

THE MULTIVALENCE OF BIBLICAL TEXTS AND THEOLOGICAL MEANINGS

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The origins of the biblical-theological discussion documented in this book go back to the Society of Biblical Literature International Meeting that took place at the University of Cambridge in July 2003. Since then, the volume has taken shape in conversations that have manifested the goodwill of all contributors, as well as the willingness of each to risk the secure confines of his or her own particular discipline and to build bridges across terminological, conceptual, and methodological divides. I have discovered that biblical theology is a discipline of risk. In an age characterized by the distance between the empirical and the conceptual disciplines, there is a risk in conceptualizing anew the intimate relations between the real and the ideal in view of epistemological and substantive concerns. This risk is met not only in the concrete wrestling with the terminological, conceptual, and methodological difficulties presented by the subject matter. It is also met by the willingness of dialogue partners to respect the ethical mandates governing any conversation, especially those conversations that strive for truth and knowledge. I thank all of the authors for participating in this biblical-theological discussion, for their enthusiasm in contributing to this volume, and for their risk-taking that challenges the biblical and theological disciplines to think anew about their relations to each other.

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