

AlbertMohler.com

Eugene Merrill's *Everlasting Dominion* — A Major Contribution to Old Testament Theology

Tuesday, November 7, 2006



Dr. Eugene Merrill, who serves as Distinguished Professor at both [Dallas Theological Seminary](#) and [The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary](#), has recently published his theology of the Old Testament.

Everlasting Dominion: A Theology of the Old Testament was released by [B&H Publishing Group](#) and it belongs on every pastor's bookshelf.

At the end of his volume, Dr. Merrill restates his theological premises. Consider this statement:

At the onset we have, without apology and equivocation, undertaken our work with the settled conviction that the Old Testament is the written word of God, revealed by him to the prophets of old, preserved from error in matters of fact and doctrine, and authoritative for both Israel and the church. We have made no effort to argue the point or provide evidence for it except to remind the reader that this is the Bible's own understanding of itself and the studied opinion of virtually all pre-Enlightenment Jewish and Christian scholars and laity alike. How one views the question of bibliology has obvious consequences for his theology so we have not on purely a priori grounds adopted one stance as opposed to another. Indeed, the position advocated here is the fruit of many years of careful and prayerful consideration of all the issues involved and reflects more than just a casual acquaintance with the difficulties inherent in any evaluation of Scripture.

Then:

In the final analysis, the whole corpus—the Word of God and the words of men—is revelatory, the product of a process of divine redactionism that guarantees that every part is precisely as it ought to be, contributing to the redemptive message for which it is intended. This lends to it a cohesion, a united and self-consistent presentation from beginning to end that cannot be explained by any number of documentary or redactionary theories of human creativity but only by the self-evident fact of the originating and controlling work of the Spirit of God. This leads to a further premise, one that logically follows—the expectation that a single Author has a single overarching message that can be readily detected. Moreover, that message itself, if it is to be understood in any meaningful way, must be informed by a central theme of themes, a story line that leaves no question as to the Author's intentions and desired effects.

Several pages later, he writes this important paragraph:

Fundamentally, the issue of the relationship of the testaments—whether theologically or hermeneutically—boils down to the nature of the whole. If one is of the conviction that the Old and New Testament alike are the Word of God, revealed and inspired by him, the difficulties largely dissolve, for the authorship and, hence, the intertextual connections of its various parts (both testaments) not only find theological justification but hermeneutical warrant as well. Authors of texts have dominical rights to those texts and from their privileged position can employ whatever devices or methods they choose to communicate and interpret their own writings. Who, then, can question the Holy Spirit of God on the matter and charge him with hermeneutical impropriety should he “violate” modern rules of hermeneutical theory?

What a magnificent and timely paragraph! Professor Merrill's words are well-stated and important. Of course, in this day these words are also controversial, for a restatement and reaffirmation of biblical authority — especially in dealing with the Old Testament, is out of step with the modern mind.

Eugene Merrill is one of the most respected scholars of the Scriptures in our times, and readers of *Everlasting Dominion* will reap the fruit of Dr. Merrill's life-long commitment to the study of Old Testament theology.

Content Copyright © 2002-2010, R. Albert Mohler, Jr.