

## His Truth is Marching On

***Unfolding Covenant History: An Exposition of the Old Testament, Volume 6: From Samuel to Solomon* by David J. Engelsma (Jenison, MI: Reformed Free Publishing Association, 2020). Hardcover, 224 pages. Reviewed by H. David Schuringa, a Reformed theologian living in West Michigan.**

*Unfolding Covenant History* is a multi-volume commentary on the Old Testament initiated by Prof. Homer C. Hoeksema (volumes 1–6), and taken up by Prof. David J. Engelsma. Following his completion of volume 5 on the period of the Judges, is now released volume 6, covering Samuel through Solomon.

To get a good whiff of the pleasant aroma in these volumes, one would do well to reread the introduction to the series in volume 1 where we learn that Old Testament history is not on a parallel track with world history. Rather, it is the very center of history with church history and general or world history as orbiting outer rings in a meaning-full, organic relationship. Such a perspective makes all the difference in the world, and is the only way to correctly understand history in all three dimensions and rightly divide the truth of sacred history that is the basis for all time from beginning to end.

Engelsma displays such as he ushers us forward in the unfolding of covenant history to understand what is going on here in scripture, the church and the world—yesterday, today and tomorrow. His commentary is unique in that instead of a verse-by-verse exposition, he gifts us with an enlightening episode-by-episode interpretation of this period of salvation history.

But be forewarned. Engelsma's exposition has a way to make you squirm in your seat and shout Hallelujah! at the same time. Never has this reviewer come across a commentary quite like this.

Engelsma operates on the basis of the sound presupposition that all scripture is God-breathed and profitable for instruction and training in righteousness. That means the Bible from Genesis to Revelation was penned ultimately by one author, the Holy Spirit. So we know that everything in God's word is true. He mines the gold of the text itself, his headlamp the system of doctrine revealed in all of scripture. And in the treasure chest of every passage he discovers Jesus Christ, the Messiah, about whom, and from whom, the unfolding history of the covenant sounds a certain trumpet for the army of God.

The commentary is generous with practical application for believers and the church today. In fact, his exegesis pulsates with relevancy and makes the Bible come alive. Or rather, shows how scripture is alive and pertinent for our salvation, the renewing of our minds, and living our daily lives.

What's his basic method for right interpretation?

The chief tools the eminent theologian employs are the covenant and the kingdom. The former which he defines as the relationship of God's sovereign friendship with his own, and the latter as the rule of that covenant friend for his people in all of their lives. So, it is a relationship of enormous and eternal proportions, generating within the bride of Christ deep esteem overflowing with awe, gratitude, and heartfelt love.

With this pair of implements in hand, there is nothing in the stories to paper-over, be it Samuel's failure to confront his wicked sons, Israel's sinful desire for a reprobate king, or even David's fiascos oozing with sorry aftermath. Truth is, the professor shakes us up as he shows from his exposition how God punishes the reprobate and chastises the elect—sometimes both looking similar, but with very different ends from the sovereign point of view.

For the sheep have a friend who would die for them. So while these dark times stand out as grave warnings for the flock, the Good News shines so brightly that you have to squint as the good Shepherd speaks his faithful word through the prophet Samuel, strong-arms Israel into longing for a faithful king, and establishes the throne forever for the Son of David. Yes, through a shepherd-boy named, David, saved-sinner, whom God molds after his own heart and through whose illegitimate offspring springs forth a victorious, anticipatory Solomonic golden age for the Seed of the woman—all for the glory of God's great name.

Indeed, astounding, incomprehensible, amazing grace. One cannot even begin to figure it out until he looks in the mirror.

Recommendation: Are you planning to study, teach, or preach from this particular portion in the history of the unfolding covenant? You would do well to begin by nosing around in Engelsma's competent, constructive, yet concise coverage of these historic, transformational events. Here proclaims the blessed gospel—our sovereign God in Christ on the way to Bethlehem and Golgotha.