

Dr Simon Kennedy, Christian Heritage College

Theology in the service of political philosophy: John Locke's revolutionary interpretation of fifth commandment'

John Locke's *Two Treatises of Government* is framed as a refutation of Robert Filmer's *Patriarcha*. Locke takes great pains to refute his biblical exegesis in his *First Treatise*, before offering an account of his own contractarian, conventionalist account of political authority in the *Second Treatise*. This paper argues that Locke was doing more than simply overturning Filmer's narrow, idiosyncratic political theology. Undergirding Locke's polemic is a "revolution" of scriptural interpretation. Protestants had consistently interpreted and applied the fifth commandment as applying to political authority, as had some interpreters in the late medieval period. Locke overturned the traditional Protestant interpretation of the fifth commandment by arguing that the fifth commandment only invokes household and filial authority. This paper explores this shift in interpretation and its political implications.

## Postgraduate Studies Seminar

28.7.2020

**Dr Darrel Bock, Dallas Theological Seminary**

‘The state of research on the historical Jesus’

At the end of the second decade of the 2000’s, it is necessary to evaluate the current state of Historical Jesus studies. Among the pressing issues in current research are orality, genre, memory, the criteria, cultural context, and the relevance of the Gospel according to John. The presentation will conclude with reflection on whether it is appropriate to assert that we have entered into a fourth quest for the Historical Jesus.

**Ms Gelly McAuliffe-Bunker, PhD candidate Brisbane School of Theology**

‘Quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger’

The triad “quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger” is a hermeneutical key to James’ epistle. Using this key, James contrasts the diverging roads of friendship with God and with the world. Swiftness in hearing must be applied impartially, and consistently, in accord with Jesus’ practices. Rather than dismiss some voices, all deserve attention, with mercy, and obedience. Yet we are not to be swift to speak. Swift speech can be judgmental speech. Swift, empty phrases are condemned. Empty words cannot fill an empty stomach. And we are not to be swift to anger. Selfish ambition or jealousy is prone to overtake God’s righteous anger. In assessing another’s situation, James wisely advises readers to be slow to speak and slow to anger. Therefore, James teaches us that

friendship with God means listening obediently, speaking wisely, and entrusting anger to His righteous action.

**Rev Dr Samuel Goh, Brisbane School of Theology**

‘The *hebel* world, its ambiguities and contradictions’

Drawing on the arguments that *hebel* is the thesis of Ecclesiastes as well as Qoheleth’s rhetorical tool, this paper examines *hebel*’s connection with Qoheleth’s ambiguities and contradictions. Taking *hebel* at its basic meaning, that is, vapour, it is argued that Qoheleth employs the image as his rhetorical strategy for reason of its opaque and in-flux character. Being opaque, *hebel* is an ideal symbol for delineating phenomena which are ambiguous and hard to define. Coupled with its ceaseless change character, the opacity allows *hebel* semantic inexhaustibility, making it a versatile device for describing fluctuating nature of reality. As everything is opaque and in constant change, Qoheleth cannot offer advice in absolute terms and often ends up making contradictory statements.