

## An Evaluation of Aaron Murray's Exegesis Paper on Psalm 55

GLG Presbytery, June 21-24, 2022 (Marion, IN)

The reviewers of Mr. Murray's exegesis paper find it in accord with the criteria outlined in our Student Handbook:

- ☒ The paper is in a 12pt font with standard margins and does not exceed the 40 pages limit. Pagination is absent, and several spelling errors easily should have been corrected with an electronic editor.
- ☒ While his footnotes follow the Turabian style formatting, Mr. Murray did **not** format his bibliography in any widely accepted style. There are no indications of plagiarism according to our detection software.
- ☒ Mr. Murray analyzes the passage's historical context, dating, and authorship.
  - However, there is no citation or interaction with various suggested historical circumstances. Mr. Murray chose the interpretation of Absalom & Ahithophel's revolt against David's throne. For example, without argumentation, Calvin denies the Absalom conspiracy, suggesting Ps 55 was written when David "*was reduced to extreme danger*" by Saul's persecution. Hengstenberg (cited in the bibliography) says, "*Against the supposition of a particular occasion, it is enough to awaken in us misgivings, that those who maintain that, cannot agree among themselves respecting it.*"
- ☒ The outline is accurate and supplies an easily accessible design for preaching and hearing the Word. The literary analysis demonstrates the text's overall flow and structure. Aaron explains the Psalm's themes of imprecation, lament, and trust.
  - The reviewers appreciate the overall theme of Psalm 55: "*the great pain of betrayal that a believer feels when a close friend walks away from everything that they once shared... the great anguish he feels when a close companion betrays God and his covenant people.*"
  - Mr. Murray provides a Christocentric interpretation of the Psalm: "*it gives them insight into the emotions of Jesus Christ when he is brutally betrayed by a tender kiss on the cheek. Jesus can sympathize with his people when their close companion walks away from the church.*"
  - In application, "*Psalm 55 gives the believer words to express their pain as they cast the burdens upon the Lord who cares for them.*"
  - Our only **critique** here is that Mr. Murray contrasts "trust" against "lament". The Bible would teach that trust is an essential component of lament, lest the expression of grief become mere complaining.
- ☒ His textual analysis shows an ability to use the critical apparatus and draw well-reasoned conclusions between variant readings. The paper does **not** include the student's own translation of the text, which our Student Handbook asks for. And the student limits his study by only interacting with the ESV. But he often suggests more fitting, alternative translations. Further, a careful verse-by-verse analysis of the text is offered where Mr. Murray works with morphology, idioms, metaphors, play on words, key textual ideas, etc.
- ☒ The paper includes a theological analysis, wherein Mr. Murray highlights the typological comparison of David to Jesus and David's betrayer, Ahithophel, to Christ's betrayer, Judas. Further, the author pays attention to the vital theological doctrines of God's character along with the expression of faith amid betrayal.
- ☒ The paper addresses the contemporary significance of this Psalm, which is always appreciated in a Psalm-singing church.
  - Christ knows betrayal, like we do, and can sympathize with us in the griefs and burdens that result from being deceived and hurt by those closest to us.
  - Careful application is made for Christians to pray imprecatory prayers, not "in a vindictive way" but "asking God to be consistent with himself."
  - Mr. Murray also applies the betrayer to the Christian, helping the believer mourn their own sin and betrayal of Christ and trust in Christ's willingness to restore His denier, just as He did Peter.
- ☒ A detailed sermon outline shows the student's ability to apply the fruits of exegesis to the church's edification.

**Recommendation:** That the exegesis paper (An Exegetical Analysis of Psalm 55) by Aaron Murray be sustained.

Thank you for the opportunity to read this paper.

Shawn Anderson and Steven Work