

THE JUDAIZING CALVIN:
SIXTEENTH-CENTURY DEBATES OVER THE MESSIANIC PSALMS

G. Sujin Pak, the author of this text, is an assistant professor of the history of Christianity at Duke Divinity School. Particularly interested in late medieval and early modern Christianity in Europe, her research and writing have focused primarily on the biblical interpretation of the Protestant Reformers, as well as “the role of biblical exegesis in the history of Christian-Jewish relations.”¹ Both of these interests are clearly evident in *The Judaizing Calvin*, a project which began as a doctoral dissertation under the direction of David Steinmetz at Duke University.² In addition to her work in the academy, Professor Pak also continues to honor her family heritage by being highly involved in the teaching and preaching ministries of the United Methodist Church.

Introduction

Pak credits her doctoral advisor, David Steinmetz, with authoring the essay that renewed appreciation for the importance of the study of biblical interpretation within the medieval and Reformation eras (3).³ Her own study, which (along with many others) follows in the wake of her mentor, is intended to make a “modest contribution” not only to the study of Calvin’s exegesis and that of other Reformers, but also to the ways in which such exegetical work has influenced “the history of Christian-Jewish relations” (4-5, 12). In order to accomplish

¹ I have gleaned this biographical information, along with what immediately follows, from Professor Pak’s faculty webpage at <http://divinity.duke.edu/academics/faculty/sujin-pak> (accessed October 5, 2011).

² G. Sujin Pak, *The Judaizing Calvin: Sixteenth-Century Debates over the Messianic Psalms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), vii. *Please note: all future citations of this text will occur in parentheses in the body of the essay.*

³ See David Steinmetz, “The Superiority of Pre-Critical Exegesis,” *Theology Today* 37 (1980): 27-38.

this, Pak analyses some of the most significant late-medieval and Reformation interpretations of Psalms 2, 8, 16, 22, 45, 72, 110, and 118—often referred to as “messianic psalms” (6).

The main objective Pak has for her work is to “demonstrate a significant shift that John Calvin introduces into the history of the exegesis of these eight Psalms” (7). This shift would later rouse the ire of the Lutheran theologian, Aegidius Hunnius (1550-1603), who accused Calvin of perverting the clear teaching of these Psalms by not reading them primarily as “literal prophecies” of Christ (8). Because Calvin’s interpretations appeared to Hunnius to be little more than “Jewish perversions,” he titled his treatise the “Judaizing Calvin” (from which Pak takes the title of her own work) (8). In Pak’s estimation, Calvin’s interpretation of these Psalms bears certain similarities to the way in which “proponents of the modern historical critical method” read the Bible (8). Although she does not view Calvin as a practitioner of this method, she nonetheless believes that he “cannot be so easily distanced from modern principles of exegesis either” (8). In addition to her primary objective, Pak also hopes to suggest some ways in which the exegesis of Scripture helped usher in “the formation of emerging Protestant confessional identities in the sixteenth century” (8).

Medieval and Late-Medieval Interpreters:

The Legacy of Literal Prophecies of Christ

In this chapter Pak examines how the eight messianic Psalms mentioned previously were interpreted by the *Glossa Ordinaria*, Nicholas of Lyra (1270-1349), Denis the Carthusian (1402-1471), and Jacques Lefèvre d’Étaples (1455-1536). She observes that there is broad agreement among each of these sources for reading these Psalms christologically and interpreting them “as literal prophecies of Christ” (14). She also charts an interesting historical progression among these interpreters which tends in the direction of an increasingly “negative view of the usefulness of Jewish exegesis” as an aid in interpreting these Psalms (29). What is particularly noteworthy among the interpreters reviewed in this chapter is not only the amount of detailed prophecy concerning the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus which they find in these

Psalms, but also the amount of prophecy they see regarding the church, as well as the impressive list of Christian doctrines which they are able to mine from these writings.

To begin, all of the interpreters surveyed in this chapter agree that these Psalms are only properly understood as literal prophecies of Christ. Indeed, Nicholas of Lyra is the only one who even pauses to mention the possibility of referring these Psalms to David or Solomon, and he quickly rejects such a reading “in favor of the christological interpretation” (14). Hence, as Pak observes, “time and again, the Gloss, Lyra, Denis, and Lefèvre read these eight messianic Psalms as prophecies of Christ’s incarnation, suffering, crucifixion, resurrection, exaltation, and kingdom” (14). To give just one example, Psalm 16 is read by all of these interpreters as a prophecy of the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. Lyra sees the prophetic fulfillment of the Psalmist’s words, “I will say to the Lord, ‘You are my Lord’” (Ps 16:2), in Christ’s cry of dereliction from the cross, “My God, my God” (Matt 27:46) (15). And all four of these interpreters “apply the assurances of Ps 16:9-10—that his body will rest secure and that he will not be given up to Sheol or see corruption—to the promise of the resurrection” (15).

Concerning the increasingly negative attitude toward the use of Jewish exegesis in the interpretation of these Psalms, Pak points out how Nicholas of Lyra, in arguing for the christological interpretation of these Psalms, appeals not only to their New Testament interpretation, but also to the fact that at least some of these Psalms were understood by ancient Hebrew scholars (e.g. Rashi) as referring to the Messiah (17-18). In a somewhat similar manner, Denis the Carthusian makes use of Lyra’s point concerning how early Jewish interpreters read these Psalms, in order to strengthen his defense that the “literal reading” of these Psalms is to be identified with the christological reading. This was important to Denis because he believed that “a proof is not strong unless it is from the literal sense,” and that this is particularly true when one is concerned to offer a defense of one’s interpretation to Jewish exegetes—“for the Jews . . . do not receive [an interpretation] unless it is the literal sense” (18). However, by the time we reach Lefèvre, who insisted on interpreting these Psalms solely “as literal, historical prophecies of Christ and the church,” we encounter a noticeable reaction against any reliance upon Jewish

exegesis in attempting to interpret these Psalms (19-20). Pak sums up what she takes to be the clear historical progression of these writers by observing how Nicholas of Lyra makes “positive use of Jewish exegesis,” while Denis “adds a more explicit concern to defend Christian readings against Jewish criticisms,” and Lefèvre goes beyond both by insisting “that Jewish interpreters and exegesis cannot reveal the Spirit’s true intention of a passage and thus should never be used by Christian exegetes” (20).

Finally, Pak draws our attention to both the ecclesial and doctrinal readings of these Psalms. Regarding the first, she points out how the four interpreters considered here quite naturally linked Christ with His church, and thus found in these Psalms not only prophecies of Christ, but of His church as well (21-22). Even more interesting, however, are the doctrinal readings which these interpreters garnered from these Psalms. Here they found the Psalmist’s teaching on both the divine and human natures of Christ (23-24), the doctrine of the Trinity (24-25), the virgin birth and perpetual virginity of Mary (25-27), and the sacrament of the Eucharist (27). To cite just a couple of examples, both “the Gloss and Lefèvre find the action of the Trinity in ‘the work of your fingers’ (Ps 8:3), which expresses the cooperation of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit” (25). And the phrase, “the showers that water the earth” (Ps 72:6), is interpreted as a reference to the virgin birth by all four interpreters (26).

Pak concludes this chapter by noting that while there are certainly some differences in the way these four interpreters read the Psalms, nevertheless, “their agreements emerge emphatically and profoundly” (28). Hence, the claim (later made by Hunnius) “that for hundreds of years these eight Psalms were viewed by Christian exegetes as truly *messianic* Psalms is not an exaggeration” (28).

Martin Luther: Literal Prophecies Redeployed

In her introductory comments, Pak tells us that she has three main purposes for this chapter. First, she wants to discuss Luther’s exegetical contribution to the eight messianic Psalms (32). Second, she intends to describe his “relationship to the previous exegetical tradition.” And

third, she purposes to discuss his “attitudes toward Jews, the Hebrew language, and rabbinic exegesis as they appear in his expositions” of these Psalms (33).

She begins with her second stated purpose, describing Luther as an interpreter in full agreement with the prior exegetical tradition. Like the late-medieval interpreters discussed previously, Luther interprets these Psalms “as literal prophecies of Christ” (33). That is, he does not read these Psalms in light of the historical circumstances of David (or Solomon). Indeed, David is not even seen “as a type of Christ” (33). Like the earlier interpreters, Luther reads these Psalms as pertaining solely to Christ and His church. Hence, Psalm 22 is interpreted with reference to “the suffering and crucifixion of Christ (Ps 22:1-2, 7-8, 12-18), the two natures of Christ (Ps 22:6, 9-10, 27-28), the virgin birth (Ps 22:9-10), his resurrection and triumph over his enemies (Ps 22:24), and his kingdom (Ps 22:27-30) and people (Ps 22:30-31)” (34).

Pak next turns to a discussion of Luther’s exegetical contribution to these eight Psalms. Although Luther generally read these Psalms as his late-medieval forbears had done, he also developed some unique emphases as he repeatedly returned to the Psalter throughout his life (36). For example, over time Luther’s interpretive emphasis shifted from reading these Psalms solely as prophecies of Christ to seeing them increasingly as vehicles for providing “instruction and encouragement to the church” (36). Here one of Luther’s major developments was to begin using these Psalms to teach about “the nature of faith and the doctrine of justification by faith alone” (37).

In addition, Luther developed various interpretive strategies in which he pitted certain concepts against one another—spirit versus letter, law versus gospel, flesh versus spirit, and visible versus invisible (39-41). Although the terminology which he employed changed over time, these interpretive strategies enabled Luther to effectively use these Psalms to provide comfort and encouragement to the newly-formed Reformation church (40-41). At the same time, however, these strategies were also “deployed against the Jews” as a means of demonstrating their “mistaken understanding of Scripture and their resulting rejection by God” (40). Pak refers to this as Luther’s “Jews-as-enemies” reading strategy” (42). Over time, this strategy was even

redeployed by Luther against the Roman Catholics. According to Pak, in Luther's later expositions of the Psalms, "the 'Jews' operate as a rhetorical tool to describe the Roman Catholic enemies, so that Roman beliefs and practices are paralleled with those of Jews in order to identify the Roman Catholics as the contemporary enemies of Christ and the church" (42).

Although Luther's hostility toward the Jews (and the Roman Catholics) is well-known, Pak nonetheless reminds us that, over time, Luther did express appreciation for the Jewish Old Testament heroes of the faith (e.g. David), along with paying tribute to the importance of learning Hebrew for properly reading and interpreting the Hebrew Scriptures (44-49). But while Luther recognized the importance of knowing Hebrew, he never "let the Hebrew text *determine* his exegesis" (49). Were someone to argue that the Hebrew "undermined" seeing Christ in the text, they would encounter nothing but scorn from Luther (49). We can see evidence for this in Luther's repeated denunciations of the "Christian use of Jewish exegesis" (49-50).

Pak concludes this chapter by reminding us that Luther's interpretation of these Psalms is very much in harmony with the preceding exegetical tradition. Like his predecessors, Luther views these Psalms as literal prophecies of Christ and the church that clearly teach Christian doctrines like the Trinity and the two natures of Christ (51). Of course, Luther still had his own distinctive emphases in interpreting these Psalms. These include "his emphasis on the teaching of justification by faith alone and his reading strategy of law versus gospel" (51). Nevertheless, it is important to see that Luther is very much in continuity with the exegetical tradition that precedes him.

Martin Bucer:

Christological Reading through Historical Exegesis

Martin Bucer's commentary on the Psalms was first published in 1529 "under the pseudonym of Aretius Felinus" (56). It is widely regarded as "his most admired" work (55). In this chapter Pak focuses on three major elements of Bucer's interpretive work. First, she analyzes "Bucer's use of historical typology in order to give readings of these eight Psalms in reference

to Christ and the church” (57). This demonstrates Bucer’s basic continuity with the preceding exegetical tradition. Second, she looks at the ways in which Bucer’s use of Jewish exegesis contributed to some of the theological emphases which characterize his interpretation of these Psalms. Finally, she also examines “Bucer’s criticisms of Jewish exegesis” and his use of “anti-Jewish rhetoric” in his commentary (57).

In the first place, Bucer is somewhat unique among the commentators examined so far in his employment of typological readings which are grounded in what he took to be the actual historical context of these Psalms. As Pak observes, “For these eight messianic Psalms, he consistently employs the device of typology, in which he sees in the figure of David and his history a foreshadowing of Christ and the church” (57). In Bucer’s mind, by grounding his typological interpretations of these Psalms in their original historical context, he is better equipped to offer readings which “are defensible against Jews and academic disputants” (58).

In addition to his concern to ascertain the historical context of these Psalms, Bucer’s reading of these texts is also informed by his deep appreciation for the “intimate unity of the two testaments” (58). Once again, this also provides him with warrant for seeing the persons and events related in these Psalms as types of Christ and the church (58). Of course, it must also be remembered that Bucer did not limit himself solely to typological interpretations. Sometimes he read these Psalms in the same way that Luther and their late-medieval predecessors had done; namely, “as literal prophecies of Christ, where David is a prophet who foresees Christ and speaks of those things that do not so much apply to himself as to Christ alone” (59).

Another important similarity which Bucer shares with the prior exegetical tradition can be seen in the doctrinal content which he finds in these Psalms. Like his predecessors, Bucer finds clear teaching in these Psalms regarding the doctrine of the Trinity and the two natures of Christ. In addition, he also finds teaching concerning “the beneficence of God, election, and the true nature of faith” (60). However, as Pak reminds us, Bucer’s primary concern in his interpretation of these Psalms is not so much to locate specific Christian doctrines, but “to position the church as their central player and subject” (62).

How did Bucer's use of Jewish exegesis inform his reading of these Psalms? As Pak makes clear, Bucer was greatly indebted to the exegetical work of such Jewish scholars as David Kimhi, Abraham Ibn Ezra, and Solomon ben Isaac (Rashi) (64). However, although he found their work to be immensely helpful in informing his own "historical exegesis" and strengthening the case for his "particular theological emphases" (65), he nonetheless reacted strongly against their attacks on Christian readings of these Psalms. To cite just one example, Bucer "directly quotes and rebukes Kimhi's attacks" against Christians who see the doctrines of the Trinity and the two natures of Christ taught in these Psalms (68).

At least in part, it was Jewish attacks of this sort against such Christian doctrines that led Bucer (like his predecessors) to engage in "anti-Jewish rhetoric" (71). In continuity with this aspect of the Christian interpretive tradition, Bucer interprets "the enemies" in these Psalms as Jews. In addition (and as we've already seen), he also sees some of the Jewish interpretations of these Psalms, particularly when they attack specifically Christian readings, as characterized by a kind of malicious "blindness and ignorance" (71).

In conclusion, Bucer is something of a mediating figure between the preceding exegetical tradition of Luther and the late-medieval exegetes, on the one hand, and the subsequent tradition of John Calvin, on the other. In continuity with the prior tradition, Bucer sometimes reads the Psalms as literal prophecies of Christ and sees in them "clear doctrinal teaching concerning the two natures of Christ and Trinity" (73). However, Bucer also makes extensive use of Jewish exegesis and "advocates the tool of typology to give christological readings that are rooted in the historical sense" (73). In Pak's estimation, although the exegesis of Bucer has much in common with that of Calvin, there are nonetheless also significant differences. And it is these differences which, at least in the minds of some, are responsible for "the accusation of Judaizing" which would later be brought against Calvin (75).

John Calvin: The Sufficiency of David

John Calvin published his commentary on the Psalms in 1557. Like Luther and Bucer Calvin loved the Psalms and regarded them as a rich storehouse of spiritual and theological truth. Nevertheless, he departed quite markedly from Luther (and, to a lesser extent, Bucer) in his interpretation of the eight messianic Psalms being considered here. For example, compared to Luther and Bucer, Calvin's reading of these Psalms is much less christologically dense. According to Pak, an examination of Calvin's exegesis seems to indicate that he is employing "certain principles that guide him as to when a Psalm properly refers to Christ and when it does not" (79). She mentions three of these in particular.

First, Calvin appears to opt for a christological reading when Christ seems to complete or fulfill the meaning of the Psalm in a way that is just not possible for either David or Solomon. This leads Calvin to a typological interpretation, "in which David (or Solomon) acts as a type of Christ, where David foreshadows a reality that is more brightly set forth in Christ" (79). Second, if Christ is recorded as having applied the words of a particular Psalm to himself, then Calvin will apply that Psalm (or at least that part of it) to Christ. Hence, since Jesus' cry from the cross, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matt 27:46), is a direct citation of Psalm 22:1, Calvin applies this passage to Christ. Interestingly, however, Pak claims that even here Calvin "spends nearly three and a half times more space applying the verse to David than to Christ" (80). Finally, Calvin also applies a passage to Christ if, by doing so, it enables him to retain "the 'simple and natural' sense of the passage and is in keeping with the author's intended meaning" (80). And here, Pak notes, "by 'author,' Calvin means both the Holy Spirit and the human author" (80).

In addition to these three interpretive principles, Calvin also offers some reasons for his more restricted use of christological interpretations of these Psalms. For example, he believes that some of these interpretations do violence to the "simple and natural" sense of a passage and can thus make them an object of ridicule to Jewish exegetes (82). In addition to this, Pak also believes that Calvin sometimes shies away from a christological interpretation because "the

simple sense concerning David and his historical context already gives a profoundly edifying reading.” And if this is so, then why should “one ‘twist’ the passage to refer it to Christ?” (82).

In light of all this, it is not too surprising to find that Calvin often jettisons reading these Psalms as “literal prophecies” of Christ or finding in them references to the doctrines of the Trinity or the two natures of Christ (82-83). Indeed, according to Pak, Calvin “drops the Trinitarian readings altogether”—apparently because he did not think that they retained “the simple sense of the passage” (84). On the other hand, if “the ‘simple and natural’ sense of the Psalm in reference to David already gives a reading that brings a message of consolation to the church, then he considers this reading not only sufficient but also powerful” (85). In Pak’s estimation, Calvin views David as an “exemplar of Protestant piety” (87-91). He (i.e. David) offers an outstanding example of faith and confidence in God (87), “devout” and “authentic” prayer (88), “true worship and piety” (89), and “exuberant praise” of his Maker (91).

When it comes to the Jews, Calvin “rarely identifies” them as the “enemies” mentioned in these Psalms (92). Indeed, when he does specifically identify these “enemies,” they are much more likely to be Roman Catholics than Jews (92). On several occasions Calvin even upholds the “biblical Jews as positive examples for Christian imitation” (93). Nevertheless, like both Luther and Bucer, Calvin can also be strongly critical of Jewish exegesis, lamenting “how the rabbis corrupt the text . . . and are ignorant of the true meaning of Scripture” (94). At the same time, however, Pak also offers evidence that some of Calvin’s interpretations of these Psalms may have been influenced (perhaps just indirectly) by the work of the Jewish exegete, David Kimhi (96-98). Hence, while Calvin could certainly be critical of the Jews, he is generally far less likely to be so than Luther (or even Bucer) (100). Indeed, it is partly for this reason, along with “Calvin’s tendency to eclipse the christological and Trinitarian readings” which so many prior Christian interpreters had found in these texts, that Hunnius felt led to “accuse Calvin of judaizing” (101).

**The Judaizing Calvin:
The Debate of Hunnius and Pareus**

In this chapter, Pak recounts the fascinating debate between the Lutheran theologian, Aegidius Hunnius, and the Reformed scholar, David Pareus. Hunnius began the debate in 1589 by writing a treatise in which he accused Calvin (who had died in 1564) of “undermining the exegetical foundations of the doctrine of the Trinity” (104). He continued his attack in 1593 with the publication of a second treatise, “The Judaizing Calvin.” In this latter treatise, he not only continued to offer evidence, “from Calvin’s own exegesis,” for the thesis that Calvin was significantly weakening key Christian doctrines, like that of the Trinity and the deity of Christ, he also accused Calvin of engaging in a “Judaizing” sort of exegesis of several passages of Scripture (including the messianic Psalms which are the subject of this study) (105).

For example, Hunnius is troubled by Calvin’s exegesis of Psalm 2:7, “He said to me, ‘You are my Son; today I have begotten you.’” He notes that Calvin applies this verse “literally to David and only secondarily to Christ” (106). But this, he claims, “renders unintelligible” the apostolic interpretations found in Acts 13:33 and Hebrews 1:5, both of which interpret this verse according to “its plain sense as a literal prophecy of Christ” (106). In addition, Hunnius also finds fault with Calvin’s failure to interpret this passage in Trinitarian terms, as a reference to the “eternal generation” of the Son from the Father. All of this leads Hunnius to berate Calvin as “a Jew,” who “plucks” and “tears this Scripture from the apostles” (106).

Hunnius is equally outraged by Calvin’s interpretation of Psalm 22, “which Christian tradition, the apostles, and the Gospels have undisputedly read in reference to the crucifixion of Christ” (108). That Calvin, therefore, should have the audacity to apply this Psalm first to David, and only secondarily to Christ, “is an atrocity in Hunnius’s eyes” (108). Hunnius turns to examine Calvin’s interpretation of Christ’s crucifixion in John 19. He notes that here Calvin says that “the evangelists *inappropriately drag*” Psalm 22:18 “to apply it to Christ” (108). This sort of remark enrages Hunnius, who says that Calvin has, in effect, “accused the *evangelists*, rather than the Jews, of bending the meaning of this Psalm to an unnatural sense” (108).

Pak summarizes Hunnius's objections to Calvin under four main headings. First, Hunnius objects to Calvin's identification of the literal sense of these Psalms with issues in the life of David (or Solomon) rather than Christ (110). Although Calvin usually does see Christ in these Psalms, he sees him there in a "secondary" or "typological" sense, which he does not regard as "the Psalm's 'plain and simple' sense" (110). Second, Hunnius is outraged by what he regards as Calvin's "arrogant disregard for apostolic authority in exegesis" (110). Third, Hunnius believes that Calvin is essentially dishonest and "devious" in his exegesis of this material (111). And finally, Hunnius claims that Calvin is guilty of judaizing; that is, of reading the Old Testament like a Jew instead of a Christian (111).

Two years after the publication of Hunnius's second treatise, David Pareus published two books of his own in defense of Calvin. "In the first and shorter book, he defends the orthodoxy of Calvin's doctrines of the Trinity and the eternal divinity of Christ" (111). In the second and longer work, he defends Calvin's exegesis of Scripture against the attacks of Hunnius (112). Against the accusation that Calvin was a "judaizer," Pareus turns to the New Testament witness and concludes that one can only be a judaizer if he is such in both doctrine and practice. Practically speaking, this would involve believing, teaching and living in a manner that was completely contrary to Christian belief and practice—and it would clearly be "insane" to claim that Calvin was guilty of such things (113).

In defense of Calvin's use of typology, Pareus makes a distinction between "simple" and "composite" types. Simple types should be understood with reference to "Christ alone." But composite types "can apply both to the type and to Christ" (114). Hunnius argues that the New Testament authors read and apply these Psalms as simple types of Christ. But Pareus claims that it would be wrong to understand the apostles and evangelists in this way, for this would mean "that they deny the sacred history within the type, which is the very thing that gives the content that is then applied to Christ" (115).

Having made the distinction between simple and composite types, Pareus next turns to a defense of Calvin's reading of Psalm 2:7, "You are my son; today I have begotten you."

Hunnius had been upset that Calvin applied this verse first to David and only secondarily to Christ—an application which he deemed to be contrary to the apostolic witnesses, who apply this verse only to Christ. But Pareus argues that Calvin applies this passage to Christ just as the apostles do. In addition, Pareus does not see it as contrary to the apostolic witness to apply this passage also to David, for he believes that “to deny the application of this verse to David is to ‘deny the sacred history itself’ upon which the type is based”—and this, he thinks, cannot be what the New Testament writers had in mind (116). In response to Hunnius’s charge that Calvin does not apply this verse to the eternal generation of the Son of God, Pareus points out that Calvin, along with many other notable theologians and expositors, reads this verse in continuity with the apostolic tradition by interpreting it in reference to the glory of Christ “displayed in the resurrection” (116).

Concerning Calvin’s interpretation of Psalm 22, Pareus argues that Calvin does indeed apply this passage to Christ “first and foremost” (118). The fact that Calvin also applies some of this Psalm to David should not be considered suspect because “part of Psalm 22 is simple (i.e., refers to Christ alone) and part is composite” (118). Regarding Calvin’s comments on John 19, Pareus points out that Calvin explicitly teaches that Psalm 22:18 “ought not be restricted to David’ but must be explained concerning Christ” (118).

So was Calvin a judaizer? Pak concludes her discussion in this chapter by pointing out that Calvin, as Hunnius alleged, did indeed “interpret these Psalms with limited christological applications” (121). In fact, on two occasions Calvin explicitly takes issue with the apostolic interpretations of Psalm 8:4 and 16:10. In these instances, notes Pak, Pareus does not “defend Calvin’s reading . . . in his Psalms commentary,” but rather points to “Calvin’s New Testament commentaries (where these passages are quoted) as the more authoritative and accurate expression of his views” (122). This leads Pak to observe that there is an important distinction to be seen between Calvin’s Old Testament and New Testament commentaries. Calvin, she reminds us, was much concerned with “authorial intention” (122). This concern finds expression in Calvin’s tendency to read the Psalms “according to the *Psalmist’s* intention, first

and foremost” (122). But when Calvin turns to the use which the New Testament writers make of these Psalms, “his concern is then more for the authorial intention of that New Testament author” (122). This leads him to make “more robust christological application” in his New Testament commentaries than he does in his comments on the Psalms (122). In light of this, Pak does not think that Calvin was a judaizer. At the same time, however, she does understand why Hunnius would see in Calvin’s Old Testament exegesis “significant departures from the antecedent Christian tradition and a challenge to the assumptions and principles of that tradition” (124).

Conclusion

In her conclusion, Pak attempts to do two things. First, she argues that her study suggests a link between biblical interpretation and “the formation of confessional identities” (125). Second, she attempts to locate the significance and place of Calvin “within the history of Christian biblical interpretation” (125).

Concerning the role of biblical interpretation in the formation of confessional identity, Pak first notes that Luther generally continued interpreting these messianic Psalms in the same way as his late-medieval predecessors had done. At the same time, however, she also notices “the new, characteristically Lutheran emphases upon justification by faith alone, the distinction between law and gospel, and the use of his Jews-as-enemies reading strategy to depose Roman Catholic authority, teachings, and practices in favor of Protestant ones” (127). In a similar way, although Bucer’s interpretations of these Psalms shared many commonalities with those of Luther, Pak believes that Bucer’s exegesis also “reveals the emerging Reformed doctrinal emphases on the beneficence of God and election, the use of the Psalms to promote a program for the cultivation of true piety, and the exegetical tool of typology” (127). While Calvin continues to promote many of the same emphases as Bucer, he nonetheless takes things “in a logical but different direction” (127). For example, unlike Bucer, Calvin is much less inclined to emphasize “the primacy of the christological readings of these Psalms” (127). Rather, Calvin tends to focus on “the doctrine of God’s providence” and “the cultivation of Protestant piety

through the example of David” (127). Pak interprets Calvin’s interpretive emphases as advancing “a particularly Reformed reading that begins to help buttress an emerging Reformed confessional identity” (127). This confessional identity becomes even more firmly established in the next generation, as is evident in the debate between Hunnius (representing a Lutheran identity) and Pareus (representing a Reformed identity) (128).

In the final part of her conclusion, Pak turns to consider the place of Calvin in the history of biblical interpretation. She first observes that while “Calvin falls prey to many of the anti-Jewish views” that were common in his day, he nonetheless developed a method of interpreting the Old Testament that enabled him to avoid “most of the anti-Jewish tendencies of premodern Christian exegesis while simultaneously preserving a very Christian reading” of this important portion of biblical revelation (131-32).

Pak next suggests that Calvin represents a “significant shift” in the literal reading of the Old Testament, particularly when the passages under consideration are those which have traditionally been understood within the church as “literal prophecies of Christ” (133). By focusing his interpretation on the intended meaning of the human author, Calvin tends to be much less likely than his predecessors to see the meaning of the text as a literal prophecy of Christ (133).

Finally, Pak rejects the view that Calvin should be seen as, in some sense, an early pioneer of the modern historical-critical method of biblical interpretation. This view, she says, “is mistaken on many fronts” (134). At the same time, however, she does recognize that a “significant shift” occurs in the way Calvin reads and interprets the Bible (particularly the Old Testament). This is one of the things that makes Calvin so intriguing as an interpreter of Scripture. For although he remains firmly planted within the “precritical” exegetical tradition, he nonetheless “foreshadows . . . significant exegetical emphases . . . that will later be taken up by different interpreters in different contexts with effectively different exegetical assumptions and outcomes” (139). Hence, we might say that, in certain respects, Calvin helps prepare the way for biblical interpretation in the modern world, without himself being part of that world.