

## **On the proper use of the Old Testament Thinking as a theologian of the cross**

- 1) The best way to sort this out is to look at the fact that we are not Jews, and Jews are not Christians.
  - a. For the purpose of this discussion put aside the issue of so-called Messianic Jews (Christians).
  - b. When Jews hear what we say about the OT, they simply reject it—we do not understand what is there. (Keep in mind the huge diversity within Judaism on anything.)
  - c. Classic is the Jewish response to Sanders, Paul and Palestinian Judaism (and those following him): Sanders has merely fabricated a Judaism not supported by the texts (Jacob Neusner). It avails nothing that Sanders and followers ignore this devastating critique and blithely go on doing their thing.
  - d. It is also nothing to the point that Christian Old Testament professors of homiletics claim some Jews are “open” to our Christian insights or whatever concerning the OT—with whom are they talking? Reconstructionist Jews—who are so mystic and liberal that they agree with everyone, not only Christians?
  - e. Basic is the fact that, especially since Ezra, Jews are absolute about idolatry, which means that they in no way accept a son who is “of one substance” with the Father in the Trinity.
  - f. Yes, the NT makes extensive use of the OT, but in very divergent ways within itself (a whole separate field of study by itself)—closer to some Jewish schools of thought in Matthew and James, and in a different way, in Revelation, but not so close in Paul.
  
- 2) Yes, there was Marcion, but the complex historical issues involved in understanding him must not be allowed to take away from the real issue: How do the OT and the NT relate to each other?
  - a. Traditional are shadow/reality, promise/fulfillment, covenants, salvation history, and the like.
  - b. All of these approaches break apart faced with “of one substance.” Or, put another way, there is no cross in the OT.
  - c. Yes, there is Luther’s practice—and usage even in the Book of Concord—plus many. Especially Goepfelt et alii. What is “the total Luther”? What is “Lutheran identity”?
  - d. What are the possibilities?
    - 1) OT and NT are antithetical. Marcion. Possibly Baumgaertel.
    - 2) OT and NT are one, because they are “one word” of God. One revelation. One canon (whether the 66 books, or more, as the RCs and Orthodox—differences here).
    - 3) The Reformed tradition, in its many variations, is here—seen especially in its version of covenant theology and of salvation history. (For our purposes here, we set aside discussing the magisterium in RC and Tradition in the Orthodox). Eichrodt, von Rad—typology.
    - 4) What this means for the Reformed is that Jewish interpretation of the OT is “blinded” and/or deluded.
    - 5) For our purposes here, we leave out the “history of religions” school and radical historical criticism—with their very different presuppositions.
    - 6) Both testaments, however the cross.
  
- 3) “Of one substance” 325/381 is a fundamental way to sort out what Lutherans do (Schlink)—that there is “no cross in the OT” is another. The God Himself would come is not anticipated in the OT. (Not even in theophanies.)

- a. To assert that “suffering,” as in Jeremiah, Job, the Suffering Servant, et alii, anticipates the cross is a Gnostic move.
  - b. To state it thetically, as Luther does: The cross alone is our theology, is merely to restate Paul’s basic point: “For I decided to know nothing among except Christ and Him crucified” (1 Cor 2:2; cf. Gal 6:14).
  - c. The cross is not just part of our theology, the cross IS our theology.
- 4) In the charter for the CrossAlone District (section 2), this is spelled out:
- a. God saw the problem, sin and death; He solved it His way; and it is solved (John 19:30).
  - b. The resurrection certifies that the cross is not a tragedy. The cross prevents the resurrection from becoming a fantasy.
  - c. We are elected through the proclamation of the Word of the cross (1 Co 1:18).
  - d. The cross alone divides law and gospel.
    - 1) The cross alone establishes what sin/death is: Holiness cannot allow sin; the cross alone can handle sin. (Because we are caught in sin, we cannot comprehend the enormity of the contrast between holiness and sin. The cross alone is able to establish the “that” of this contrast, the “that” of the enormity of sin/death.” (*lex semper accusat* --- second use of the law).
    - 2) The cross alone establishes salvation, and it is finished (the gospel).
  - e. Only Lutherans “discern law and gospel” (A few conservative Reformed theologians attempting this are ostracized. All the Reformed have a third use of the law—as does the LCMS.)
  - f. Discerning law and gospel is the basis for the two kingdoms (only Lutherans base ethics on the two kingdoms).
  - g. There is no third use of the law (SA 3, 2); FC 6 has such a title, but the Article in fact describes the first use of the law.