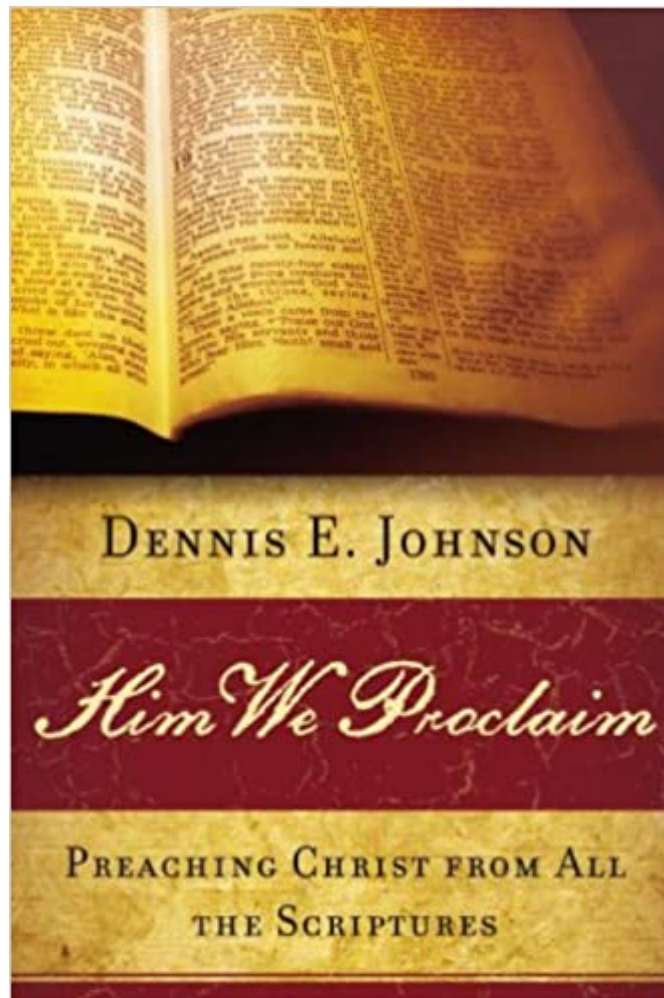


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# Him We Proclaim: Preaching Christ From All The Scriptures



## Synopsis

Challenging modern preachers to expound the Bible like Peter and Paul, *Him We Proclaim* makes the hermeneutical and historical case for a return to apostolic preaching; preaching that is Christ-centered, redemptive-historical, missiologically communicated, and grounded in grace. But moving beyond theory, *Him We Proclaim* provides examples of how this method applies to all Old and New Testament genres, from history and law to psalm and prophecy to doctrine and exhortation.

## Book Information

Paperback: 512 pages

Publisher: P & R Publishing (April 12, 2007)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1596380543

ISBN-13: 978-1596380547

Product Dimensions: 6.1 x 1.1 x 8.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.4 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars 15 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #166,223 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #146 in [Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Ministry & Evangelism > Preaching](#) #34100 in [Books > Religion & Spirituality](#)

## Customer Reviews

"This book holds the promise of the recovery of biblical preaching for those who will give themselves to the demanding and glorious task of setting each text within the context of God's redemptive plan. This is a book that belongs on every preacher's bookshelf." --R. Albert Mohler Jr., President, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

"Apostolic hermeneutics? Dare we read the Scripture backward as well as forward? Dennis Johnson's answer is a marvelously informed and convincing 'yes!' *Him We Proclaim* is sure to be widely read and discussed both in the academy and by groups of serious-minded preachers of the Word." --R. Kent Hughes, Senior Pastor Emeritus, College Church, Wheaton, IL

"If only we could learn to preach like Peter and Paul. The wish becomes solid reality in Dennis Johnson's wonderful advocacy of preaching Jesus Christ in the twenty-first century as the apostles did in the first. Under Johnson's tutelage, preaching apostolic, Christ-centered, redemptive-historical, missiological sermons that are grace-driven becomes a dream within reach." --Bryan Chapell, President and Professor of Practical Theology, Covenant Theological Seminary, and author of *Christ-Centered Preaching*

Dennis E. Johnson is Academic Dean and Professor of Practical Theology at Westminster Seminary California. He has written *Triumph of the Lamb*, *Walking with Jesus through His Word*, *The Message of Acts in the History of Redemption*, *Him We Proclaim*, and *Philippians* (part of the *Reformed Expository Commentary* series). He and his wife, Jane, have four grown children and many grandchildren.

I was not fortunate enough to attend a seminary where Biblical Theology or intertextual approaches were widely popular. Had it not been for a single Professor who opened my mind on this account, I might have gone on thinking that all contemporary evangelical hermeneutical models were unnecessarily limiting. Following the breadcrumbs giving by this professor in looking for a better approach I ultimately ended up here at Dennis Johnson's "*Him We Proclaim*." I was hampered, however, by the fact that the book is billed as a preaching text, when its greatest impact is as a hermeneutics text. The book makes the bold claim that modern evangelical rules are not only different from Apostolic methods, but that apostolic methods should be used by us. The excitement begins in the introduction and promotional quotes where one can sense that Johnson not only pushes the boundaries but defends them extremely well. A lifetime of study built on a generation of recovery of Biblical Theology starting with the work of Edmund Clowney led to this fabulous work. The crux and the power of the book is that he actually demonstrates the apostolic method by working his way through the book of Hebrews. Taking Hebrews as an apostolic commentary on the Old Testament and therefore a textbook on how to interpret the OT, he demonstrates how to do it. In doing so, he finally gives us the intellectual models which allow us to close the gap between anointed preaching and Biblical interpretation.

This has proved to be an insightful and helpful read. I think that the chapter on New Covenant and New Creation are a must read for any preacher who truly wants to preach Christ. I appreciate that Johnson champions "apostolic" preaching of New Covenant that is not necessarily Paedobaptist (I'm a Baptist) but instead thoroughly advocates Christ as the consummation of the new covenant. Some of the chapters seem needlessly long, but all in all, a great resource.

Excellent book on seeing and preaching Christ from all of Scriptures. The portion on how the OT interprets the OT is just great and insightful, and so helpful. Every Reformed pastor should be familiar with the materials in this book :)

Great insights into preaching from Old Testament and New Testament. Johnson gives the history of interpreting Scripture which I found beneficial. I found it a bit hard to read, but it is more academic than devotional. Good resource for preaching.

Dennis Johnson helps pastors unlock the whole bible, particularly the Old Testament for expository preaching that is edifying and Christ centered, without straying into moral lessons or far fetched typology.

thanks

This was a great book. Although it is not one I could read cover to cover. I was looking for a book that really laid out a Christology of the Old Testament and how to preach Christ. Instead the author's premise is more built around 2 Timothy 3:16-17 than around Jesus as the focal point of the Scriptures. If you're looking to do some deep reading on this topic I would recommend this book. Yet, there might be other books that are better that I would order first.

How should the modern pastor or teacher take the Old Testament (the Tanakh), a series of books written thousands of years ago, and relate it to life in the modern world? This is a question of some urgency in the modern world, a question embedded in the larger question of how the Church can be (or become, in the thinking of many pastors), relevant to the world in which we actually live. The theme Dennis E. Johnson takes in *Him We Proclaim* is this is not a unique problem -- the Church has been here before, and has solved this problem before. In finding relevance in today's world, the Church should look back to the Apostles, and the way they made the Scriptures they had available, the Tanakh, relevant to the situation they found themselves in. Framed in this way, the problem moves into more familiar territory: how do the writers of the New Testament, the Apostles, use the Tanakh? The author begins this book by noting that the answer to this question is primarily theological; that the Scriptures are one unified set of books telling one unified story. Discovering this single story will allow modern preachers and teachers to make the entire Bible relevant to our modern culture. The key to discovering this single unifying story is, for Johnson, understanding how the Apostles used the Tanakh. To lay this foundation, Johnson works through the priorities of preaching, and then examines Paul's Preaching, to reach an understanding of what he calls Apostolic Christ Centered Preaching. He then examines objections to this type of preaching,

including the objections of those who read the Scriptures more literally, and those who read the Scriptures more allegorically. In the second part of the book, the author works through a "practical guide for the modern preacher," ending in an appendix providing a step by step instruction set for putting this method of preaching into practice. Here the author provides three main themes, Preaching Christ, Preaching the Promises, and Preaching the Promise Keeper. Johnson's work has some foundational problems, however. He begins with the assumption that the Church Fathers, those leaders who followed the Apostles, kept the path of "Apostilistic Preaching" alive, but that this style of preaching was overcome by the belief that the Church replaces Israel on the one side, and the reaction of literal reading on the other side. The reality is far different -- the two groups that didn't want to read the Scriptures literally immediately after the Apostles left the scene were the some elements of the Church's leadership and some elements of the Jewish leadership. In the one case the goal was to gain social status for the Church, in the other to prove the Church was wrong. A second problem he faces, or never resolves, is what the relationship between "preaching Christ," and "preaching salvation," really is. The author insists that Christ centered preaching is the answer to the problem, but constantly lapses into salvation and personal holiness as the narrative through which Christ is preached. For instance: "Whether the focus is on personal holiness, corporate responsibility within the church, or cultural engagement, the objective of "preaching to edify" is to engage Christians in the intentional pursuit of transformation in both behavior and relationships." Kindle Location 709 The reader is never told why preaching Christ should center on improving the moral condition of man, rather than on actually preaching Christ. The author seems to leave out the steps of a changed mind and a changed heart; it is through better thinking that Christians can learn to make better decisions, rising to become the witness of the world God intended. Better thinking requires a focus on Christ, rather than on the story of salvation or personal piety. Johnson often lapses into "salvation as the central theme" as well, mixing his themes in various places. These issues swamp the usefulness of this work. The author, in an attempt to find a "middle way" between the literal hermeneutic of the conservative, and the allegorical hermeneutic of the liberal, finds a mixed bag of possibilities, finally resulting in resorting to the allegorical hermeneutic of the liberal with the caveat of "pay attention to the original context." No matter how strongly the reader believes they must pay attention to the original context, the reader who takes this line will always fall into comparing the weight of the original context against the weight of making the Scriptures "relevant," and will virtually always find relevance to have more heft than the dictum. Overall, well written and well thought out. The argument is structured nicely, and the practical application is a welcome addition to books that fundamentally resolve to hermeneutical issues. The author's assumptions

aren't well explained, and drive the final point into the very place the author is trying to avoid, however.

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