Latimer Trust
Monthly Reading List – October 2026

This is a summary of recent books read by Martin Davie, compiling his evaluations and the commendations of others.

In this edition:

Author	**Title**	**Martin's opinion**
Christopher Ash	*A Forgotten Prophet: Micaiah's Courage and the Call to Faithfulness in Troubled Times*	This is an excellent study which demonstrates that even biblical characters and passages that can be easily overlooked have much to teach us. A great book for personal devotional reading and a great resource for a sermon series or for small group Bible study.
Colin Hansen, Skyler Flowers et al	*The AI Apocalypse: A Survival Guide for Humanity*	The multi-disciplinary team that has produced this collection is to be congratulated on opening a Christian conversation about these crucial issues. A book that needs to be read, pondered and used as a basis for a better-informed Christian discussion about what an AI-shaped future could look like and what it should look like. An important read.
Timothy Keller and Michael Keller	*The Stories We Live By: How Jesus Critiques and Completes What Our Culture Tells Us*	This book is an excellent resource for Christians seeking to engage in cultural apologetics, and to offer to people who want to know what Christianity has to offer that cannot already be found in Westen secular culture, and for a home group to help understand why and how they need to engage with the dominant cultural stories of our time.
John C Lennox	*My Story: A Spiritual and Intellectual Autobiography*	Of great interest and value to anyone who wants to know what God can do through a life dedicated to him. John Lennox has been an outstanding servant of God over many decades and this book is a testimony to his service and to the grace and power of the God who made it possible. A great and inspiring read.
Simon Sebag Montefiore	*The Cauldron: The Making of the Modern Middle East*	Before Christians offer comments on what is currently happening in the Middle East they need to understand what is actually taking place there and its recent history. This book provides an essential tool to help understand this history. It is a book that promotes knowledge rather than ignorance by telling all sides of the story without obviously taking sides. Highly recommended.

Christopher Ash, *A Forgotten Prophet: Micaiah's Courage and the Call to Faithfulness in Troubled Times*, Christian Focus, ISBN 978-1-52711-422-7, £7.99 (e edition also available).

Overview:

Formerly the Director of the Proclamation Trust's Cornhill Training Course in London, Christopher Ash is now Writer-in-Residence at Tyndale House, Cambridge.

His new book, which began life as four expositions given at the Crieff Fellowship of Scottish ministers in January 2025 is a series of four studies of the biblical accounts of the Old Testament prophet Micaiah Ben Imlah as recorded in 2 Chronicles 18 and 1 Kings 22.

In his introduction Ash explains:

> Micaiah appears, is faithful, and then disappears. And that is the best you and I can hope for – that we appear on the scene of Christian history, are faithful to our Master, and then disappear from the scene. If we think we can do more than that we need a reality check. But if we fear we do not have the gifts or talents to do this, we need to be encouraged: every single man, woman, or child who is a disciple of Jesus can have that word 'faithful' written over their story. Every pastor can aim to have the word 'faithful' written on their gravestone… Micaiah can encourage us because he is a faithful prophet who prefigures and foreshadows another and greater prophet the Lord Jesus Christ. His short story pictures for us what it means to be faithful and especially to be a faithful pastor.

Ash's study of Micaiah is divided into four scenes, each of which highlights a different aspect of what the story of Micaiah can teach us about being faithful to Christ.

Scene one (2 Chronicles 18:1–11, cf. 1 Kings 22:1–22) is about being 'Faithful to Christ in a confused culture.'

Scene two (2 Chronicles 18:4–13, cf. 1 Kings 22:5–14) is about being 'Faithful to Christ amid contradictory 'Christianities.''

Scene three (2 Chronicles 18:14–22, cf. 1 Kings 22:15–23) is about being 'Faithful under the Great God.'

Finally, scene four (2 Chronicles 18:23–19:3, cf. 1 Kings 22:4–20) is about being 'Faithful awaiting final vindication.'

In a short review it is impossible to summarise the contents of these four scenes. However, the following extract from the conclusion to scene three will give a flavour of the whole. Looking at what Micaiah says in his address to King Ahab of Israel and King Jehoshaphat of Judah, Ash writes that Micaiah demonstrates five convictions:

> Firstly, Micaiah knows that Ahab has a conscience. Micaiah speaks to Ahab's conscience. And we may do the same as we bear testimony to Christ today. It is a great thing as Christians, and especially as pastors, to know that men and women have consciences. When we speak, we may speak intentionally to the consciences of our hearers.
>
> Secondly, Micaiah knows that the pastoral task is enormously significant, that pastors are under-shepherds, and that the chief shepherd – the Great Shepherd, the Good Shepherd – cares for his sheep. The sheep may be scattered like sheep without a shepherd. But the Good Shepherd will gather them. And he gives to pastors the privilege of gathering with him.
>
> Thirdly, Micaiah sees the higher throne. His sights are filled not with the impressive yet puny bluffing threats of culture, but with the sight of the Lord on his throne with the unbeatable armies of heaven waiting to do his every command.
>
> Fourthly, Micaiah grasps that the devil's lies are all under the sovereign providential wisdom of God, and that somehow even false teachers in God's church are there because of some heavenly council meeting. In their malice and deception, they cannot help serving the sovereign purposes of God.
>
> And lastly Micaiah knows there is a judgement.

Martin's opinion:

This is an excellent study which demonstrates that even biblical characters and passages that can be easily overlooked have much to teach us. Ash makes it clear that the story of Micaiah, read in the light of the biblical story as a whole teaches us how to be faithful to God and his word in a world such as our own where culture is confused and where there are competing versions of Christianity in the marketplace. We can be faithful in the knowledge that we have a great God who is sovereign over all that happens and will in the end vindicate those who faithfully stay the course in the ministries to which he calls them. A great book for personal devotional reading and a great resource for a sermon series or for small group Bible study.

Commendations:

Jason Helopoulos writes:

> Though small in size, this book overflows with what the average Christian – and especially Christian leaders – need in our often-turbulent age. It can be read prayerfully in a single sitting, yet it offers instruction and example rich enough to shape a lifetime of faithfulness.

Colin Hansen, Skyler Flowers et al, *The AI Apocalypse: A Survival Guide for Humanity,* Zondervan, ISBN 978-1-95659-321-1, £14.83, (e edition also available).

Overview:

Anyone who has not spent the past few years living a solitary life, under a rock, in the middle of a desert, will know that one of the most, if not *the* most important, developments of recent years is the development of Artificial Intelligence or 'AI', that is to say, the development of computers that can process and assimilate information and act upon that information in a way that that is quicker and more powerful that anything that human beings can achieve. They will also know that people are now talking about a future dominated by AI in apocalyptic terms, a future in which the use of AI will radically transform the world forever in directions that might be unimaginably good or unimaginably evil.

The AI Apocalypse is a collection of essays produced by the Gospel Coalition and edited by Colin Hansen and Skyler Flowers that address from a Christian perspective the key issues raised by the development of AI. As Hansen puts it in his introduction:

> What are we living for? How can humanity survive the AI apocalypse?
>
> If we're content delivery machines that get hungry and tired, we lose to AI.
>
> If we're data processors that get confused and forgetful, we lose to AI.
>
> If we're the only creative beings made in God's image, then AI can never replace us.
>
> Because AI can never show us the purpose. AI can never call on wisdom to call out good. Only humans – you and I – can do that, when we call on the Lord.

The collection is in three main parts.

Part I looks at what it means to say that 'the advent and integration of AI technologies into human life is an 'apocalypse.'' Two essays by Chrisopher Watkin argue that 'AI holds up a mirror that exposes what we believe human beings are and what we are made for' and work towards 'a biblical theology of humanity and AI.' Clayton Chancey then builds on Watkin's work to consider what is positive and what is negative about the capabilities of AI, 'helping us to know where AI is useful and where it is dangerous.'

Part 2 focuses on 'how AI is reshaping human life.' Essays by Michael Keller, Alan Noble, Keith Plummer, Rachel Gilson and Brett McCracken consider this topic in relation to the issues of human identity, companionship, counselling, the workplace, and human artistry. Autumn Alcott Ridenour then concludes this part of the book 'with a reflection on the beginning and end of human life, showing how God's limits promote human flourishing.'

Part 3 consists of an essay by the Kenyan AI researcher Joshua Baru considering 'how AI is already transforming the globe' and 'the many possibilities the new technology has opened for the world's future.'

These three parts are then followed by a conclusion and an epilogue. In the conclusion Skyler Flowers and Michael Graham 'offer 10 resolutions for AI use derived from a moral reflection on the Ten Commandments'. For example:

> We will not worship AI or any human invention as an omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, and omnibenevolent guide. We will not worship humans, either ourselves or others, whose capabilities might be amplified by AI's power. We will not worship money, status, productivity, or anything else that might result from our use of AI and new technologies. We will submit our lives at all times in every way in total dependence on the one true God.
>
> We will not allow AI to turn us inward and away from our fellow humans. We will not use it to indulge our sexual desires or longings for intimacy. We will not confide in bots nor seek their counsel or comfort. No technology is a substitute for human connection. We will not deface other image bearers by creating their likeness for our own gratification. We will not view, read, or create – and will resist by every godly means – AI

> generated pornography. We commit ourselves to faithfulness in relationships, purity in our thoughts, and self-control in our passions.

The epilogue by former US senator and university president Ben Sasse calls on Americans 'to form their lives around communal, familial and individual virtues so that we might enter the AI apocalypse as those equipped to harness these technologies for good.'

At the end of the book there are two appendices. The first gives 'some basic FAQs about AI and its origin, mechanics and potentialities'. The second contains a 'full glossary of AI related terms.'

Martin's opinion:

The AI Apocalypse: A Survival Guide for Humanity is a helpful introduction to the nature of AI and the issues it raises for how we should live in the future in the brave new world that the development of AI seems destined to bring about. AI is not going to be un-invented so we must think carefully how it can be harnessed for good ends rather than be used to reinforce the sinful tendencies that exist in all human beings because of the Fall. For Christians this means thinking about how we can make sure that the existence of AI does not tempt us to believe that we no longer need to be dependent on God or other human beings (since AI can give us all that we desire) or that we can use AI to circumvent the human limitations that God has put in place for our good and seek instead to attain some sort of artificial god-like status by means of technological innovation. The multi-disciplinary team that has produced this collection is to be congratulated on opening a Christian conversation about these crucial issues. *The AI Apocalypse* is a book that needs to be read, pondered and used as a basis for a better-informed Christian discussion about what an AI-shaped future could look like and what it should look like. An important read.

Commendations:

Brad Littlejohn has written:

> 'Get wisdom, and whatever you do, get insight.' Never before has the Solomonic summons been so urgent as in the age of AI. The authors of this volume have rendered a timely service for the church. They offer no easy answers – we get plenty of those from the bots – but rather the hard questions that summon us to stay true to our creaturely vocation.

Timothy Keller and Michael Keller, *The Stories We Live By: How Jesus Critiques and Completes What Our Culture Tells Us*, Hodder and Stoughton, ISBN 978-1-39983-358-5, £18.99 (e and audio editions also available).

Overview:

Michael Keller is a Presbyterian minister in New York and is the son of the renowned Presbyterian, preacher, theologian and apologist, the late Tim Keller. In the Introduction to *The Stories We Live By* he explains that prior to his father's death in 2023 he and his father were discussing the power of stories to shape the way we live our lives. He recalls that his father observed:

> … that stories shape who we are because they subtly transmit beliefs and assumptions in easily absorbed forms. Our culture transmits many such beliefs and assumptions, but we don't recognise them as such. We don't even recognise them as beliefs. We just think, *This is the way things are*. These belief transmitting stories are everywhere. We are taught them, not formally in a classroom, but by the music we listen to, the films we watch, and the social media we scroll through every day.

In the light of this observation Michael Keller and his father decided to undertake a joint project looking at the stories told by contemporary Western culture. They decided:

> Let's write a book together about the stories of modern culture. Let's bring to light the stories that shape us and show how they crack under the weight of real life, so the reader can weigh and evaluate the beliefs contained in each.

The Stories We Live By is that book, written by Michael Keller on the basis of the material already written by his father prior to his death. As Michel Keller further explains in the introduction:

> The goal of this book is not just to identify seven key hidden cultural narratives that shape our lives – identity, power, freedom, morality, truth, happiness, and progress; it's to ask a harder question: Why are they not working? Why is the modern script, which promised us paradise, delivering us into a crisis of meaning? We must examine the stories that are failing us. We will evaluate their effectiveness and then compare and contrast each story with the Christian story. These seven stories were not picked at random. They form the imaginative architecture of modern life that offer answers to some of our most fundamental questions: Who am I? What is wrong with this world? What will put things right? Stories, like people, are complex projects. The human longings in each reveal, we suggest, how Christianity offers a more complete story.

The body of the book consists of ten chapters.

In the first chapter the Kellers introduce the hidden cultural narratives identified in the introduction in more detail.

In chapters two to eight the Kellers explore these hidden cultural narratives in detail, exploring what each of them has to say, and looking at how in each case the Christian faith offers

> a story that is richer and more comprehensive than those our culture provides. Other accounts may explain some things about our experience; only Christianity holds together what the others cannot, including our hopes and dreams.

In chapters nine and ten the Kellers first 'explore a model for engaging our culture's stories and the ideas embedded in them – learning to affirm what is good, to critique what is incomplete, and to redirect our deepest desires towards Christ.' They then go on to explain that when we discover that 'real, lasting truth' is found not in science but in Jesus and put our faith in him, we will receive the happiness, freedom and identity we have always wanted, and learn to live morally in obedience to the God who created us, and how to handle the power we have been given 'not by hoarding or ignoring it, but by giving it away in the service of others, just as Jesus did for us.'

In a brief closing epilogue Michael Keller reflects on the fact that what he learned from his father is that Christianity is about placing ourselves in the story about Jesus taught by the Christian faith and invites his readers to do this. 'Don't just believe this story in your head; let it move into your heart to become the one story you read every other story by.'

Martin's opinion:

The Stories We Live By is an excellent work of Christian apologetics. The Kellers explain the importance of the key stories that shape Western culture and show that in each case these stories are incomplete in themselves but point us towards a supernatural completion that can only be found in the person and work of Jesus Christ. This book is an excellent resource for Christians seeking to engage in cultural apologetics, an excellent book to offer to people who want to know what Christianity has to offer that cannot already be found in Westen secular culture, and an excellent book for Christians to look at in a home group setting to help people understand why and how they need to engage with the dominant cultural stories of our time.

Commendations:

Glen Wishnew declares:

> This volume offers a reader-friendly analysis of cultural narratives that helps Christians cling to the gospel and point others toward hope in Christ.

John C Lennox, *My Story: A Spiritual and Intellectual Autobiography*, SPCK, ISBN 978-0-28109-197-3, £24.99 (e book and audio versions also available).

Overview:

John Lennox is Northern Irish mathematician, bioethicist, Christian apologist and lay theologian. As well as his professional publications in the area of mathematics he has written numerous books on religion, ethics, and the relationship between science and Christian belief.

He has doctorates from the universities of Cambridge, Oxford and Cardiff and is currently emeritus professor of Mathematics at the University of Oxford, where he is also Emeritus Fellow in Mathematics and Philosophy of Science at Green Templeton College. He has lectured at Wycliffe Hall and at the Oxford Centre for Christian Apologetics and is an Associate Fellow of the Saïd Business School and a Senior Fellow at the Trinity Forum.

His autobiography traces the story of his life and work. Starting with his childhood in Northern Ireland, it moves on to his period of undergraduate and postgraduate studies and the way in which rigorous Bible study and honest debate convinced him that Christianity made better sense of truth, morality, and science than atheism. It then records his travels first in Germany, then in Hungary, Israel, the Soviet Union and other parts of Eastern Europe, time spent in Rwanda, his move to Oxford and his engagement in debates about religion and Science with 'new atheists' such as Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens. It finally recounts the way God continued to lead him into new forms of Christian ministry in new places in his eighth decade.

In the introduction Lennox explains that:

> This is a book that for many years I refused to write. Autobiography means writing about oneself and is therefore fraught with many obvious dangers, especially at a time when narcissism is on the rise.

However, as he goes on to say:

> I have decided to write this account, since I would have no story worth telling were it not for the person who has shaped my life and made it what it is – indeed, the one ultimately responsible for my existence, and that is Jesus Christ, the Son of God.
>
> Very early on in my life I became convinced that Christianity was true – that Jesus Christ was God Incarnate who had come into the world to be my Saviour by dying on the cross for me. That was the really big story into which I wished my little life to be fitted in some way. As I grew, I sensed a calling to do what the apostle Peter said: 'Honour Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defence to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect'.

Lennox's autobiography is an attempt to fulfil that calling. At the end of the book he returns to the issue of autobiography by noting the 'sobering question: how will my record of me compare with God's record of me?' He expresses the fear that 'this book, like my life, has been too much about me and too little about the Lord Christ who has guided and empowered me' and notes according to biblical teaching he will face the judgement of God for his shortcomings.

However, because the one who will judge him is also the one who has given him the 'unmerited gift of forgiveness and eternal life' he finishes the book by declaring his confidence:

> One day I shall live and move and have my being in heaven with all those whom the Lord has redeemed. I shall see my parents again and all those believing friends who have preceded me. I am also looking forward to meeting the heroes of the faith: the patriarchs, the prophets, the disciples and apostles, and a vast host of men and women who witnessed to the gospel throughout history so that it eventually reached me. The thought of such meeting fills me with great anticipation. Yet above and beyond all of that, I am finally going to meet and be with Jesus Christ the son of God, who has been my Saviour, Lord, and Shepherd these many years, and I will continue to dwell with him for the ages to come. To him alone be glory.

Martin's opinion:

My Story is a well-written account of a fascinating, multi-faceted and immensely productive life. It will be of great value to those studying the history of Evangelical Christianity at the end of the twentieth and the start of the twenty-first centuries and those interested in the debates about science and religion that took place in that period. Above all, however, it will be of great interest and value to anyone who wants to know what God can do through a life dedicated to him. John Lennox has been an outstanding servant of God over many decades and this book is a testimony to his service and to the grace and power of the God who made it possible. A great and inspiring read.

Commendations:

Cheryl Praeger comments:

> John Lennox's autobiography is extraordinary. It is an honest, witty and engaging account of his life and it offers a wonderful description of how we perceive the world, from the logic of science and mathematics to the comprehension of beauty – above all how we apprehend God through our life … The book is totally absorbing and impossible to put down.

Simon Sebag Montefiore, *The Cauldron: The Making of the Modern Middle East*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, ISBN 978-1-39963-489-2, £25.00 (paperback, e and audio editions also available).

Overview:

As anyone who has not been living in total seclusion will be aware, what is happening in the Middle East is something that excites huge controversy all around the world. Like the Vietnam war in the 1960s and 70s and the American led invasion of Iraq in 2003, the conflicts that are taking place in Gaza, the West Bank, Lebanon, Iran and Yemen are matters on which everyone seems to have an opinion, and these opinions are both very strongly held and very polarised.

This polarisation of opinion is also something that exists within the Christian Church with many Christians being very strongly critical of Israeli activity in Gaza, the West Bank and Lebanon, and attacks by the United states and Israel on Iran, while many others are strongly supportive of the actions of Israel and the United States. seeing them as a necessary response to the threat posed by militant Islam.

To make a positive contribution to the debates around these matters, Christians need to make sure that what they say is based on knowledge rather than ignorance and prejudice. To this end they need to properly understand the situation in the Middle East and part of this proper understanding is being well informed about the historical events that have shaped, and continue to shape, what is happening today.

Simon Sebag Montefiore's new book *The Cauldron* is a very important resource for any Christian who wants to know about these historical events. The book covers the whole of the Middle East (which for these purposes stretches all the way from Morocco to Afghanistan and also includes Sudan) from the beginnings of modern Saudi Arabia in the capture of Riyadh by Abdulaziz bin Abdul Rahman Al Saud in January 1902 to the attack on Iran by the United States and Israel in operation Epic Fury in February 2026.

The book is in two parts.

Part one in the first third of the book is entitled 'Act One – Empires: Sultans, Pashas & Proconsuls.' It covers the period from 1900–1945 and tells the story of how the rule of the Ottoman Empire over most of the Middle East was replaced in the wake of the First World War by the imperial rule of Great Britain, France and (briefly) Greece, and alongside this the creation of Turkiye and the development of modern Iran. It also describes the growth of Jewish settlement in British-ruled Palestine following on from the agreement of Britain and League of Nations that a Jewish 'national home' should be constituted there 'without prejudice to the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities' and the violent attempts of Arab Muslim nationalists to prevent this happening.

Part two in the second two thirds of the book is entitled 'Act Two – Independent States: Presidents, Kings & Imams.' It covers the period from 1945 to the present day and tells the story of the emergence and subsequent history of the modern independent Arab states in the Middle East alongside the emergence and subsequent history of Israel and how the Islamic Republic replaced the rule of the Shahs in Iran from 1979 and the consequences that have followed from this. This part also covers the terrorist attacks on the United States on 9 September 2001 and the attack on Israel by Hamas on 7 October 2023 and the conflicts that have taken place as a result of these two events.

The book ends with a conclusion 'The garden amidst the flames' in which the author reviews the story he has told, where it has currently got to and the options for where the story may go in the future. In the light of all that he recounted he declares that:

> Amongst Iranians, Israelis, Palestinians, Sudanese, Lebanese and so on, there is still hope – not the folly of that delusional optimism that often leads to more bloodshed – but the toughness of hope in a noble project that may take generations to build. Ignorance is the father of righteous certainty, hatred and slaughter; knowledge is the mother of respect for others, alliance, sharing and tolerance. Knowledge is an elixir, the antidote to the poisons of supremacy, bigotry and ignorance. Peace is only possible when a majority in society hears and accepts the narrative of the others. This is the mission of this book.

Martin's opinion:

Before Christians offer any comments in the light of their faith on what is currently happening in the Middle East and what they hope might happen in the future they need to understand as well as they can what is actually taking place there and to understand that they need to first understand its recent history. In *The Cauldron* Simon Sebag Montefiore provides them with an essential tool to help them to understand this history. It is a book that is comprehensive in its scope, is based on deep knowledge of the relevant source materials, and is balanced in its conclusions. It is a book that succeeds in its ambition to promote knowledge rather than ignorance and it does this by telling all sides of the story without obviously taking sides. Highly recommended.

Commendations:

David Petraeus has written:

> Masterful. In *The Cauldron*, Montefiore brings extraordinary narrative power and scholarly depth to the making of the modern Middle East, tracing the region's turbulent evolution from empire to ideology, and from revolution to war. Ranging from Morocco to Iran, and from 1900 to the present, this is history at its best – richly told, unsentimental, and essential for understanding the forces that continue to shape one of the world's most consequential regions.