rights reserved.”

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