



Reading the Bible with the Dead: What You Can Learn from the History of Exegesis that You Can't Learn from Exegesis Alone

John L. Thompson

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Many Christians would describe themselves as serious and regular readers of the Bible. Yet, if we are honest, most of us have a tendency to stick with the parts of the Bible that we understand or are comforted by, leaving vast tracts of Scripture unexplored. Even when following a guide, we may never reach into the Bible's less-traveled regions -- passages marked by violence, tragedy, offense, or obscurity.

What our modern minds shy away from, however, ancient, medieval, and Reformation commentators dove into. In fact, their writings often display strikingly contemporary interests and sensitivities to the meaning and moral implications of the Bible's difficult narratives. John Thompson here presents nine case studies in the history of exegesis -- including the stories of Hagar and Jephthah's daughter, the imprecatory psalms, and texts that address domestic relations, particularly divorce -- in order to demonstrate the valuable insights into Scripture that we can gain not only from what individual commentators say but from fifteen centuries' cumulative witness to the meaning of Scripture in the life of the church.

Visit Dr. Thompson's companion website at: <http://purl.oclc.org/net/jlt/exegesis> so access further features such as a list of commentary literature in English through the year 1700 and sample sermons that model a homiletic use of the history of interpretation.

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