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Contact Information:

Dr. Gabriele G. Braun
gabrielle.braun@t-online.de

God's Praise and God's Presence: A Biblical-Theological Study

by Gabriele G. Braun

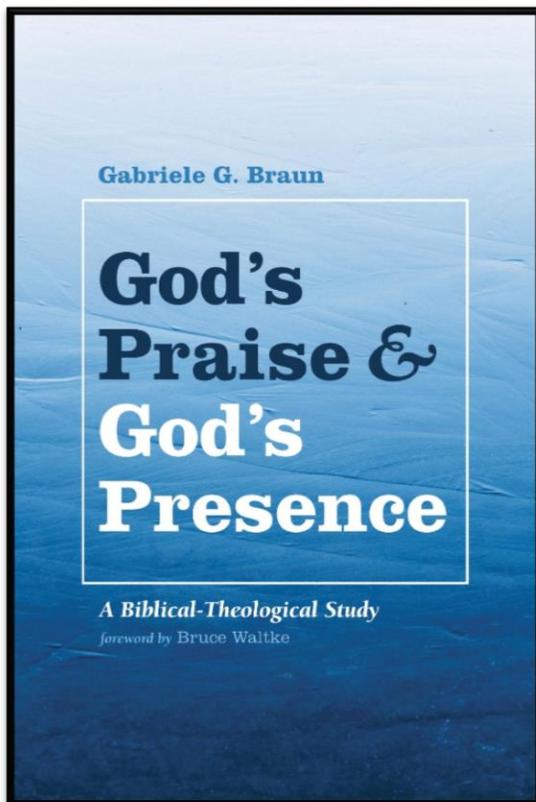
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New Title from Gabriele G. Braun

God's Praise and God's Presence: A Biblical-Theological Study



The main aim of this book is to provide an answer to the question: is there a connection between God's people's praise and God's presence? The central argument is that Scripture in both Testaments testifies to a correlation between human praise and divine presence. This hypothesis has been investigated in the light of contemporary Christian worship culture and the ensuing need for further biblical studies, which represents the background for this investigation. The study achieves the above aim by applying biblical theology as a discipline and canonical and intertextual models as a method.

Gabriele G. Braun has been a lecturer of biblical Greek and Hebrew and is an extraordinary researcher at Northwest-University Potchefstroom, RSA. She has a background in modern languages and holds two master's degrees and one PhD in theology. Gabriele volunteers as a preacher and speaker in the Lutheran Church and elsewhere, and as a theological translator.



Interview with Gabriele G. Braun

Question: There are quite a few books on divine presence and on human praise already. Do we really need another book on this topic?

Answer: It is true, numerous books have been written either on the theme of divine presence or on the theme of human praise, but hardly any on a potential connection between both.

Question: The title of your book *God's Praise & God's Presence* implies such a connection. Can you explain the potential and the kind of this relationship?

Answer: The connection can be identified in all the texts investigated in both Testaments which contain both elements of divine presence and human praise, but in the context of a divine-human covenant relationship.

Question: Which one happens to come first – praise or presence?

Answer: God has initiated relationships and covenants with humankind by revealing his presence in a special way, specifically with regard to the concept of temple. Human praise has been a possible response to this divine self-revelation. Still, at times, the correlation has proved to be reciprocal.

Question: As a practical consequence for our worship, does this mean: We cannot not use praise as a means and instrument to make God's presence "show up on scene" without living our everyday-life with him?

Answer: Precisely, God is relational and we as human beings and bearer of his image are also relational. It takes a holy covenant-relationship to cultivate this dynamic interaction between divine presence and human praise.

Question: Then, praise is more than singing songs in a worship service?

Answer: Exactly, praise is a lifestyle as we live our life with Christ.

Question: You apply biblical theology. Why would you recommend biblical theology as a distinct discipline?

Answer: Because BT is more than the sum of OT and NT and, hence, represents a discipline in its own right.

Question: Can you explain this a little more?

Answer: First of all, the Old Testament, i.e. the Hebrew Bible, needs to be interpreted in its own right and likewise the New Testament, i.e. the Greek Bible. Only then, can we identify potential intertextual links between both in order to discover a theme running through both Testaments. This is the task of biblical theology, and the connection between divine presence and human praise is such a theme.

Question: Which method have you employed?

Answer: In the present project, a combined method between a canonical approach and an intertextual model has been employed.

Question: Which kind of canon are you talking about? How about canon formation as a process?

Answer: While being aware of the process of canon formation, the present approach has defined canon specifically in terms of the final textual form of the Scriptures. Regarding the kind of canon, e.g., for the OT, this is the canon of the Hebrew Bible.

Question: Who should read your book?

Answer: Old Testament and New Testament scholars who are interested in a biblical approach as well as scholars who seek a biblical exegetical foundation for a sound theology of worship as the basis and guideline for our contemporary Christian worship.

Thank you for the interview.

An Excerpt from *God's Praise and God's Presence: A Biblical-Theological Study*

The title *God's Praise and God's Presence* conceals a question: Is there a connection between both? This question has arisen in the light of contemporary Christian worship culture and its need for further biblical studies, which represents the background for the present project. Hence, the main aim of this book is to provide an answer to the question: Do the Scriptures actually confirm a connection between God's people's praise and God's presence? The answer is that Scripture in both Testaments does testify to a correlation between human praise and divine presence, yet, in the context of a human-divine covenant relationship.

For that purpose, biblical theology has been applied as a distinct discipline and canonical and intertextual models as a method. This has been done in the hope to infuse life to a discipline somehow long lost and rarely rediscovered. This discipline is full of potential to facilitate drawing treasures from the Scriptures with the purpose to rediscover their meaning and message for present-day readers.

Thus, this project represents a modest biblical-theological study based on the writer's doctoral dissertation with North-West University, RSA, and no liturgical investigation, yet, with the hope to provide some results which may be applicable to pastoral theology, and especially in liturgical studies, in order to serve contemporary Christian worship and its needs.

Praise for *God's Praise and God's Presence: A Biblical-Theological Study*

“We have often heard that ‘the Lord inhabits the praises of his people.’ Gabriele Braun shows that this is a reality that reverberates throughout Scripture. Her comprehensive exploration of the topic leads her to an appropriately nuanced affirmation of a ‘reciprocal correlation between presence and praise.’ Her work is characterized by academic rigor that also helpfully illuminates the relational nature of the connection between God and his people.”

—**Stuart T. Rochester, Asia Pacific Theological Seminary, Philippines, and North-West University, South Africa**

“Gabriele Braun’s proposal that Scripture reveals a reciprocal relationship between God’s presence and the praise of his people is carefully argued and illustrated. The result is a biblical theological exposition that is wonderfully relevant to contemporary debates among Christians about the nature and significance of praise. God-honoring praise is rightly considered in relation to gatherings for worship and the biblical call for a life of worship.”

—**David G. Peterson, Moore Theological College, Sydney, Australia**

“In the intersection of biblical theology themes, God’s presence in the world and human praise of God merits careful consideration. Dr. Braun brings together these two important themes to enrich our understanding of the light the Bible, both Old and New Testaments, sheds on the relationship between God’s presence and God’s people’s praise. Her study, which engages with contemporary scholarship, offers a depth of treatment that is biblically grounded and theologically informed.”

—**T. Desmond Alexander, Union Theological College, Belfast, Northern Ireland**

