

and confident in the goal of justice—not of culture warrior. When the church engages in political strife improperly, it risks being coopted by parties with ulterior motives and thus risks losing the gospel. The eighth chapter sketches out arguments on justice and rights. In this chapter, Leeman attempts to articulate some of the complexity of the careful balance between freedom and responsibility. He first defines justice, then offers a dozen principles for doing justice drawn from Scripture. The book concludes on a hopeful note. Though the United States is divided and rages against itself and those outside, Leeman finds comfort in the sovereignty of God over all things, which will lead to the final arrival of justice when Christ’s kingdom is fully inaugurated on Earth.

How the Nations Rage is a good book and well suited for the present political environment. Leeman’s arguments are helpful and refreshing. As a Christian political philosophy, the path paved by this book weaves narrowly between totalizing engagement and monastic withdrawal. Whether the reader agrees with Leeman on every point, the arguments of this volume are carefully made and deserve diligent consideration. The gospel is at the heart of Leeman’s vision for the church, which ensures that the uniqueness of the bride of Christ remains at the forefront of this book about politics.

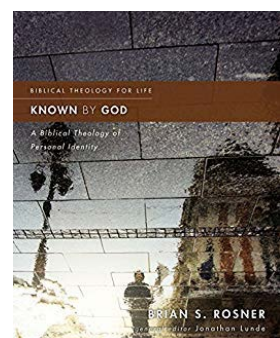
This book is subject to the limitations of its format; it is a popular level book with rigorous research behind it. As such, the astute scholar is likely to find Leeman’s case under-supported. There are points where some readers will want additional explanation, but which were likely limited to make the book succinct and accessible. However, if the reader places this in tandem with Leeman’s academic volume on the subject, the strength of the case improves immensely. Additionally, this volume is contextually oriented toward the United States, which will limit its appeal to Christians in other nations. Despite this contextual limitation, it may still benefit readers outside of the United States.

This is a useful and worthy book for the church right now. *How the Nations Rage* will serve as an excellent resource for pastors and congregations as they seek to navigate the ongoing political turmoil. This is a book that deserves wide reading and careful consideration. Healthy conversations about the church and politics are likely to result.

Andrew J. Spencer
CrossPointe Church
Monroe, Michigan, USA

Brian Rosner. *Known by God: A Biblical Theology of Identity*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017. 274 pp. £18.99/\$29.99.

In *Known by God*, Brian Rosner offers a very satisfying study of biblical anthropology framed by the question of identity. Repeatedly, and rightly, he returns to the fact that being known by God is the ground of all human identity, and to be known by God is to be a child of God. He observes that while Christians have often studied what it means to “know God” (as in J. I. Packer’s celebrated *Knowing God*), there has been little reflection on the equally prominent theme of being known. Rosner sets this theme in contrast to the late-modern view that identity is self-constructed; i.e., we make ourselves to be what we choose. He illustrates the theme with several personal reflections of how the reality of being known by God sustained him through the crisis of the sudden end of his



marriage. At the start of the final chapter he comments that “in one sense the whole of this book has been my personal testimony” (p. 246). How appropriate for a book on personal identity.

Known by God is a fascinating study in biblical theology, offering biblical perspectives (or a biblical perspective) on the basic question: “Who am I.” Rosner’s own previous description of biblical theology is that “it proceeds with historical and literary sensitivity and seeks to analyse and synthesise the Bible’s teaching about God and his relations to the world on its own terms, maintaining sight of the Bible’s overarching narrative and Christocentric focus” (“Biblical Theology,” in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and Brian S. Rosner [Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 2000], 10). *Known by God* does more than this, though never less. It engages directly with a host of contemporary cultural, ethical and philosophical issues, and it offers extended discussions which not only explore and organise the biblical material but apply it in a wide range of ways. So, the scope of *biblical* theology is extended beyond the analysis and synthesis of the Bible ‘on its own terms’ to include much that is found in traditional *systematic* theological discussion. This is the explicit goal of the series in which authors offer “descriptions of biblical theology” and then “draw out that theology’s practical implications for the contemporary context” (p. 17). *Known by God* illustrates the value of the approach and raises intriguing interdisciplinary questions, to which I will return at the close of this review.

After two introductory chapters, which set up the question of personal identity and the approach of the book, Rosner examines some of the common markers of identity (e.g., occupation, marital status, wealth, race, gender). He shows that the biblical writers are well aware of these but do not look to any of them as a basis for identity. He warns that each can become an idol. Building on his previous work on greed as idolatry (*Greed as Idolatry: The Origin and Meaning of a Pauline Metaphor* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007]), he argues that idolatry is a metaphor which means “putting something in the place of God, trusting something instead of God, and loving something more than God” (p. 61). Here is one point of many where Rosner does more than biblical theology. Partially inspired by Tim Keller, Rosner suggests that the markers of identity can become idols which fail to satisfy and degrade their devotees. This insightful discussion is an extension and application of biblical teaching into new areas.

In chapter 4 Rosner looks at how the Bible understands human existence, reviewing key biblical anthropological terms and the presentation of human constitution as soul, body, flesh, mind, heart, and spirit. The rest of the chapter examines the foundational text of Genesis 1–3 to show that humans are presented as special, social, sexual, moral, and spiritual beings. This is a very useful summary of standard observations, which are sometimes the focus of treatments of biblical anthropology. Rosner understands that there are far wider horizons to be examined, and the rest of the book focuses more directly on the question of personal identity and its basis in being known by God.

Rosner builds his case with a chapter dealing with humans as “the image and likeness of God,” which he understands to mean that we are God’s children and members of his family. He suggests this is the core meaning of the term, which provides a basis for understanding the other dimensions of image bearing (rationality, righteousness, relationship, rule, etc.). He further argues that “the sonship dimension to the image of God has great potential for a more unified biblical theology of personal identity” (p. 84).

I am not convinced that sonship is the core meaning of image language. J. Richard Middleton’s biblical theological argument that the image is royal-priestly terminology remains persuasive, and it is surprising that Rosner does not engage with it (*The Liberating Image: The Imago Dei in Genesis 1* [Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2005]). This does not invalidate Rosner’s project, but it does raise the question

as to whether “personal identity” (as important as it is) is the most comprehensive lens through which to view theological anthropology.

In the same chapter, Rosner deals with how Adam and Eve lost their identity as God’s children; treating the fall as one of the two “archetypal episodes of temptation” in Scripture (Jesus’s temptation in the wilderness being the other). There is no discussion of the implications that Adam and Eve’s sin has for their children beyond it being an archetype of all temptation.

The heart of the book is in chapters six to ten which trace the theme of being known by God as his child through the Bible. Several of these chapters include exegetical studies of “sample texts” which show in detail how various passages present the theme under consideration. Each discussion is stimulating and helps to make Rosner’s case. Chapters six and seven focus on the theme of God’s people being known by him in the Old Testament and then the New. The Old Testament chapter relates being known by God to belonging to him; being loved and chosen by him; and being his child. All of these are shown to be part of the experience of Israel and individual figures in the Old Testament. Chapter seven offers a similar survey of the New Testament, relating being known by God to the similar themes (belonging, loved and chosen, adopted).

Chapters eight and nine look more closely at the Christological foundation of personal identity. Chapter eight sets out the New Testament presentation of Christ as the Son of God and relates that to salvation in Christ. Union with the Son makes believers the children of God. This is a crucial chapter in giving the book deep roots in the gospel. Rosner is more tentative than needed when he comments that “while no New Testament text says it explicitly, Jesus being known by God as his Son may well be the grounds by which we are known by God as his sons and daughters” (p. 145). He is ready to move beyond explicit textual evidence in much of his discussion, and on this point he has made his case convincingly.

Chapter nine takes up the New Testament theme of sonship as it is applied directly to believers. After a helpful discussion about biblical metaphors, it examines the familial metaphors of the New Testament. Rosner shows how these metaphors, which develop from both Old Testament themes and Christ’s identity as the Son, assure believers that in Christ they are loved children and heirs; members of a wide family of brothers and sisters. This relationship calls them to imitate the Father and his Son, to live in harmony with and care for their siblings and to expect God’s loving discipline (p. 171).

The final core chapter sets personal identity in a temporal and communal context, exploring the role of *shared memory* and *defining destiny* in shaping identity. It presents identity narratively. Believers remember they have been bought at a price, have died with Christ and carry the death of Jesus with them. They likewise live hard pressed but sealed for redemption, belonging to the day when they shall be like Christ with resurrection bodies. Each of these is a communal truth: “we have died,” “we were sealed,” “we shall be like him.”

The third part of the book applies the biblical and theological discussion to four issues which are highly relevant to personal identity: significance in the face of disappointment, disability and death; pride and humility; comfort and direction. I will not summarise these chapters, but I commend them to readers for their own spiritual good, and to preachers for material to share with and apply to their congregations.

The final chapter deals with how believers come to know themselves as known by God in Christ. Rosner’s answer is “the basic disciplines of the Christian life” (p. 245)—or we might better say “the means of grace.” Scripture, fellowship, prayer, worship, the sacraments and “living the gospel” are the matrix in which we can grasp the truth that we are the children of God (p. 260).

Known by God is a fine work. Like other volumes in the series, it offers more than most biblical theological treatments in terms of synthesis and application. It is generously sprinkled with stimulating quotes from a wide range of sources—from Calvin and Augustine to Alasdair MacIntyre and singer, Kasey Chambers. The theology is articulated personally, not only applied personally. This is best displayed in the cumulative reading of Jesus’s encounters with individuals in John’s Gospel (pp. 126–37), which not only highlights Jesus’s knowledge of individuals but encourages readers “to expect Jesus to meet them and direct them in the particularity of their individual lives and circumstances” (citing Richard Bauckham, *Gospel of Glory: Major Themes in Johannine Theology* [Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015], 17). Rosner shows that the Bible, understood in terms of the gospel of Christ, has much to say to contemporary issues of identity.

There are a range of other issues to which this material could be applied. The obvious ones are the pressing ethical questions related to gender, sexuality, life and death and bio-technology. Rosner touches on some of these but is right to have kept his focus on the central question of personal identity.

My interdisciplinary question (as a systematic theologian) is: If this is biblical theology in full flower, is there any need for systematic theology? As I worked through *Known by God*, I wondered at several points if my own discipline had anything further to add. My conclusion (perhaps not surprisingly) is that it does. So I finish this review with a short reflection on where Rosner’s work might be developed more fully.

Surprisingly, *Known by God* does not refer to Calvin’s classic discussion of self-knowledge, found in the opening chapter of the *Institutes*. Calvin claims that “nearly all the wisdom we possess, that is to say, true and sound wisdom, consists of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves.” With this, I am sure Rosner would agree. Calvin then observes that there is a proper order—knowledge of God leads to proper self-knowledge: “man is never sufficiently touched and affected by the awareness of his lowly state until he has compared himself with God’s majesty” (*Institutes*, I.i.1–3, trans. McNeill). In the light of the knowing of God, we recognise we are dependent creatures and sinners in desperate need of mercy. Again, none of this is foreign to Rosner, but it raises the question of how self-knowledge relates to knowledge of God.

Rosner presents his work as a balance to the traditional emphasis on “knowing God.” It, in turn, needs to be supplemented with a discussion of coming to know that we are known—by knowing God. It is one thing to assert that human identity is not grounded in our own wills, or even in our shared human experience, but is framed by God making us, knowing us and determining us from before birth (Ps 139:13–16). Calvin’s discussion points us in the right direction. We will know ourselves as known by God only in knowing God. This is a theme which would importantly supplement Rosner’s discussion. He hints at it in the final discussion in which he argues that the means of grace are the way in which we may know ourselves as we are known (p. 246). However, they are, first of all, the ways in which we know God. It is precisely because of this that they lead us to know ourselves before and in him.

This supplementation would, I suspect, make the theme of sin and fallenness more prominent. Rosner does, of course, discuss sin, and it is implied in the many discussion of redemption. Yet, in the (admittedly brief) subject index there is no entry for sin or the fall. That confirms my sense of reading the book—knowing myself as a sinner is not a primary category for the discussion. Systematic considerations would suggest it needs to figure more fully.

Finally, knowing ourselves in light of knowing God highlights the eschatological dimension of personal identity. Naturally, Rosner refers to 1 Corinthians 13:12 several times: “now I know in part;

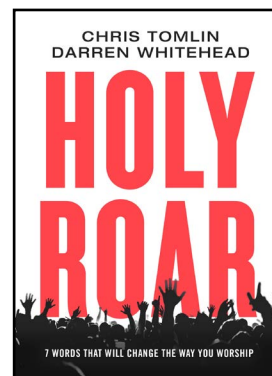
then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.” Primarily, he makes the point that we are already fully known by God. Yet the text underscores the incompleteness of *our* knowledge; knowledge of God, but also of all else in light of God. Personal identity rests in being known by God. The existential appropriation of that is possible as we know him, and that is always compromised by sin. Only when we see Christ as he is will we know ourselves properly in him. None of this is denied by Rosner, and there are points where he affirms elements of it. But again, it deserves to be more prominent.

These systematic reflections may or may not deserve a place in *Known by God*. They at least need to be put alongside it. I suggest them, not to diminish the value of the book, but as a contribution to reflection on being known and knowing—and to the discussion of the theological disciplines.

John McClean
Christ College
Sydney, New South Wales, Australia

Chris Tomlin and Darren Whitehead. *Holy Roar: 7 Words That Will Change the Way You Worship*. Nashville: Nelson, 2017. 128 pp. £10.99/\$15.99.

The origin story of Darren Whitehead and Chris Tomlin’s *Holy Roar: 7 Words That Will Change the Way You Worship* goes like this: Tomlin heard Whitehead preach on the seven biblical Hebrew words for praise. It was a sermon that, in his words, would “change the way I led worship from that day forward.” Tomlin texted Whitehead immediately. “Your message was amazing. Everyone needs to know these words. It needs to be everywhere. Maybe even a book!” Whitehead texted back saying they should write it together. They did just that over the summer of 2017. Right around the time of the book’s release in October, Whitehead joined Tomlin on his “Good Good Father Tour,” delivering the seven-words message as a powerful exhortation on each night of the tour.



The result of their collaboration is a book which is neatly structured and very easy to read. Whitehead and Tomlin’s writing is skillfully efficient; big on impact but not on word count. At 128 pages of relatively large print one can read the whole thing in an hour or two. Each chapter forms a consistent triptych. Panel 1: A well-crafted retelling of an event in Whitehead’s life. Panel 2: An explanation of a Hebrew word and its implications for Christian praise. Panel 3: Tomlin telling the story of a song he’s written that captures the chapter’s theme.

The stories that bookend each chapter are gripping. Two excited sixty-year-olds dragging Whitehead into the festivities at a rowdy Jewish wedding; the spiritual potency of the Christian music played during his wife’s labor; crying over the phone with a father whose son was on life-support after a motorcycle accident ... and suddenly woke up. They’re emotive. They’re sharp. And each illustrates its chapter’s theme precisely. Here the sermon history of the book’s content brings with it a persuasive rhetoric which works in its favor.

Each chapter also has a section of quotes and discussion questions. These excerpts from historical voices may be the best part of the book. Calvin, C. S. Lewis, Luther, Tozer, Spurgeon—each lends a short and sweet sound bite. Martin Luther King Jr. introduces the final reflection with a profoundly rich quote on the social experience of worship as a realization of unity that transects all levels of life: “Whenever