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Green's "Why Salvation?" (Book Review)

Dennis Ingolfsland
Crown College

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Why Salvation?,

by Joel B. Green, Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 2013. 192 pp. \$29.99.

ISBN 9781426756993

*Reviewed by Dr. Dennis Ingolsland, Director of Library Services/Professor of Bible,
Crown College, St. Bonifacius, MN*

Why Salvation? is divided into five chapters, the first of which discusses the nature of humanity. Denying the existence of the soul and a literal Adam, Green argues that humanity, not the individual, is created in the image of God, that is, in relationship to God. Sin begins in Genesis 3 as a decision against God which results in alienation not only from God but also from the whole earth.

Chapter two discusses “Yahweh the Healer” as a prominent theme throughout the Old Testament and as one of the ways in which the kingdom of God is disclosed through Jesus.

Chapter three, “Yahweh the Liberator,” argues that the picture of God as warrior and liberator is found throughout both Old and New Testaments and that God’s liberating work extends to individuals, the world’s power structures and the entire cosmos.

In chapter four, “How Can We Be Saved?,” Green argues that Jesus’ message “is realized in the call to change one’s heart and life and thus to align oneself with God’s rule, to engage in the practices of the kingdom...” (104). Chapter five, “The End of Salvation,” explores how “end-time thinking” is related to the church.

Green does an admirable job of placing salvation in the broader context of the story of Israel’s history throughout both Old and New Testaments. Also commendable is the fact that Green does not promote an easy-believism but insists that salvation involves a change of heart allegiance which necessarily results in a corresponding change in lifestyle.

On the other hand, readers interested in soteriological issues such as Calvinism/Arminianism, lordship salvation, or the current controversy over justification and the “new perspective,” will look in vain. The book is well-documented, well-indexed and recommended for Christian college or seminary libraries that collect exhaustively in the area of soteriology.