

FREDERIK POULSEN

God, His Servant,
and the Nations in
Isaiah 42:1–9

Forschungen
zum Alten Testament 2. Reihe
73

Mohr Siebeck

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73



Frederik Poulsen

God, His Servant, and the Nations in Isaiah 42:1–9

Biblical Theological Reflections after
Brevard S. Childs and Hans Hübner

Mohr Siebeck

FREDERIK POULSEN, born 1984; 2010 Master of Theology, University of Copenhagen; 2014 PhD in Theology, University of Copenhagen; currently External Lecturer in the Department of Biblical Studies, University of Copenhagen.

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*To my grandfather
John Strange*

Preface

This book is a slightly revised version of my PhD thesis which was written during my three-year stipend at the Department of Biblical Studies at the Faculty of Theology, University of Copenhagen. The thesis was defended in June 2014. I wish to express my gratitude to the members of the assessment committee Hermann Spieckermann, Göran Eidevall, and Mogens Müller for a fair and thought-provoking discussion during the defense and to the series editors of FAT for accepting this work for publication.

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Through it all, my wife Maren has been a loving and supportive companion and an indispensable conversation partner. She and our sons Johan and Samuel continue to be a source of great joy to me.

The book is dedicated to my grandfather John Strange on the occasion of his 80th birthday. As an archeologist, biblical scholar, and minister in the Lutheran church he has struggled to approach the Bible critically and faithfully. The book does not provide a final answer to his life-long struggle, but hopefully a step further towards constructive reflection and clarification.

Frederik Poulsen
October 2014

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Abbreviations

BHS	Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia (5 th edition, 1997)
LXX	Septuagint
LXX.D	Septuaginta Deutsch (2009)
MT	Masoretic Text
NA	Nestle-Aland. Novum Testamentum Graece (27 th edition, 2001)
Syr	Peshitta
Tg	Targum
Vg	Vulgate

Introduction

A central issue for Christian biblical theology is the relationship of the Old and New Testaments. At first sight, the question concerns how to relate the two discrete parts of the Bible, that is, one part consisting of originally Jewish scriptures written in Hebrew and Aramaic and one part consisting of early Christian scriptures written in Greek. Yet a fascinating but also challenging feature is the great density of intertextual connections between the testaments. Hardly any book is as self-referential as the Bible. From a historical point of view, most of the New Testament writings emerged in constant interaction with what we now call the Old Testament, citing and commenting on larger passages and picking up themes and motifs.

A closer glance at the citations from the Old Testament in the New indicates that the New Testament authors primarily used the Greek Septuagint (or some form of it), even in those cases where this version differs significantly from its Hebrew equivalent. A well-known example is Matthew 1:23 in which the notion of a “virgin” rather than a “young woman” derives from the Septuagint version of Isaiah 7:14. Questions immediately emerge regarding the relationship between the form of the quotations and the original Hebrew text and regarding the distinctive interpretations of Old Testament passages in the New. No serious interpreter of the Bible can avoid reflecting on these issues.

The textual form of the Old Testament citations leads to a much more fundamental question: what version of the Old Testament is proper for modern biblical theology? The Hebrew Bible which is treasured by the Jews and has served as the normative Old Testament for the Protestant churches since its “rediscovery” by the reformers in the 16th Century? Or rather the Septuagint which constituted the Bible of the New Testament authors and served as the textual basis for the church fathers’ formulation of Christian doctrine?

The New Testament’s use of the Old leads to another fundamental question: to what degree can the Old Testament be read as Christian scripture apart from the New Testament’s reception of it? Does the Old Testament continue to witness in its own right? Or is only the Old Testament as received in the New appropriate for Christian biblical theology?

This book handles these questions through a systematic investigation of the role of the Old Testament in the Biblical Theologies of Brevard S. Childs

and Hans Hübner and through an exegetical analysis of Isaiah 42:1–9 within its larger biblical context.

A. Biblical Theology and the Format of the Book

The field of biblical theology is broad and notoriously difficult to define.¹ This brief overview serves to position this book among the current activities within the discipline.² At one end of the spectrum we find systematic Biblical Theologies, which reflect on hermeneutical and methodological issues and/or attempt to present a coherent picture of the theology of the Bible. Examples of methodological investigations include James K. Mead's *Biblical Theology: Issues, Methods, and Themes* (2007), Niels Peter Lemche's *The Old Testament between Theology and History* (2008), Mark Elliott's *The Heart of Biblical Theology* (2012), and Edward W. Klink III and Darian R. Lockett's *Understanding Biblical Theology* (2012), all of which critically review recent approaches and discuss principal issues, but seldom if at all touch upon the biblical texts.³

A promising attempt to present the theology of the Christian Bible is the book by the Göttinger professors Reinhard Feldmeier and Hermann Spieckermann on the doctrine of God: *Der Gott der Lebendigen: Eine biblische Gotteslehre* (2011).⁴ The ambitious layout of the book covering the whole Bible is warranted by the authors who, as specialists in the Old and New Testaments respectively, are well-informed by scholarship within their individual fields. Rather than splitting the structure of the book into discrete sections on each testament, eighteen chapters on separate aspects of God's being and doing present a cohesive reading of the Bible.⁵ However, a weak-

¹ I employ the term "biblical theology" for the discipline in general and the term "Biblical Theology" for specific books or attempts to do biblical theology; cf. Hagelia, *Three Old Testament Theologies*, xi, note 1.

² For an overview of recent trends, see e.g. Barton, (Pan-)Biblical Theology; Collins, *Between Apologetics and Criticism*; Elliott, *Heart of Biblical Theology*; *Reality of Biblical Theology*.

³ See Elliott, *Heart of Biblical Theology*; Klink & Lockett, *Understanding Biblical Theology*; Lemche, *The Old Testament*; Mead, *Biblical Theology*.

⁴ See the English translation, Feldmeier & Spieckermann, *God of the Living*.

⁵ Their view on the question of canon is rather unusual; cf. Feldmeier & Spieckermann, *God of the Living*, 10, note 18: "For the conception of a biblical doctrine of God, the canons of the churches in the East and West are fundamental. Foundation on a specific canon is not necessary for the biblical doctrine of God since the shaping of the project undertaken seeks to state precisely the content that the canon attempts to ensure through the selection of Scriptures: the transmission of the understanding of God responsibly in relation both to the ancient witnesses and contemporary addressees, transmission that should be achieved

ness of this work which it shares with other thematically ordered Biblical Theologies is the constant danger of cutting across the literary contexts of the single passages from the Bible. In a word, there is a danger of damaging the integrity of the individual biblical text and thus its theological purpose.

At another end of the spectrum we find contributions which present a theological reading of specific passages from the Bible. Over the last ten years or so, the movement “theological interpretation” has fostered two commentary series, a journal, and a number of anthologies and dictionaries.⁶ As an apparent reaction against the historical criticism of the 20th Century, it takes its stance primarily within the history of ecclesial interpretation and explores, often guided by the church fathers, the theological content of the biblical writings. A weakness of many of these contributions is their almost absurd specialization on individual passages or distinct centuries, even decades, within the history of interpretation, which means that they fail to think of the Bible as a whole. A variant of this trend is found in the attempts to read discrete passages or books of the Old Testament as Christian scripture. Students of the British scholar Walter Moberly in particular have produced a number of dissertations with the rubric “X as Christian scripture.”⁷

As an alternative, the present book attempts to combine systematic considerations with exegetical analysis. The two issues that this book addresses – the differing versions of the Old Testament and the significance of the New Testament’s reception of the Old – are studied both in theory and in practice. Part I offers some principal considerations regarding the role and function of the Old Testament in biblical theology that should guide, or at least accompany, the interpretation of any given text.⁸ Part II approaches the two issues in practice by exploring the interpretative implications that the attention to the Septuagint and the New Testament has for the reading of a selected text from Isaiah.

in accordance with the intention of those witnesses, but which also requires interpreters to mediate it.”

⁶ E.g. Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible (2005–), The Two Horizons New Testament Commentary (2005–), *Journal of Theological Interpretation* (2007–), *Dictionary of Theological Interpretation of the Bible* (2005), *Studies in Theological Interpretation* (2006–).

⁷ See e.g. Earl, *Reading Joshua as Christian Scripture*; Woods, *Jeremiah 48 as Christian Scripture*.

⁸ Cf. Childs, *Isaiah* xii: “Usually books on biblical theology have been relegated to a special subdiscipline, and thought to relate only to larger hermeneutical and theological concerns without any close relation to exegesis. Those engaged in biblical theology are often dismissed as ‘theologians,’ and not biblical interpreters. For my part, I have always considered biblical theology to be only an ancillary discipline that better serves in equipping the exegete for the real task of interpreting the biblical text itself.”

B. The Old Testament in Biblical Theology: the Childs-Hübner Debate

A fruitful entry into the question of the role of the Old Testament in biblical theology is a close study of Brevard S. Childs and Hans Hübner and their major contributions to the field: Childs' *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (1992) and Hübner's *Biblische Theologie des Neuen Testaments 1–3* (1990–1995). These works have often been linked as two of three major attempts in the 1990's to present a Theology covering the whole Christian Bible.⁹ Nevertheless, any thorough comparison between the two has not yet been achieved.

Comparing the positions of Childs and Hübner is not groundless, because they explicitly comment upon each other's works. Both of them contributed to the issue of *Jahrbuch für Biblische Theologie* on the problem of the biblical canon(s) and to the anthology *Eine Bibel – zwei Testamente*.¹⁰ In the prolegomena of his *Biblische Theologie*, Hübner offers an excursus of seven pages on Childs, referring to Childs' approach as a "Gegenposition" to his own, and offers a few more pages in the concluding epilegomena.¹¹ In his *Biblical Theology*, Childs makes a brief reference to Hübner and presents a more elaborated refutation of Hübner's approach in a separate article in *Theologische Zeitschrift*.¹² Finally, in 2003, Hübner reassumed the discussion, designating Childs as "der wichtigste Gesprächspartner" concerning the assessment of the New Testament's reception of the Old.¹³

More importantly, concerning the role of the Old Testament in biblical theology, they seem to embody two opposite positions. On the one hand, Childs insists on treating the Old Testament as a discrete witness in its own right retaining its historical, literary, and theological integrity and using the scope and text of the Hebrew Bible. On the other hand, Hübner argues that it is primarily the Septuagint version of the Old Testament as it has been received and interpreted by the New Testament authors that is valid for Christian theology. Although their main works on biblical theology are more than 20 years old now and much has happened within the field since then, their

⁹ The third one is Peter Stuhlmacher's *Biblische Theologie des Neuen Testaments 1–2* (1992–1999). Cf. e.g. Hasel, Recent Models; Räisänen, *Beyond New Testament Theology*, 120–125; Söding, *Entwürfe Biblischer Theologie*, 41–104; Stuhlmacher, *How To Do*, 74–82.

¹⁰ See Baldermann & others, *Zum Problem*; Dohmen & Söding, *Eine Bibel*.

¹¹ Hübner, *Biblische Theologie 1*, 70–76 ("Exkurs: Brevard S. Childs' Konzeption von canonical approach"); *Biblische Theologie 3*, 278–281. Despite his sincere attention to the work of Childs, Hübner nevertheless refers to him as "D.S. Childs" in the concluding bibliography of volume 1!

¹² Childs, *Bedeutung der hebräischen Bibel*; *Biblical Theology*, 77.

¹³ Hübner, *Kanon*, 30.

contradictory positions appear to be so fundamental in nature that they invite closer study. The purpose of studying Childs and Hübner here is not to evaluate and test their approaches to the Old Testament as such, but rather to describe and compare their principal arguments with regard to the main issues of this book.

The scholarly literature on Childs is rather considerable and new books come out every year.¹⁴ According to Christopher Seitz – his student and colleague – there is a small “cottage industry” in evaluating the contribution of Childs.¹⁵ Among the early reviews which were written before the appearance of Childs’ *Biblical Theology*, James Barr’s rather negative assessment in *Holy Scripture* (1983) stands out.¹⁶ Many later examinations and reconstructions of Childs’ position seem to have simply reproduced Barr’s caricature, including John Barton’s *Reading the Old Testament* (1984), Mark Brett’s *Biblical Criticism in Crisis?* (1991), and Paul Noble’s *The Canonical Approach* (1995, written 1991/2).¹⁷ The reception of Childs has been more positive in German-speaking scholarship as his contributions to German anthologies show (see above).¹⁸ Scholars such as Rolf Rendtorff and Georg Steins¹⁹ have been inspired by Childs’ thesis and Manfred Oeming who seems rather critical towards Childs²⁰ has translated *Biblical Theology* into German in cooperation with his wife (*Die Theologie der einen Bibel*, 1994–1996).

The recent literature, which has been written after Childs’ death in 2007, includes at least four monographs.²¹ Daniel Driver’s *Brevard Childs, Biblical Theologian* (2010) offers a fine introduction to the scholarly context and reception of Childs’ work. Despite the abundance of critical and informative observations, a clear presentation of Childs’ thesis never appears. Chen Xun’s *Theological Exegesis in the Canonical Context* (2010) presents a chronological examination of Childs’ most important books and articles, but suffers from the lack of a critical approach to the material. Philip Sumpter’s *The Substance of Psalm 24* (2011) offers a much more critical and provocative

¹⁴ Unfortunately, I received a copy of the recent collection of essays on the work of Childs, *The Bible as Christian Scripture* (2013), too late to include it in my analysis; see Seitz & Richards, *Christian Scripture*.

¹⁵ Seitz, *Theological Interpretation*, 61.

¹⁶ Barr, *Holy Scripture*.

¹⁷ See Barton, *Reading*; Brett, *Biblical Criticism*; Noble, *Canonical Approach*; cf. Driver, *Brevard Childs*, 41–56. Barton, however, does provide a more fair presentation 20 years later, see *Canonical Approaches*.

¹⁸ See Driver, *Brevard Childs*, 60–76.

¹⁹ See e.g. Rendtorff, *Theologie 1–2*; Steins, *Bindung*; cf. Barthel, *Die kanonhermeneutische Debatte*.

²⁰ See Oeming, *Das Alte Testament*.

²¹ See Chen, *Theological Exegesis*; Driver, *Brevard Childs*; Shepherd, *Theological Interpretation*; Sumpter, *Substance*.

inquiry of the inner coherence of Childs' approach. An application of his approach is exemplified in a careful reading of Psalm 24. Finally, Charles Sherperd's *Theological Exegesis and Isaiah 53* (2012) studies the hermeneutical approach of Childs (along with those of B. Duhm and A. Motyer) and explores the manner in which it pertains to Isaiah 53 within a Christian framework.

The scholarly literature on Hübner is more limited in quantity compared to that on Childs. Although his position frequently shows up in the sketches of previous literature introducing recent Biblical and New Testament Theologies, the review of it is mostly brief with only one or two critical remarks.²² In addition to book reviews there are a handful of longer examinations of Hübner's program,²³ in particular of his concept of revelation.²⁴ Among the few who constructively have embraced Hübner's work is the Danish scholar Mogens Müller, who actually appears to have *read* him carefully.²⁵ The modest reception of Hübner may derive from the fact that he wrote almost entirely in German. His monograph *Das Gesetz bei Paulus* has been translated into English (*Law in Paul's Thought*, 1984) and Italian (*La legge in Paolo*, 1995) and his *Biblical Theology* likewise into Italian (*Teologia biblica del Nuovo Testamento*, 1997–2000). Yet in addition to some smaller encyclopedia contributions, only two articles on the New Testament's reception of the Old have appeared in English.²⁶

C. Isaiah 42:1–9 as a Case Study

A key concern of this book is to investigate the issues regarding the differing versions of the Old Testament and the significance of the New Testament's interpretation of the Old in practice. This is done in order to explore the interpretative implications of paying full attention to the Septuagint and the New Testament in the study of a specific Old Testament text.

For this endeavor, I have chosen Isaiah 42:1–9. There has been a growth in attention to LXX Isaiah in recent years and, needless to say, the hermeneutical significance of Isaiah for understanding the New Testament is indisputable. From the outset, Isaiah 42:1–9 appears to be a perfect starting point for

²² See e.g. Barr, *Concept*, 182; Beale, *Biblical Theology*, 10; Crüsemann, *Wahrheitsraum*, 83–85; Hahn, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments I*, 15–16; Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament*, 18; Marshall, *New Testament Theology*, 38; Morgan, *New Testament Theology*, 188–189; Wilckens, *Theologie des Neuen Testaments I,1*, 47–48.

²³ See Balla, *Challenges*, 238–245; Winkel Holm, *Teologisk problem*, 105–116.

²⁴ Pfleiderer, *Ausbruchsversuche*, 172–176.

²⁵ See e.g. Müller, *Christus als Schlüssel*. Recently, however, Müller has revised his support of Hübner's thesis, see *Septuagintas betydning*, 228–229.

²⁶ See Hübner, *New Testament Interpretation*; *OT Quotations*.

biblical theological reflection. It is a challenging but theologically central text. The Hebrew version as such is ambiguous regarding the nature of the servant figure being portrayed, his identity, and his task. The Septuagint version reveals several variants. The figure is explicitly identified with Jacob/Israel and key statements are rendered differently. In the New Testament, vv. 1–4 are cited in Matthew 12:18–21 as a reflection of Jesus’ public ministry. The textual form, however, fits neither the MT nor the LXX and some of the variants may stem from Matthew’s own exegetical activity to shape the portrait to fit his overall theological concern.

Being the first of the so-called “Servant Songs,” Isaiah 42:1–9 has received massive scholarly attention and the literature is vast. However, discussions of relevant scholarship and methodology will occur in the introductory sections of chapters 4–6.

D. The Structure of the Book

This book consists of two parts. Part I investigates the role of the Old Testament in the Biblical Theologies of Childs and Hübner.²⁷ The approach is descriptive and systematic and the aim is to present their positions as faithfully as possible. Chapter 1 sketches their main ideas and major works, lists a series of common presuppositions, and outlines the structure and content of their Biblical Theologies. Chapter 2 examines the different ways in which they picture the formation of the Christian Bible and how they view the authority of canon. Chapter 3 explores their definitions of the discipline of biblical theology and how they propose to interpret Old Testament texts within a larger biblical theological context. The main argument of Part I is that Childs’ and Hübner’s differing approaches to biblical theology are determined by their different perceptions of the formation of canon and by their opposite views on the authority of canon.

Part II investigates the issues regarding the alternative versions of the Old Testament and the New Testament’s use of the Old in practice by studying Isaiah 42:1–9. The approach is analytical and constructive. Chapter 4 looks at Isaiah 42:1–9 according to its Hebrew version. It analyses the text, form, structure, and literary context of the passage before turning to a classical verse-by-verse examination. Special attention is given to the servant figure and his task. Chapter 5 compares the Hebrew version of the passage with that of the Septuagint in order to illuminate the theological nature of the Greek version and examines the implications of including this version in the inter-

²⁷ An early version was presented at the EABS/OTW/SOTS/SBL Meeting in Amsterdam in July 2012 and will appear in a collection of conference papers, see Poulsen, *Role of the Old Testament*.

pretation of the passage. Chapter 6 studies the reception of Isaiah 42:1–9 in the New Testament in terms of citations, allusions, and theological themes and sketches the interpretative implications of this reception. Chapter 7 offers a presentation of the servant and his task according to the distinctive versions before placing the Isaianic passage within its larger biblical context. This is done by a closer glance at the view of the nations in Isaiah, Matthew, and Luke-Acts and at the function of the passage within Isaiah as a whole. A final section reflects on the relationship between the Old and New Testaments regarding Isaiah 42:1–9. The conclusion draws the observations together.

Part I

The Old Testament in Biblical Theology

Chapter 1

Introducing Brevard S. Childs and Hans Hübner

This chapter introduces some main lines of thought in the work of Brevard S. Childs and Hans Hübner. What apparently unites these two scholars is their ability to exceed the traditional boundaries of biblical exegesis to grasp the “bigger picture.” Besides being recognized as Old and New Testament specialists, respectively, they share the concern of approaching the Bible as a theological book. By this common concern, they often move into the field of theological hermeneutics, church history, and systematics. In a word, they are *biblical theologians*.¹

Nevertheless, the intention is not to present any exhaustive biographies, which, at least in the case of Childs, has been done very well already.² What seems to be of initial importance, however, is Childs’ formative research stay in Basel and Heidelberg from 1950–1954 studying under giants like Walther Eichrodt, Walter Baumgartner, and Karl Barth. Daniel Driver rightly asserts that Childs’ work emerges out of this German context (which also explains the rather positive reception of Childs in German-speaking scholarship).³ Because of this early Continental influence on Childs’ thought, Childs and Hübner share some essential presuppositions.

The following presentation is divided into three areas. First, it will sketch their main ideas and major works. Then, it will offer a list of common presuppositions. Finally, it will briefly outline the structure and content of their Biblical Theologies.

¹ Hübner was professor of biblical theology and Childs refers to himself as “biblical theologian” at least once; cf. Driver, *Brevard Childs*, 6.

² For recent biographies on Childs, including developments in his academic career, see Chen, *Theological Exegesis*, 17–55; Driver, *Brevard Childs*, 5, 12–13, 37–38; Gignilliat, *Old Testament Criticism*, 145–168; Harrisville & Sundberg, *The Bible*, 309–310. For a biography on Hübner, I am not aware of any larger account besides Grünschloß, Wilk & Schaller, Nachruf, and Schnelle & Söding, *Paulinische Christologie*, 5–6. For complete bibliographies of the two, see, for Childs, Driver, *Brevard Childs*, 293–299; and see, for Hübner (until 2005), Hübner, *Hermeneutik*, 294–300; *Wahrheit*, 184–188.

³ Driver, *Brevard Childs*, 37–41. Cf. John Barton’s recent claim that the underlying impulse of the canonical approach comes from German-speaking theology, in particular from Karl Barth; see Barton, (Pan-)Biblical Theology, 247.

A. Main Ideas and Major Works

Brevard S. Childs (1923–2007) was professor of Old Testament at Yale University for more than forty years. His life project was to stress the significance of canon for the study of the Bible.⁴ To him, biblical interpretation should not only explain what the texts *meant*, but also consider what they *mean* today as canon of the church;⁵ these dimensions belong inextricably together. Rather than being isolated as a religio-historical discipline, biblical exegesis must engage in theological concerns and cooperate closely with church history and systematics. Although often misunderstood, the endeavor to integrate academic exegesis within this larger theological context is the main aim of Childs' "canonical approach."⁶ To Childs, modern criticism's view on the biblical texts as merely "inert sherds" and religio-historical sources for examining some people's long-gone religion results in theological barrenness. A canonical approach must overcome this impasse by viewing, or actually hearing, the Bible, not (only) as a collection of ancient historical documents, but as God's living voice speaking directly to its modern readers. As canon, the Bible ought to be read as a vehicle of divine revelation.

This endeavor undergirds Childs' dislike of the term "canonical criticism." In his *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*, for instance, the goal is not to offer another historical-critical tool or method alongside form criticism or redaction criticism. Rather, the goal is to establish "a *stance* from which the Bible can be read as sacred scripture."⁷ In short, the issue is not method, but the perspective from which the interpreter approaches the texts. Childs' call is to view the biblical texts, not as historical documents trapped in the past, but as still-speaking testimonies to the living God. This demands a new *approach* rather than a new method or a new criticism. Nevertheless, opponents have often criticized Childs for the lack of a clear and coherent method.⁸

⁴ Cf. my Danish introduction to Childs' work and program; see Poulsen, Brevard S. Childs.

⁵ Cf. Krister Stendahl's well-known distinction; see chapter 3.

⁶ Cf. Seitz, *Character*, 85: "A canonical approach is an effort to read texts in a fresh way, to engage in questions of historical, theological, practical, and conceptual significance, and to keep the lines of communication between the testaments, between the Bible and theology, and between them both and the church, open and responsive."

⁷ Childs, *Old Testament as Scripture*, 82, my emphasis. Cf. Sumpter, *Substance*, 41: "Canonical interpretation is not a method ... it is a stance vis-à-vis Israel's witness, which is a stance vis-à-vis the reality of God."

⁸ Cf. Driver, *Brevard Childs*, 56. Driver defends Childs by stating that "lacking a formal methodology is not the same as lacking a coherent and workable approach. Nor does it automatically entail a lack of hermeneutical sophistication."

Choosing the word “canon” as a label for the approach is no coincidence. Childs does not, however, accept the narrow, yet common, definition of canon as simply a closed list of books.⁹ To him, canon is not merely a list but a “cipher” which refers to theological features in the process of text formation, the treasuring of texts as scripture, and a rule of faith, that is, a critical norm for transmitting and interpreting the texts. In short, canon concerns the *quality* of the theological testimonies.¹⁰ Canon is an area in which one can hold different theological matters in tension. By applying this term, Childs also tries to recover the Patristic understanding of the unity of scripture and its witness to the one salvific history centered on Christ (cf. Irenaeus).¹¹ Canon as a rule of faith provides a *framework* for Christian interpretation, rather than a specific method (see chapters 2 and 3). This recovering of traditional Christian understanding implies reconnecting the modern study of the Bible with the old one, that is, getting modern biblical studies into a “family resemblance” of traditional Christian exegesis again.¹² This explains Childs’ sincere attention to pre-Enlightenment exegesis and his reemployment of traditional theological language, terms, and concerns. With the expression of Christopher Seitz, in Childs’ desire for comprehensiveness, the many different facets and concerns of biblical studies are pressed into “a single field of play.”¹³

The abundance of articles, bible commentaries, studies in *Wirkungsgeschichte*, biblical introductions, and Biblical Theologies demonstrates this desire or struggle to understand “the form and function of the Christian Bible, Old Testament and New, as one witness to the church across its total life.”¹⁴ Of special importance are the article “Interpretation in Faith” (1964) and the book *Biblical Theology in Crisis* (1970) in which Childs presents an early outline of his program. His introductions to both the Old and New Testaments (1979, 1984) develop the concept of “canonical shaping” and stress the importance of seeing the biblical texts *as scripture*. From the mid-1980’s, Childs’ endeavor to read the Old Testament as *Christian* scripture is made

⁹ E.g. Eugene Ulrich, who defines canon as “the definitive, closed list of books that constitute the authentic contents of scripture;” see Ulrich, *Notion and Definition*, 34.

¹⁰ These factors or aspects of Childs’ employment of the term have been singled out and even presented in bulleted summaries; see Barr, *Holy Scripture*, 75–77; Kvanvig, *Historisk Bibel*, 135; Steins, *Bindung*, 13. Although this procedure may seem illuminating, it actually runs against Childs’ concept of a single “cipher;” see Driver, *Brevard Childs*, 145.

¹¹ Childs was influenced in particular by Bengt Häggglund’s article “Die Bedeutung der ‘regula fidei’ als Grundlage theologischer Aussagen” (1958) and by Isaac L. Seeligmann’s article “Voraussetzungen der Midraschexegese” (1953) from which he adopts the concept of “canon consciousness;” see Driver, *Brevard Childs*, 175, 250–252; Sumpter, *Substance*, 8–9.

¹² Cf. Barton, *Canonical Approaches*, 47.

¹³ Seitz, *Character*, 31.

¹⁴ Driver, *Brevard Childs*, 3.

clear with the appearance of his *Old Testament Theology in a Canonical Context* (1985) and in particular of his *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* (1992). Relevant to this book, Childs has written important books on Isaiah, including his form-critical study of *Isaiah and the Assyrian Crisis* (1967), his theological commentary on *Isaiah* (2001), and, finally, his *The Struggle to Understand Isaiah as Christian Scripture* (2004) which explores the theological reception of Isaiah in the history of the church.

Hans Hübner (1930–2013) served from 1982 until his retirement in 1995 as professor of New Testament and biblical theology at the Georg-August-University of Göttingen. Like Childs, he has covered a broad spectrum of issues, centering on exegetical, *theologiegeschichtliche*, philosophical, and hermeneutical problems. Amongst a number of New Testament themes, the interpretation of Paul certainly constitutes a “Schwerpunkt.”¹⁵ In addition, Hübner has worked intensely with the Septuagint and the apocryphal writings, especially Baruch and the Wisdom of Solomon. Concerning hermeneutical questions, he has explored and applied the existentialist interpretative method of Rudolf Bultmann and, besides this hermeneutic, described the philosophical hermeneutics of famous German thinkers like Friedrich Nietzsche, Friedrich Gogarten, and Martin Heidegger. Among Hübner’s obvious sources of inspiration are also Hans-Georg Gadamer and Karl Rahner.

In his early career, Hübner worked with classical Lutheran themes such as justification and the law as his Münster dissertation *Rechtfertigung und Heiligung in Luthers Römerbriefvorlesung* (1965),¹⁶ his Habilitationsschrift *Das Gesetz in der synoptischen Tradition* (1973), and his monograph *Das Gesetz bei Paulus* (1978) show. During this period, his interest in biblical theology and the New Testament’s use of the Old was strengthened, as can be seen in his article “Biblische Theologie und Theologie des Neuen Testaments” (1981) and his monograph *Gottes Ich und Israel. Zum Schriftgebrauch des Paulus in Römer 9–11* (1984). In his *Evangelische Fundamentaltheologie* (2005) he moves from biblical theology into hermeneutics.¹⁷

After writing his *Biblische Theologie des Neuen Testaments* (1990–1995), Hübner has, along with Antje and Michael Labahn, edited the project *Vetus Testamentum in Novo*, which lists in synoptic columns all Old Testament citations within the New. Volume 2 *Corpus Paulinum* and volume 1,2 *Evangelium Johannis* appeared in 1997 and 2003. According to the website of the

¹⁵ Schnelle & Söding, *Paulinische Christologie*, 6.

¹⁶ The reading of Luther actually made Hübner convert from Catholicism to Protestantism; cf. the preface of his dissertation: “der Verfasser [wurde] über dieser Arbeit an Luther selbst lutherisch;” see Hübner, *Rechtfertigung und Heiligung*, 7.

¹⁷ In a European context, the proper term “fundamental theology” (German: “Fundamentaltheologie”) refers to the principal questions concerning the nature, purpose, and method of theology as a scholarly discipline.