

Mr. Allen Blackwood Exegesis Paper Review
Joel Hart

Mr. Blackwood submitted his exegesis paper on Psalm 88. The structure of this review is to work through the expectations of exegesis papers as found in the GLG student handbook.

At the end of the review will be some general comments that lead to a recommendation.

[Handbook expectations are in bold; reviewer comments are in italics underneath].

The paper should be not more than 40 pages (not including title page, appendices, and bibliography), in a 12 point font with standard margins.

The paper is 35 pages long, and so meets this standard.

The paper should include an analysis of the historical context, dating, and authorship of the passage.

Mr. Blackwood does good work with the historical context and authorship. His analysis of Heman's tie to the Sons of Korah in Numbers offers good insight into the text. While he does not draw out a proposed date explicitly, he identifies Heman as a grandson of Samuel (page 31) and serving in the context of the Davidic kingdom.

The paper should include textual analysis, showing an ability to use the critical apparatus and to draw well reasoned conclusions between variant readings.

Mr. Blackwood spends extensive time on the textual analysis and the critical apparatus. He shows an effective comfort level with the apparatus and drawing conclusions between variant readings.

The paper should include the student's own translation of the text, word studies of key terms, and a verse-by-verse analysis of the text that shows the student's understanding of morphology, idioms, metaphors, plays on words, key ideas in the text, etc.

Mr. Blackwood provides a good translation of the text and a good verse-by-verse analysis of the work. At times, it seems the critical apparatus work maybe gains too much prominence in the verse-by-verse analysis. In a few places, Mr. Blackwood could have done more work exploring things like idiom and metaphor. Some of the idiom and metaphor analysis comes out more richly in his theological analysis. And in his verse-by-verse work, some of this type of analysis appears, for example, in his discussion of "the dead" in verse 11.

The paper should provide some kind of outline, diagramming, structural analysis, and/or literary analysis that demonstrates the overall flow of the text and makes explicit the key theme (or themes) of the passage.

Mr. Blackwood's outline work appears on pages five and six. He effectively draws out the literary parallels that move across the Psalm. While the work is there, he might have been able to more explicitly the logical flow that emerges from the text through the outline.

The paper should include a theological analysis, paying attention to key theological issues in the church which the text addresses and what doctrines of the faith the passage informs.

Mr. Blackwood offers a rich theological analysis (v29-35). He was well tied together themes of personal suffering with the suffering of Christ. Mr. Blackwood has a good hold on ties between Psalm 88 and other parts of Scripture, including Lamentations, Job, and Isaiah 53. By ending with a move toward the atonement seen in this text, Mr. Blackwood shows how Psalm 88 informs our doctrine of propitiation and the suffering of Christ.

The paper should include a meditation, sermon outline, statement of propositions with development, or other summary of the work that shows the student's ability to apply the fruits of exegesis to the edification of the church.

Mr. Blackwood includes a straightforward sermon outline. Perhaps more detail could be given, but he did make clear that his fuller sermon outline was available upon request. It is clear from the outline and from the reflections expressed in the paper that Mr. Blackwood has written and meditated on Psalm 88 in a way that would prepare him to preach.

Footnotes should be used rather than endnotes. Footnotes should be in a widely accepted standard format (e.g., Chicago style, SBL, Turabian, etc.) Proper credit is to be given for all quotations.

Mr. Blackwood's formatting and style are solid. There were a few typographical errors in spelling that could be corrected (occurances instead of occurrences; identitcal instead of identical). But all in all, it's a well-formatted paper.

General comments:

Mr. Blackwood has explored a difficult Psalm with a serious and faithful approach to the text. It is clear Mr. Blackwood has worked extensively with the Hebrew text itself and also with how the Psalm relates to the broader narrative of Scripture. In some places, one might wish for more exegetical work on the individual verses he unfolded. But the overall scope of his paper is excellent, and I would commend it for your reading.

I recommend this exam be sustained.

Joel Hart