



BOOK-LEVEL MEANING: A NEGLECTED BUT ESSENTIAL TOOL FOR PREACHING

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ABSTRACT

In the realm of homiletics, much attention is given to the understanding of the particular details of a passage, as well as how that passage speaks Christologically, within its canonical context. While these are needful elements of the hermeneutical and homiletical enterprise, one must also understand a passage within the context of the book it is contained in. Book-level meaning allows authorial intent to be guarded at the macro-level, considering not merely a passage or chapter, but how such a unit of thought fits within the entirety of the author's distinctive approach and argumentation. This article will contend that book-level meaning serves as a key hermeneutical tool that should be used in preaching in ways that are exegetically faithful and witness to Messiah and our calling to follow him in accordance with the author's intent.

INTRODUCTION

"And that's what the book of _____ is all about." So ends many of the frequently watched videos put out by the Bible Project.¹ While there are a number of videos on biblical themes and the various genre contained within Scripture, the most useful videos, in my estimation, are those that summarize an entire book of the Bible visually within a 7-8 minute span. Many of the students I teach are aware of these videos, which are even

embedded in an app (Read Scripture) that guides you in reading through the Bible in a year, and have been helped in understanding the main message of larger, more neglected books like Isaiah, Jeremiah, or Numbers. These resources have reminded us that book-level meaning really matters.

Hermeneutics and homiletics textbooks focus much of their energy on understanding the details of a particular passage with tools, such as word studies, sentence diagramming, block diagramming, syntactical analysis, and the like. Over the last several decades in particular, attention has also been given to understanding passages Christocentrically, and/or within its canonical context.² And these matters are essential to the interpretive enterprise, as well as for responsible preaching. However, what does not always garner as much attention is the need to understand a passage within the context of the book it is contained in.³

Book-level meaning allows authorial intent to be guarded at the macro-level, considering not merely a passage or chapter, but how such a unit of thought fits within the entirety of the author's distinctive approach and argumentation. This can also be useful when thinking through how a given Old Testament (OT) passage points forward to Christ, or how we venture from Christ's work to the application of a text to our own lives. Wanting to do justice to texts like Luke 24 and John 5 where Jesus speaks of the Law, Prophets, and Writings witnessing to him, while at the same time seeking to do so in a textually responsible manner, passages can be brought back to book-level meanings to see how the author is pointing readers to Messiah.

This paper will contend that book-level meaning serves as a key hermeneutical tool that should be used in preaching in ways that are exegetically faithful and witness to Messiah and our calling to follow him in accordance with the author's intent. As such, this paper will speak briefly to the need to address the passage-level, book-level, Testament-level, and canon-level meaning of a text, focus in on how one understands the book-level meaning, give practical counsel on how to keep the book-level context in mind when preaching passages, as well as how

to preach a sermon on a whole book, and, finally, offer two specific examples of what this would actually look like in practice.

VARIOUS LEVELS OF CONTEXT

Passage-Level

When someone speaks of passage-level context, they are typically referring to a paragraph, argument, story, coherent set of images, or a song seen in Scripture with a clear and logical beginning and end. Essentially, a passage will consist of a chain of clauses that should be read together to get the full intent and meaning of that section.⁴ Typically, this will also comprise the unit that one will preach to a congregation.⁵

Understanding passage-level context will involve determining the specific genre, translating the passage from its original language, and engaging in detailed discourse analysis and exegetical outlining. These steps are key to see the fine details of the content one is dealing with. This is often a massive focus for the preacher, and rightfully so, but study does not end here.

Book-Level

The focus of this paper will concern book-level context. In fact, Osborne recommends we start at this level to really understand the meaning of a smaller passage: “first, we chart the whole of a book to analyze its flow of thought in preliminary fashion; next, we study each part intensively in order to detect the detailed argumentation; finally, we rework the thought development of the whole in relation to the parts. We move from the whole book to its major sections and then to its paragraphs and finally to its individual sentences.”⁶ If we hope to get a clear view of a passage we must understand the book as a whole and refer people to that level of meaning often.

More will be said regarding this level of context later in the paper.⁷

Testament-Level

The passage one is preaching will be contained within a book, and that book will be contained within a Testament. The Bible is a two-Testament book, signifying those books that are anticipating Messiah and those that speak of his arrival, his person, work, and the call of the gospel to all nations. One could, in other words, summarize the OT as a series of promises made and the New Testament (NT) demonstrating how those promises are kept, all in the context of Jesus Christ.⁸ Which Testament a passage is found in will shape and determine how one preaches that text, considering various details as well as the passage's location in redemptive history. Thus, Testament-level context quickly takes us to one other realm of context, namely, canonical.

Canon-Level

The canonical level of context means that as we think about a particular passage we will preach, we consider it in light of the book it is found in, the Testament it is contained in, and then how it fits in the midst of the whole Bible. The Bible, while filled with many books, contains one unified story (Rom. 1:1-6), many authors, but one overarching author (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21). Thus, preaching demands that we think in terms of biblical theology.

Biblical theology is the study of the whole Bible on its own terms⁹ to the end that we understand and embrace the interpretive perspective of the biblical authors.¹⁰ Biblical theology makes textual and salvation-historical connections by means of noting continuity and discontinuity between the Testaments, promise and fulfillment, typology, and the NT use of the OT (as well as the OT use of the OT). As a discipline it analyzes and synthesizes the whole canon on its own terms, showing how the Testaments integrate, and the covenants

(Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, New) and promises of God climax in Christ (2 Cor. 1:20).¹¹

UNDERSTANDING THE BOOK-LEVEL MEANING

All of these aspects of context are crucial when studying Scripture and laboring to preach a passage to a particular group of people. However, as has been stated earlier, it does seem at times that book-level context in hermeneutics and for homiletics can be a neglected area. Thus, it is to this level of context that we turn our attention for the remainder of the paper.

Again, if we hope to get a clear view of a passage we must understand the book as a whole and refer people to that level of meaning often. The first key step in understanding book-level meaning is to read the entire book in one sitting. This may sound easy for books like *Jude* or *Philippians*, but it is certainly more of a challenge for *Luke* or *Isaiah*! This is essential to understanding the overall flow and message of the book, and is just our normal way of reading. For example, we do not read emails one paragraph at a time only over several days, breaking them down for analysis. Instead we read the whole thing. While certainly daunting when thinking of reading *Psalms* in one sitting, most books can be read in one sitting in two hours or less (we watch movies and shows for at least that length of time).¹² Reading the book through in one sitting multiple times (at least 3-4 in preparation) to understand the overall flow and argumentation is essential for properly interpreting a passage in light of its overall book-level context.

This reading of the book, when approached intentionally, gives interpreters a much better comprehension of the structure of the book and, thereby, a fuller overall picture when approaching a specific passage. Carson rightly maintains, "It is essential to develop literary sensitivity—or to put it another way, to become a good reader. . . . Above all, good reading goes with the flow. Although it is always worth meditating on individual words and phrases (especially in discourse), even so the meaning of those words is shaped by their context. Good readers will

diligently strive to make sense of the flow of the argument."¹³ As one understands the flow of the argument of the book it is valuable at this point to write out a one-sentence summary of the entire book. This is good to capture the essence of the message of the entirety of that particular book, and will likely get minor adjustments through further study.

After reading through the book in one sitting several times and writing out the book's theme in a sentence the preacher is then better equipped to go through book at a slower pace since the overall context is now in his mind. At this point it is best to break the book down into its natural seams (chapter and verse breaks may or may not help you here). This would mean seeing the larger sections of the book (e.g., Gen. 1-11; 12-50), as well as the discrete passages that stand on their own in terms of their contribution to the book overall (e.g., breaking down Genesis into smaller, more manageable sections). Depending on the genre, this could mean breaking the book down into distinct narratives, sections of an argument, or a particular chapter.¹⁴ We should read these distinct sections, again multiple times, and then write a brief summary for each section.¹⁵

At this point in the study of the book you would have before you a one-sentence summary of the entire book and summary sentences of each section within that book. This is needful for the exegetical rigors to come, as well as thinking through the book's place within the entire canon. As an interpreter, one cannot manage to understand distinct details of a paragraph until they know the overall flow of the book and where and how that paragraph fits in. This is essential for our hermeneutics, and it should also shape our homiletics.

KEEPING THE BOOK-LEVEL MEANING IN MIND FOR PREACHING

Preaching is the task of stewarding and heralding God's Word such that the people of God encounter God by means of His Word.¹⁶ While philosophies of preaching differ, this paper is assuming that many preachers will be preaching in an expository

fashion, likely through whole books of the Bible, as a significant portion of their preaching calendar throughout the year. If that is the case, all that has spoken of thus far does not apply merely to the hermeneutical side of things, but also to homiletics. Book-level meaning is significant for preachers.

This is true for at least three reasons. First, we need to train who listen to our sermons to be good readers of whole books. This will allow listeners to consider that level of context as a guide for their understanding of smaller passages within the book. If we can do this effectively, we will help our people become more faithful as students of the Word in their own personal study. Second, the focus on book-level meaning could help listeners make textual connections they have yet to make. For example, church members likely think of 1, 2 Samuel as separate books that tell a continuing story, but are not aware of literary links that bind the whole narrative together. This can be seen in the connection of Hannah's song (1 Sam. 2:1-10) and David's song (2 Sam. 22:1-51), which tell of a main theme in the book, namely, God puts down those who are prideful and lifts up the oppressed and humble.

Finally, book-level meaning is significant for preachers because it is a way to bring your hearers back to the main theme of the book and, by virtue of that, show them the theocentric/Christological significance of the book as a whole. This is not the only way to think of Christ in all of Scripture, but it is a strategic, and textually faithful (and sometimes neglected) way to bring church members to a place where they can responsibly see God's work in Christ throughout all of Scripture, as well as textually fitting application for today.

With these points in mind consideration will now be given to the preaching of a particular passage with book-level meaning in mind, as well as how a preacher could go about responsibly preaching an entire book in one sermon.

In Preaching a Particular Passage

Let's suppose a preacher is in the midst of a series working through a book of the Bible. At this point the preacher will have read the whole book numerous times, summarized the book in one sentence, summarized the various sections in a sentence each, and will have already preached several messages in the series. The temptation will be to focus on the task at hand (the passage to preach) and potentially forget about the overarching message of the book as a whole. A preacher can also say the idea of the book each week, but do so redundantly in a way that eventually falls on deaf ears.

Strategically, therefore, a preacher needs to keep in mind several matters when preaching a text and wanting to keep book-level context in the minds of their hearers. First, throughout the preaching series continue to read the whole book in one sitting (perhaps once a week). This will keep the big idea of the book fresh in your mind. Second, consider memorizing large sections of the book, or even the entire book itself. Again, this will keep you invested in the breadth of the book as much of your time will now be focused on depth. Third, on some occasions, remind your congregation of the main idea of the whole book as part of your introduction. Doing this at strategic moments allows one to remind the audience, but not do so to the point of boredom. Help them connect the passage to the larger argument of the book as a whole.

Fourth, connect the context of your passage in varying ways to the big idea of the book. This could be a connection to a particular explanation or application. Finally, as you speak of how the book points to Christ, or from his work toward application, use the main idea of the book as a means of taking your hearers to that point. This will bring them through passage, book, Testament, and canonical-level contexts, which is excellent for their reading of the Bible as a whole. None of these approaches should be used every time in preaching, but it is good to tether the passage you are preaching to the overarching theme

as the book-level context is the main context one must consider for understanding.

In Preaching a Whole Book

Another approach to keeping the book-level context in mind while preaching is to preach a message that encapsulates an entire book of the Bible. Mark Dever differentiates such sermons from those that are more typical in evangelical churches. "Some people preach *topical* sermons, which focus on a particular topic such as money, parenting, or repentance. . . . Other people preach *expositional* sermons. An expositional sermon takes a portion of Scripture, explains it, and then applies it to the life of the congregation."¹⁷ Each of these types of sermons have their place, though, if we are going to preach the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27), exposition should be the norm for proclaiming the Word to our congregation. Dever classifies sermons that preach through an entire book in one message as expositional in nature, but "rather than looking at particular Scripture through a microscope, we are looking down from an airplane."¹⁸

Dever terms these types of messages as overview sermons (i.e., sermons that make book-level meaning their main emphasis): "An overview sermon attempts to give the burden of one particular book in a single message. If a typical expositional sermon makes the point of the biblical text the point of the sermon, an overview sermon simply makes the point of the whole book the point of the sermon. . . . aspects of God and his plan can be seen most clearly not only when studying the microscopic structure of one phrase in one verse but when examining a book as a whole."¹⁹ While preaching in this way can be complex on a number of levels, this is an effective approach to allow church members to think about the overall context of a book. This kind of sermon could begin or end a series, but seems most logical to use at the front end.

When preaching an entire book in one sermon, several matters need to be kept in mind. First, one simply cannot speak to every detail contained within the book. This may seem

obvious, but the temptation in study will tend toward including important details from various passages within the book. However, with sermons like of this kind, one must differentiate between what is important and what is essential, focusing on the latter for preaching to our congregation. Second, while a great deal of time and focus could be spent on background information (author, recipient, cultural and historical details, etc.), it is vital that the majority of this kind of sermon focus on the actual text of the book. This demonstrates that our hearers are able to do study and see the kinds of things we will point out as faithful Bible readers. It is Scripture that transforms (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

Third, it will be helpful to your congregation to have both a one-sentence big idea for the book, as well as a breakdown of the key sections of the book. This is true because one will be easy to recall and refer to again and again, but the breakdown of sections will give our people a better idea of how to locate specific passages in the overall book. Both items are useful. Fourth, place the book in its larger canonical context. In other words, use these kinds of sermons to help your people understand the overarching storyline of Scripture. And finally, when preaching through a whole book in one sermon, keep your audience in mind. This is an opportunity to show them that books written millennia ago were written for future readers as well. Hosea may have spoken to Israel in a particular time period, but it is still calling us away from spiritual adultery to worship of the true God. Sermons on whole books have great value for teaching your people about book-level meaning.

TEST CASES

Having considered some key principles of book-level meaning and the impact it can have on our approach to preaching, we will now consider two test cases for how this would look in a typical ministry context. The first book will be 1 Timothy, a book that I preached through recently at my local church as part of a preaching team. I will then also look at Judges as a test case for how this could be done.

1 Timothy

1 Timothy is a book of manageable size, consisting of only six chapters. As a preaching team we committed to reading the book through multiple times, especially doing so in one sitting. This allowed us to discern repeated themes, key imperatives, and other textual clues as to the main thrust of Paul's message in this letter. We noted the book had much to say about false teachers. We then looked at the broader context of 1 Timothy as contained in the Pastoral Epistles and recognized that while the letters to Timothy and Titus differ in context, they all have instructions that relate to dealing with false teachers. This also grants a focus on Christ, as any false teaching spoken of belittles gospel truth. Based on the purpose stated in 1:3-4 (avoid false teaching, be a good steward of God) and the key call to know "how one ought to behave in the household of God," we titled the series "Family Life in God's House." Our oft-repeated one-sentence summary of the book (not brief, but said numerous times) was as follows: The local church is to learn how to live well as God's family by rejecting false teaching, embracing godly leadership, and living as good stewards of God's truth.

Once we had the overarching summary of the book, we sought to break the book down into manageable units, for preaching and for listening comprehension.

Greeting, Charge to Timothy, Challenge to False Teachers	1:1-20
Instructions for Family Life in the Church	2:1-3:13
Challenge to False Teaching, Charge to Timothy	3:14-4:16
Instructions for Family Life in the Church	5:1-6:2
Challenge to False Teaching, Charge to Timothy, Salutation	6:3-21

We broke down the sections to preach in slightly smaller units, but this was the overall flow of the book we came back to

again and again. In this way we reminded members of the overall main idea and where we were in the context of the book so we could always tether fine details to the overarching structure. The sermon series began with an overview sermon of the entire book, highlighting many of these points along with key themes and questions that would need to be answered as went through the letter.

In speaking to our congregation, people appreciated the consistency and book-level context reminders throughout the sermon series. This allowed us as preachers to continue to have our thoughts held at a holistic level (especially as it relates to false teaching and the proper stewardship of God's Word), and also allowed our people to engage varying dynamics of the text in small groups, keeping the entirety of the book in mind with intentional questions. Thus, book-level context, when connected to a church-wide reading plan, intentional small group questions, and a united team-preaching approach, has garnered good results of recall and specificity of application as we continue to assess.

Judges

The book of Judges is a book we are looking at as a preaching team, possibly in late 2021. The book is much longer than 1 Timothy and is found in an OT context under a different covenant than our own, and thus poses some different challenges. However, the tools for book-level context remain the same and can provide the same kind of clarity as we study distinct passages.

First, we should read the twenty-one chapters of Judges numerous times before preaching, and as many times as we can doing so in one sitting. We need the overarching context of the book itself, and this is the best way to get it. Doing so will lead one to offer a one-sentence summary of the book, such as "God's people, who have no king to lead them, exhibit an ongoing cycle of covenant unfaithfulness." This highlights the cycle one observes within the book, as well as the continual refrain toward

the end, which states, “There was no king in Israel, everyone did what was right in their own eyes” (Judges 17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25).

One would also need to consider where the book of Judges is placed in the OT. Judges comes on the heels of all that occurred in the Pentateuch and the book of Joshua. The people are now occupying the land, but there are still residents that are harassing Israel and even leading them into idolatrous practices. They are to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation in the midst of foreign nations (Exod. 19:5-6), but we continually observe their failure in upholding this calling. We have judges, but we are awaiting the days of a king. This context matters as one seeks to locate themselves in the particular moment of redemptive history.

With the overarching summary of the book in mind one would then break the text down into preachable units.

Failure to take the land	1:1-2:5
The cycle of disobedience	2:6-3:6
God’s deliverance seen in judges	3:7-31
Unlikely means of deliverance with Deborah, Barak, and Jael	4:1-5:31
God delivers Israel through an unlikely leader, Gideon	6:1-7:25
Victory, idolatry, and chaos	8:1-35
The rise and downfall of the wicked ruler, Abimelech	9:1-57
Further examples of sin, deliverance, and disobedience	10:1-12:15
The birth of Samson	13:1-25
God’s providence seen in an imperfect life	14:1-15:20
Samson and Delilah	16:1-31
No king in Israel leads to idolatry and unrest; we need a king	17:1-18:31
No king in Israel leads to depravity and atrocities; we need a king	19:1-30
No king in Israel leads to war and unrest; we need a king	20:1-21:25

This kind of broad breakdown of the book will serve as a rubric for preaching content, and must always be tied back to the book-level context, the overarching story of Judges as a whole. One can see as they read through the book and work through these sermons that the judges (as well as the people) go through a continually downward spiral, with the judges beginning as fairly good, to by the end there are completely immoral judges or in fact no judges at all. Everyone is just doing what is right in their own eyes.

A series on the book of Judges would certainly be helped by an overview sermon to get things started, as this would help people orient themselves to a large book and give them something to hold onto as they traverse the terrain of the various narratives. After that initial sermon, focus would go to the sections to preach for each week, working through the book in a systematic manner. Preachers and congregants alike may be wondering how one can point to Christ and the gospel on a weekly basis, as well as how the truths of an OT book apply to them today. However, if we keep the main idea of the book (God's people, who have no king to lead them, exhibit an ongoing cycle of covenant unfaithfulness), and continue to point our people back to this overarching idea, it can be understood how one would point forward to Christ and the gospel. First, while we may view some humans as hero-deliverers in Judges, ultimately, we see that God is the ultimate hero-deliverer who sends Christ to save his people. Second, sin is real and has real consequences. We need to be saved from our sin. The darkness of Judges highlights the light of redemption.

Third, we need a king. Judges points this out through repetition at the end of the book, and we see the king come in Samuel. Saul fails abysmally, and David is a very good king, in fact the prototype of kings to come. But even he fails, pointing the reader beyond David to a coming king. This is a final way to think of Christ and the gospel when preaching through Judges, namely, the covenants. Israel is breaking the Mosaic covenant frequently, but in the broader context we see the Davidic covenant rendered in 2 Samuel 7, telling of a king to come who

would reign forever in righteousness. The covenants point to Christ. Certainly, there are other ways one could point forward to Christ and make specific applications to people today when preaching Judges, but one can observe that book-level context is a helpful tool for this purpose.

CONCLUSION

Book-level context can be neglected at times, but is a helpful tool for preaching. Dever rightly reminds us,

I want the members of my church to become so familiar with the books of the Bible that they know how to turn there as easily as they turn to popular Christian books. So when members of the church struggle with conflict, I will encourage them to read the book on conflict resolution by Ken Sande, but I also want them to have been trained by an overview sermon to immediately ask themselves, 'I wonder what James says about this situation?' When members want to learn about the Christian life, let them read C. S. Lewis and J. I. Packer; but let them also think to read 1 Peter and 1 John! When people struggle with discouragement, by all means read Ed Welch on depression; but also read Revelation! When people worry they are slipping into legalism, I hope they know to reach for Martin Luther or C. J. Mahaney on the cross-centered life; but I also hope they know to reach for Galatians.²⁰

We are called to preach the whole counsel of God,²¹ and a key tool in doing that work will be to do our work of interpretation and preaching thinking about the passage, the Testament, and the canon, as well as considering the context of an entire book. This level of context will be essential when consider authorial intent, and as such it provides needful work for the preacher of God's Word.

NOTES

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1. See <https://bibleproject.com/>.
 2. "Christ in All of Scripture" was the theme of the 2019 Evangelical Theological Society meeting. Myriad books get into this topic, including works by Ed Clowney, Graeme Goldsworthy, Dennis Johnson.
 3. Hermeneutics texts do at times address this matter, though not always referring to this level of context as "book-level." For example, John H. Sailhamer, *Old Testament Theology: A Canonical Approach* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), 209-12, refers to this level of context as "inner-textuality." Other texts deal with this level of context when considering the different genres contained in Scripture. See for example Andreas J. Köstenberger and Richard D. Patterson, *Invitation to Biblical Interpretation: Exploring the Hermeneutical Triad of History, Literature, and Theology* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2011), 237-563.
 4. For more on this point see Jason S. DeRouchie, *How to Understand and Apply the Old Testament: Twelve Steps from Exegesis to Theology* (Phillipsburg: P&R, 2017), 98-127.
 5. This is especially true when preaching in expositional fashion through a book of the Bible. For more thoughts on how one breaks a book into discrete units for preaching see Abraham Kuruvilla, *A Manual for Preaching: The Journey from Text to Sermon* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019), 4-6.
 6. Grant Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2006), 40.
 7. One may also want to consider whether a book they are preaching is a part of a collection to incorporate "collection-level" context. For example, considering Exodus as an entire book, but also within the collection of the Pentateuch. Or consider Hosea as a book, but also as a part of the collection of the Twelve, or the Minor Prophets.
 8. For an expansion of thought on these themes as shown through a series of sermons on each book of the Bible see Mark Dever, *The*

Message of the Old Testament: Promises Made (Wheaton: Crossway, 2006); Mark Dever, *The Message of the New Testament: Promises Kept* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2005).

9. Jeremy M. Kimble and Ched Spellman, *Invitation to Biblical Theology: Exploring the Shape, Storyline, and Themes of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2020), 16.

10. James M. Hamilton Jr., *What is Biblical Theology?: A Guide to the Bible's Story, Symbolism, and Patterns* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2014), 15-16.

11. Parts of this summary comes from Andrew Davis Naselli, *How to Understand and Apply the New Testament: Twelve Steps from Exegesis to Theology* (Phillipsburg: P&R, 2017), 231-38. See also Richard Lints, *The Fabric of Theology: A Prolegomenon to Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 303-10.

12. See Naselli, *How to Understand and Apply the New Testament*, 196 for a chart that depicts the amount of time it generally takes to read each book of the Bible out loud. You may also want to listen to the book on audio as a means of doing this.

13. D. A. Carson, "Approaching the Bible," in *New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition*, ed. D. A. Carson, et al. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1994), 13-14.

14. For good examples of breaking down the book of Ephesians and Genesis 25:19-36:43 see Kuruvilla, *A Manual for Preaching*, 20-25.

15. Osborne notes that this should be done with a pen in hand, taking down notes about the various sections as you read through the book. Also, this is a time to look at repeated patterns and natural breaks in the narrative or argument that you are studying. See Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral*, 41-45.

16. See Jason C. Meyer, *Preaching: A Biblical Theology* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2013), 21.

17. Dever, *The Message of the New Testament*, 15-16.

18. *Ibid.*, 16.

19. *Ibid.*

20. *Ibid.*, 17.

21. For a helpful resource on how one could strategically work to preach through the whole Bible in their ministry, noting the

major divisions of Scripture (Pentateuch, Former Prophets, Latter Prophets, Writings, Gospels, remainder of the NT) and giving equal attention to each area, see Tim Patrick and Andrew Reid, *The Whole Counsel of God: Why and How to Preach the Entire Bible* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2020).