

Preface

Only eight years have passed since the publication of *Reading the Bible with Giants*. As I finish the second edition of this book I cannot help but feel that more time than that has passed. The paradigm shift from print to e-books that was beginning just a few years ago is in full swing now. The invention of moveable type and Gutenberg's press transformed not only how people read, but who read that material and how accessible printed material was. The shift to electronic media is beginning to have a similar impact, only it is occurring in a much more compressed time span. Marshall McLuhan's insight that "the medium is the message," that the form of a medium is incorporated in the message and influences how the message is received, may have been originally addressed the impact of television but applies to the shift in publication we are experiencing today as well.

Revisiting my work in this context has been a stimulating challenge in a number of ways. First, because this book will be released in print, ePub, and iBook formats, it has forced me to look at the argument, structure, and content of the material with fresh eyes. What works in print (longer chapters) may not be appropriate for someone reading it on their e-book reader and vice versa. The ability to include images and other media in the e-book formats has justified the inclusion of more images in the print form to level the playing field.

During this same time span there has been an explosion of content relevant to the history of biblical interpretation on the Internet. Medieval manuscripts that once required a visit to the special collections room of a library or museum in Europe are often available as high-resolution images on the Internet. When I wrote the first edition of this book I tried as hard as I could to cite resources that were available on the Internet. This often led to long searches or ended in frustration. By contrast, this time I often had to select between several websites that had similar information in order to

determine which site presented the material in the clearest or most accessible manner.

There has been a growing interest in the reception history of the Bible since the first edition of this book as well. Commentaries are beginning to include discussion on how the text has been interpreted and the impact of those interpretations. Commentary series that focus on the history of interpretation continue to grow and mature in sophistication. Specialized studies that examine one book of the Bible or a particular biblical story appear with increasing frequency. The gorgeous three-volume work *Illuminating Luke* by Heidi Hornik and Mikeal Parsons is an exemplar of the recent interest in this field.

Needless to say it has been an enjoyable task revisiting and revising my work. Not only has it allowed me to correct mistakes in the text and hopefully clarify my argument at various points but it has been a real learning experience on my part as well. On the one hand, exploring the implications and tools for writing an e-book has opened my eyes to the potential teaching and communication avenues for this new medium. On the other hand, as I reviewed my earlier research and pursued new lines of inquiry, my own understanding of the various biblical texts that I use as examples was expanded.

The concept of the hermeneutical circle is brought up at several points in this book. Every time we study the Bible we come at it from a slightly different perspective. Understanding is always a fluid act, constantly being revised and updated. When I laid the manuscript for this book down for its initial publication that was, in a certain sense, one circuit around the hermeneutical circle. Now, as I finish a revision of this book, I have completed my second journey around that circle. This revision is a partial reflection of one of my laps around the hermeneutical circle. Hopefully the text reflects the education and edification that I have received from reading the Bible at the feet of the giants who have preceded me, and I encourage you to join me on this journey.