

Latimer Trust

Monthly Reading List – Apr 2026

This is a summary of recent books read by Martin Davie, compiling his evaluations and the commendations of others. This time Martin has not focused on newly published books, but on five books he has been reading recently and which he thinks are very valuable.

In this edition:

Author	Title	Martin's opinion
G Geoffrey Harper	<i>'You Shall Be Clean': A Biblical Theology of Defilement and Cleansing</i>	This is a book written by a scholar for other scholars, for those who are already familiar with the biblical and extra-biblical material and who want to examine in more detail what this material has to say about defilement and cleansing. Those who come into this category will find this an extremely useful resource that will deepen their understanding and stimulate further reflection.
Dario Fernández-Morera	<i>The Myth of the Andalusian Paradise: Muslims, Christians, and Jews under Islamic Rule in Medieval Spain</i>	In spite of its scholarly rigour it is a very readable book which is easily accessible for someone with no previous knowledge of its subject matter. This is an important study that deserves to be widely read, because it exposes the falsity of the widespread argument that the Islamic states of medieval Spain provide models for the sort of tolerant and progressive society we need today and in the future.
Eric Patterson	<i>A Basic Guide to the Just War Tradition: Christian Foundations and Practices</i>	An important contribution to the literature on this subject. It is a well-informed guide to the Christian just war tradition that applies the teaching of the Bible and the Christian tradition to the key issues that need to be discussed when thinking about warfare from a Christian perspective. This is a book that can be unreservedly recommended to any Christian who wants to think more deeply about how Christians should think about war and Christian participation in it.
Mikel Del Rosario	<i>Did Jesus Really Say He Was God?: Making Sense of His Historical Claims</i>	This book is an excellent introduction to the most vital issue in the study of the New Testament: Who was Jesus? It shows that careful historical study, rather than leading to scepticism about the traditional Christian belief that Jesus is divine, actually points in the opposite direction. This is a book that all theological students should read and that all ministers should have on their shelves and encourage the members of their congregations to read. Very highly recommended.
Preston Sprinkle	<i>From Genesis to Junia: An Honest Search for What the Bible Really Says About Women in Leadership</i>	<i>From Genesis to Junia</i> provides a detailed and up-to-date account of the current state of the debate about what the Bible says about women in leadership and as such anyone who is interested in the topic will benefit from reading it even if they ultimately disagree with Sprinkle's own egalitarian conclusions.

G Geoffrey Harper, *'You Shall Be Clean': A Biblical Theology of Defilement and Cleansing*, Apollos, ISBN 978-1-78974-272-5, £15.97 (e book also available)

Overview:

Geoff Harper is Director of Research and Lecturer in Old Testament at Sydney Missionary & Bible College, Australia. His new book in the Apollos New Studies in Biblical Theology series is concerned with what the Bible teaches about impurity or defilement and how human beings can be cleansed from it.

In his Introduction he explains that the reasons for writing or reading a book on this subject are because:

... Defilement and cleansing are essential aspects of the biblical authors' worldviews. Moreover, correctly understanding these concepts directly impacts overlapping areas of theology: sacrifice, atonement and the ritual use of blood; relationship with God, oneself, the community and the earth; the task of world evangelism and testifying to all that God has accomplished; and, as above, one's conception of Jesus. Impurity and its amelioration directly impinge on vital areas of Christian thought and practice.

For all these reasons it is important to understand what the Bible has to say about defilement and cleansing.

Harper notes that:

... since the publication of Wilfred Paschen's seminal *Rein und Unrein* [Clean and Unclean] in 1970 the volume of literature devoted to exploring biblical (and extra-biblical) conceptions of purity has markedly increased. That is good news. Nevertheless, very few studies consider how the themes of defilement and cleansing play out across the canon. This is the gap the current volume addresses.

Harper's volume is in nine chapters.

Chapter 1 begins his study by looking at what the books of Leviticus and Numbers have to say about 'the causes, objects, scope and implications of defilement, as well as the various means God allocates for cleansing.'

Chapter 2 then 'synthesizes these initial soundings to construct a provisional conceptualization of purity.'

Chapter 3 goes on to examine how in the Pentateuch and the Former Prophets (Joshua-Kings) 'moral and ritual faithfulness mark one as belonging to God'.

Chapter 4 notes how the Latter Prophets (Isaiah to Malachi excluding Daniel) 'Foreground the moral defilement produced by bloodshed, idolatry and sexual immorality to warn about, and explain, the necessity of exile. But they also provide important indicators that Yahweh will one day conclusively purify his people.'

Chapters 5 and 6 look at how the remaining books of the Old Testament canon (The Writings) show a 'greater definition and reframing of concepts as various communities work out the purity implications of beings God's holy people' and how this continues in the extra-biblical literature of the Second Temple period.

Chapter 7 explores how the Gospels and Acts:

... repeatedly employ purity dynamics as they present their respective portraits of Jesus and the nascent church. Jesus is the supreme purifier who readies people for the arrival of God's Kingdom. In him, and through the pouring out of the Holy Spirit prophetic hope is realised.

Chapter 8 considers how in the Epistles: 'Purity informs social and ethical boundaries and drives exhortation for transformation. The purity of God must be reflected in the purity of his people.'

Finally, chapter 9 builds on the previous material to articulate: '... a biblical theology of defilement and cleansing and grounds this in three representative areas of Christian thought and practise.' The three areas concerned are thinking about the incarnation, thinking about the atonement, and thinking about global mission.

Martin's opinion:

You shall be clean is an exhaustive study of how the concepts of defilement and cleansing are understood and developed in the biblical material and in the Jewish writings of the Second Temple period. It also helpfully applies the results of this study in three key areas of Christian theology and practice. Like other volumes in the New Studies in Biblical Theology series, this is a book written by a scholar for other scholars. It is a book that this written for those who are already familiar with the biblical and extra-biblical material Harper looks at and who want to examine in more detail what this material has to say about defilement and cleansing. Those who come into this category will find this an extremely useful resource that will deepen their understanding and stimulate further reflection. Highly recommended.

Commendations:

David Firth has written

With clarity, insight and humility, Geoff Harper demonstrates that the theme of defilement and cleansing is woven into the whole of Scripture. Far from being an obscure part of the Old Testament, it has vital connections to Christian theology, discipleship and witness. This is a study that deserves to be widely read for both for the challenges and encouragement it provides.

Darío Fernández-Morera, *The Myth of the Andalusian Paradise: Muslims, Christians, and Jews under Islamic Rule in Medieval Spain*, ISI Books, ISBN 978-1-61017-095-6, £23.60 (e book and audio versions also available).

Overview:

Darío Fernández-Morera is Associate Professor in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at Northwestern University. His book on Islamic rule in medieval Spain, which was first published back in 2016, but is now available as an e book, is a major work of revisionist scholarship that challenges the view constantly expressed in both works of academic scholarship and by major mainstream broadcasters such as the BBC that Islamic Spain (*al Andalus* – hence ‘Andalusia’) was a paradise of cultural progress and religious tolerance.

As Fernández-Morera writes in his introduction:

This book aims to demystify Islamic Spain by questioning the widespread belief that it was a wonderful place of tolerance and *convivencia* [coexistence] of three cultures under the benevolent supervision of enlightened Muslim rulers. As the epigraphs throughout this book illustrate, the nineteenth-century romantic vision of Islamic Spain has morphed into today’s ‘mainstream’ academic and popular writings that celebrate ‘al Andalus’ for its ‘multiculturalism,’ ‘unity of Muslims, Christians and Jews,’ ‘diversity,’ and ‘pluralism’ regardless of how close such emphasis is to the facts.

The bulk of the book consists of seven chapters.

Chapter 1, ‘Conquest and Reconquest’ explains how from 710 onwards Arab and Berber forces, motivated by an understanding of the Quranic concept of *jihad* that saw it in terms of continuous military conquest in the name of Islam, crossed the straits of Gibraltar from North Africa and fought their way up through Spain and southern France, conquering the existing Christian Visigothic kingdoms on the way, until they were finally stopped by the forces of Charles Martel at the Battle of Tours in 754. From their bases in the mountains of Galicia and Asturias in Northwest Spain the Christians fought back and eventually after centuries of gradual Islamic retreat the Christian reconquest of Spain (the ‘*reconquista*’) culminated in the fall of the final Spanish Islamic state, Granada, in 1492.

Chapter 2, ‘The effects of Jihad’ explains that the Islamic invasion resulted in the destruction of a flourishing ‘Hispano-Visigoth’ civilization in Spain. This civilization was a fusion of Visigothic and Roman culture that was based on Christianity in its Catholic form, that was aware of and made use of the literary and intellectual heritage of the classical world, and that had a much more sophisticated material culture than that possessed by the invaders. This culture was deliberately destroyed by the invaders because they wanted the material riches of this civilization, such as its gold and jewellery, for themselves, and because they sought to eradicate the public symbols of Christian belief as a permanent witness to Islamic dominance (hence the destruction of churches and cathedrals and their replacement by mosques).

Chapter 3, ‘The daily realities of Al-Andalus,’ emphasises that Islamic Spain was not a modern pluralist society. It was a conservative Islamic society which was rooted in the hardline *Maliki* school of Islamic jurisprudence and in which Islamic law as interpreted by the *ulama* or Islamic clerics ruled every aspect of everyday life. Rather than being a religious melting pot, Islamic Spain was a rigidly divided society in which Muslims, Christians and Jews led separate lives in their own communities, with Christians and Jews being second class citizens or ‘*dhimmis*’ who had to pay a tax known as the *jizya* in order to receive ‘protection’ from their Islamic overlords.

Chapter 4, ‘The myth of Umayyad tolerance’ looks at the claim that the Umayyad dynasty that ruled most of Spain from 711–1031 was a beacon of tolerance and religious pluralism. The chapter explains that this oft repeated claim is completely unjustified. In Fernández-Morera’s words:

Like most things concerning Islamic Spain, the rule of the Umayyads is praised enthusiastically by many of today’s admiring academics, Islamic studies experts or not, as an inspiring example of tolerance and *convivencia* of the three faiths (Islam, Judaism, and Christianity).

In fact, as Ibn Hazm gleefully puts it, of all the dynasties in Islamic Spain the Umayyads were ‘the most afflicting to the enemies of God.’ The celebrated Umayyads actually elevated religious and political persecutions,

inquisitions, beheadings, impalings and crucifixions to heights unequalled by any other set of rulers before or after in Spain.

Chapter 5, 'Women in Islamic Spain' addresses another myth about Islamic Spain, which is that under Islamic rule Muslim women enjoyed lives of personal and sexual freedom unparalleled in the Christian cultures of the time. The chapter shows that, like the myth of Umayyad tolerance, the notion of the freedom of women in Spanish Islamic society is completely unjustified. To quote Fernández-Morera again:

The vision of scores of bejewelled free Muslim women walking about Al Andalus with long flowing hair and elegant silk dresses, displaying their undulating and voluptuous bodies while freely enjoying life in public places and working as poets, lecturers, teachers, librarians, copyists, physicians, and so forth under the tolerant and enraptured eyes of Muslim men is a wishful Western academic fantasy at best, and a shoddy professional reading of the historical evidence at worst.

The reality is that Muslim women underwent female circumcision at early age, were married young, and were expected to spend their lives almost exclusively in the domestic sphere, to be completely chaste, and to be covered up and veiled in public and in the presence of any man who was not a close male relative. Muslim men, on the other hand were free to make use of the services of vast numbers of female non-Muslim sex-slaves imported from all over the Mediterranean and beyond as part of the flourishing Islamic slave trade. Female slaves could and did become learned and write poetry, but this was only in order to make them more sexually desirable to Muslim men. Contrary to the myth, the places where women really did enjoy the opportunity for political power and a high degree of personal independence were the Catholic kingdoms in Spain. Female emancipation extended as Islamic rule retreated.

Chapter 6 and 7, 'The truth about the Jewish Community's golden age' and 'The Christian condition' examine the reality of the lives of the Jewish and Christian communities in Islamic Spain. It notes that they were subject communities whose concerns about heresy and apostasy led them to rigorously police their own internal existence and avoid contact with those who were not of their community. As previously noted, rather than being a pluralist society, Islamic Spain was a divided society in which the subject Jewish and Christian communities kept apart from wider Muslim society and from each other. Chapter 7 also notes that, as in other parts of the Islamic world, the membership of the Christian communities in Spain shrank over time and that Christians, like the 'martyrs of Cordoba,' who sought to publicly express their beliefs in opposition to Islam faced execution.

In his Epilogue Fernández-Morera reiterates that in Islamic Spain:

Christians were at the bottom of a stratified Islamic world, where Arabs occupied the top, followed by Berbers, then by freed Muslim white slaves, and finally by *muladis* (converts), who were further divided into first generation converts and the rest. And of course Christians, again by definition, were not part of the Islamic *umma* but were merely tolerated and 'protected' (a word with ominous meaning for anyone familiar with 'protection' rackets) as long as they humbly kept their place and paid for said protection.

Martin's opinion:

The Myth of the Andalusian Paradise is a work of rigorous academic scholarship which is based on a close study of original medieval sources which are meticulously listed in the notes and bibliography. However, in spite of its scholarly rigour it is a very readable book which is easily accessible for someone with no previous knowledge of its subject matter. This is an important study that deserves to be widely read, not only because it bears truthful historical witness to the witness of life in Islamic Spain, but because it exposes the falsity of the argument that has become widespread in Western academic circles today that the Islamic states of the past, those in medieval Spain in particular, provide models for the sort of tolerant and progressive society we need today and in the future. This argument is explicitly or implicitly anti-Christian in basis, and what Fernández-Morera shows is that it has no foundation in historical reality.

Commendations:

Noel Valis declares:

This sober and hard-hitting reassessment demolishes the myths of religious tolerance and multiculturalism that have hopelessly romanticized the precarious coexistence and harsh realities of medieval Spain under

Muslim rule. Well documented and persuasively argued, this book is a must-read as a window into the lessons of the past.

Eric Patterson, *A Basic Guide to the Just War Tradition: Christian Foundations and Practices*, Baker Academic, ISBN 978-1-54096-547-9, £19.99 (hardback, e book and audio versions also available).

Overview:

Eric D. Patterson is an American political scientist whose work focuses on international relations, just war theory, and the intersection of religion, ideology, and national security. As he explains in its opening chapter, his book on the Christian just war tradition is about:

... pursuing peace based on justice in the conduct of statecraft. Statecraft is the skilful political leadership of a country, including as it relates to other countries. Effective statecraft draws on the wisdom of past experience and is buttressed by moral commitment. Christian reflection on statecraft should draw on what the Bible and theological reflection on it have taught us over the centuries about human beings living together in community. Christian thinkers offer particular wisdom about the responsibility of government to provide order and justice. That tradition is called the just war tradition, and its essential feature is a commitment to conducting statecraft in a way that pursues peace with justice.

Having introduced the Christian just war tradition in this way in chapter 1 of his book, Patterson goes on in chapters 2–6 to consider various different aspects of this tradition.

Chapter 2, 'Theological Foundations of Just War Statecraft,' 'goes into some detail on the theological underpinnings of the just war principles of legitimate political authority acting on a just cause with right intentions.' It argues that these underpinnings are God's institution of governmental authority, an understanding of military service as a legitimate Christian calling to serve God and neighbour, and the principle of good stewardship that means political leaders should count the cost and likelihood of success before going to war, and that the use of force in war should be proportionate.

Chapter 3, 'Historical Overview of the Christian Just War Tradition' surveys the contribution to the development of the Christian just war tradition made by a number of key Christian thinkers including Augustine, Aquinas, Luther and Calvin and more recently Paul Ramsey and Jean Bethke Elshtain. It explores how these thinkers applied Christian ethical principles 'to the moral dilemmas of their time, working out appropriate limits on warriors and warfighting, all with the goal of peace.' The chapter ends by arguing that Christian pacifism fails to take into account the distinction between the responsibilities of individual citizens and those of government officials and between a justified use of force aiming at peace and unrestrained violence motivated by 'sinful desires such as bitterness, hatred, greed and envy.'

Chapter 4, 'Morality and Contemporary Warfare: Distinguishing Moral Resistance from Violent Rebellion' considers how to distinguish between 'the elements of lawful resistance' and 'unlawful violence and rebellion' based on factors such as legitimate and illegitimate authority, right and wrong intentions, and the distinction between force and violence. The chapter also considers the forms of warfare found in the Old Testament books of Joshua and Judges, the Crusades, and other forms of holy war such as Islamic terrorism.

Chapter 5, 'The Motivations and Characteristics of Just Warriors,' considers what distinguishes a just as opposed to an unjust participant in war. It argues that just warriors 'are distinguished by what they love, what angers them, and their character.' It also looks at the:

... important distinction between righteous indignation in response to injustice, on the one hand, and wrongful hatred, on the other. Just like Jesus in the temple, the just warrior may become angry but should never give in to vengeful wrath. The four cardinal virtues – prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude – provide a foundation for the heart of the just warrior.

Chapter 6, 'Ending Wars Well: Order, Justice, and Conciliation,' notes that the proper end to a just war is a just peace and declares that such a peace 'must start with basic governance and security (order) and establish elements of justice (punishment of wrong, restitution to victims).'

The chapter also notes that being a soldier is not the only legitimate vocation in the face of conflict. Christian ministers need to remind their flocks that:

Christians have vocational roles to play across the entire spectrum of domestic and international conflict. Some are called to be just warriors. Others are called to work to prevent war, assuage the grief of victims, rebuild societies through humanitarian aid, or work in the justice sector.

Martin's opinion:

A Basic Guide to the Just War Tradition is an important contribution to the literature on this subject. It is a well-informed guide to the Christian just war tradition that applies the teaching of the Bible and the Christian tradition to the key issues that need to be discussed when thinking about warfare from a Christian perspective. The conclusions it reaches reflect the consensus of mainstream Christian thinking as this has developed over the past two thousand years and the case for this consensus is set out in a very clear and readable fashion. This is a book that can be unreservedly recommended to any Christian who wants to think more deeply about how Christians should think about war and Christian participation in it.

Commendations:

Nigel Biggar comments:

The fifteen hundred years of Christian 'just war' reasoning comprise the most sophisticated tradition we have of thinking about the conditions of the morally justified use of force. Patterson, an authority both in theory and in practice, has provided a guide that is as comprehensive in scope as it is exemplary in clarity.

Mikel Del Rosario, *Did Jesus Really Say He Was God?: Making Sense of His Historical Claims*, IVP Academic, 978-1-51401-101-0, £19.99 (e book and audio versions also available).

Overview:

Mikel Del Rosario is Professor of Bible and Theology at the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. As he explains in his introduction, his new book *Did Jesus really say he was God?* had its origins in the day:

... a middle-aged woman cornered me after church one Sunday afternoon in California. I was surprised when she began to raise questions challenging the deity of Christ. I had my Bible out on a table as we began to talk. Suddenly, she grabbed my Bible, held it up with both hands like a visual aid, and confidently declared, 'According to this, Jesus never claimed to be God!' I was stunned. Even though she went to church regularly, her words echoed popular challenges to the historic Christian view of Jesus as divine.

The purpose of his book is to provide an answer to the challenge presented by this woman and those who think like her. It is an attempt to show, in a work that engages with the scholarly debate about the issue but is also accessible to the non-specialist reader, that the relevant evidence really does show that Jesus claimed to be God.

His book is divided into four parts. Part 1, chapters 1–2, looks at :

... how historians discover past events and consider rules of evidence when studying Jesus as a figure in ancient history. Despite challenges to the traditional criteria of authenticity, I will argue that historical data can lead to knowledge about Jesus and that texts based on the memories of those who had experiences of Jesus can help us construct an adequate representation of sayings and events in Jesus' life.

Part two, chapters 3–5, then looks at the accusation of blasphemy made against Jesus after his healing of a paralytic (Mark 2:1–12). In this part Rosario considers:

'... the kind of authority Jesus claimed to have in the healing of the paralytic, using his reputation as a miracle worker and exorcist as a foundational fact. How probable is it that the historical Jesus was accurately remembered as a unique miracle worker who claimed to forgive sins?'

He also engages 'with theories challenging the historicity of the scene and the idea that Jesus claimed to do something that only God had the right to do.'

Part 3, chapters 6–9, goes on to look at the accusation of blasphemy made against Jesus in his trial before the Sanhedrin (Mark 14:53–65) in order 'to discover the kind of authority Jesus claimed to have at his Jewish examination, using his arrest and interrogation by Jewish authorities as a historical starting place. How probable is it that the historical Jesus was accurately remembered as one who claimed to be the apocalyptic Son of Man who judges sin?'

In this part he also assesses 'challenges to the authenticity of the core scene and the exchange between Jesus and the high priest.'

Finally, part 4, chapters 10–12, explores:

'... two major hypotheses concerning the type of authority that Jesus claimed to possess by using five criteria for weighing hypotheses about the sayings of a person or the cause of a past event. Did Jesus claim to possess only a kind of human authority? Or does the evidence show that he claimed to possess a kind of divine authority? Combining highly evidenced data from both scenes will allow us to present a historically defensible case for Jesus' divine claim.'

The reason that the evidence from these two passages is so significant, argues Del Rosario, is that in them Jesus claims to forgive and judge sin which is something only the creator God who has jurisdiction over all creation can rightly do. The evidence thus shows that Jesus did indeed claim to possess divine authority (and thus to be God). He further notes that the evidence from these two scenes fits in with the additional evidence in Mark's gospel that Jesus has authority over 'sacred things, over nature, over demons, disease and death.' This again shows that Jesus has an authority that belongs only to God.

Furthermore, this Markan evidence also explains why immediately after the resurrection a whole series of New Testament texts show that Jesus' first followers identified him with the one God of Israel. They believed that Jesus' claim to be God had been validated by God in Jesus' resurrection.

Martin's opinion:

This book is an excellent introduction to the most vital issue in the study of the New Testament: Who was Jesus? Like the similar volume by Brant Pitre, *Jesus and Divine Christology* (Eerdmans, 2024), it shows that careful historical study, rather than leading to scepticism about the traditional Christian belief that Jesus is divine, actually points in the opposite direction. The more one studies the relevant texts the clearer the evidence that Jesus himself and his first followers believed he was God becomes. This is a book that manages to be both scholarly and readable and it is a book that all theological students should read and that all ministers should have on their shelves and encourage the members of their congregations to read. Very highly recommended.

Commendations:

Sean McDowell writes

This is a unique, timely, and important book. Mikel Del Rosario defends the vital doctrine of the deity of Jesus but does so in a remarkably systematic and careful way. He lays out his historical methodology, applies it to two key texts in the Gospel of Mark, and then responds to leading critics. This is not only a wonderful defence of the deity of Jesus but a model for how to do historical Jesus scholarship.

Preston Sprinkle, *From Genesis to Junia: An Honest Search for What the Bible Really Says About Women in Leadership*, David C Cook, ISBN 978-0-83078-580-3, £15.45 (e book and audible editions also available).

Overview:

Preston Sprinkle is an American biblical scholar who has written over a dozen well-received books including *Exiles*, *People to Be Loved* and *Does the Bible Support Same-Sex Marriage?* He is the President of the Centre for Faith, Sexuality & Gender, an organisation that equips Christians to 'engage questions about faith, sexually & gender with theological faithfulness and courageous love'

As he explains in the introduction to his new book, having grown up in a 'staunchly complementarian context where only men could be pastors and leaders,' Sprinkle eventually moved to a position in which he was 'undecided about what I think the Bible says about women in leadership.' His new book is result of a decision to use the opportunity of a sabbatical starting in the autumn of 2022 to undertake a study of this issue.

His book is in eleven chapters. It begins with the narratives of the creation and fall in Genesis 1–3 and then works forward through the rest of the Old Testament, the Gospels, Acts and the letters of Paul.

In the final chapter 'Landing the plane' he sets out the findings of his study as follows:

- 'Genesis 1–3 doesn't appear to establish a universal principle that man should exercise authority or leadership over women.'
- 'The rest of the Old Testament 'reveals a variegated picture of male-female relations ... Most formal leaders in the Old Testament are men, but some are women (like Deborah and Huldah) who exercise authority over men, and the writers of Scripture don't censor their behaviour. And Israel's all male priesthood does not appear to reflect a universal principle that only men should be teachers in God's covenant community.'
- In the Gospels, Jesus highlights service 'as the true mark of authority' and 'throughout the Gospels women are the ones who most clearly embody this key leadership trait.'
- Paul uses a number of terms to describe those who are leaders in the Church and the language he uses to refer to women such as Phoebe, Priscilla, Junia, Appia, Lydia and Aquilla suggests that 'these women were leaders in the early church.'
- The New Testament evidence indicates that: 'Some women were undoubtedly prophets and prophesied. The New Testament doesn't distinguish between male prophets who led and taught and female prophets who did not.'
- 1 Corinthians 11 'presumes that both men and women were engaging in the same kinds of ministry.'
- In 1 Corinthians 14:34–35 Paul 'is commanding women to not interrupt another prophet while he or she is speaking but to submit to the one speaking.'
- While Sprinkle thinks that 1 Timothy 2–3: 'offers what I believe is the strongest case for complementarian perspectives ... these interpretations face several challenges and there are other more plausible ways to understand this passage.'

In 1 Timothy 2:11–15: '*Authentein* most likely conveys the kind of secular or authority that a master has over his slave; therefore, Paul isn't prohibiting women from teaching or exercising godly authority over men. While Paul certainly roots his prohibition in the creation order of men and women, it seems most likely that he appeals to this Genesis account as an illustration to address a local situation in Ephesus' (reflecting the influence of the cult of the goddess Artemis).

In 1 Timothy 3:1–5 'Paul presumes a situation where most qualified overseers will be married men with children, but this doesn't mean he is forbidding everyone who doesn't fit this norm from serving in the role.'

'In the end' writes Sprinkle, 'I think the best interpretation of all the Bible's evidence shows us that both women and men can be equally qualified and gifted for all forms of church leadership.'

Sprinkle also argues that accepting this position does not lead, as some people have suggested, to an acceptance of same-sex marriage. This is because the Bible consistently teaches that:

'... sex difference is an intrinsic part of what marriage is, and it prohibits same-sex sexual relationships each time they are addressed. Scripture shows no diversity on these points. The same is not true of women in church leadership.'

Martin's opinion:

Those who are complementarians might be tempted to dismiss this book as simply yet another egalitarian argument for women's leadership. That would be a major mistake. As I have noted, Sprinkle does finally come to an egalitarian position. However, on the way he considers all the exegetical options on the passages he looks at and is as critical of many popular egalitarian interpretations as he is of complementarian ones. In addition, he is scrupulous in his footnoting so that people can check his accounts of the scholars he refers to for themselves. What *From Genesis to Junia* provides is a detailed and up-to-date account of the current state of the debate about what the Bible says about women in leadership and as such anyone who is interested in the topic will benefit from reading it even if they ultimately disagree with Sprinkle's own conclusions.

Commendations:

Lisa Harper comments:

From Genesis to Junia is one of the most compelling, encouraging and comprehensive books I've read regarding what the Bible really says about women in leadership. And Preston's thorough biblical scholarship is well balanced by his approachable humility, which makes this material read like genuinely inviting dialogue as opposed to an agenda-driven diatribe.