

# OpenTheo

## Update!

November 5, 2019



### **Alastair Roberts**

I'm back to regular podcasting, with an update on what I've been doing and some exciting projects on the horizon!

Within this episode I advertise the following books:

The new full-notes edition of the NET Bible - <https://amzn.to/2WMecjl>

Jonathan Gibson and Mark Earney's 'Reformation Worship' - <https://amzn.to/2NiNdbX>

The new ACNA Book of Common Prayer, available for purchase and download here: <http://bcp2019.anglicanchurch.net/>

If you have any questions or feedback, please send them to me on Curious Cat: <https://curiouscat.me/zugzwanged>.

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## **Transcript**

Welcome back! You may have been wondering where I have been for the last couple of months, as I've not been especially active here. A fortnight ago, I returned from a month-long trip to the US, where I visited various locations, spent time with friends, participated in various events, perhaps most notably a Theopolis Colloquium, on the book *The Politics*

of Virtue by Adrian Papst and John Milbank. There were many stimulating conversations, lots of interaction with people, lots of catching up with friends, lots of speaking, and all in all, I didn't have much time to set aside for podcasting.

But here I am, I'm back, I've got over the extreme whirlwind of activity on my arrival back, and now I'm able to get back into a regular routine. At least I hope it's going to be like that. There are a number of things coming up in the next few weeks and months.

I've currently been working through the material on the course on Biblical Wisdom with Davenant Hall. That has been a lot of fun. We've gone through the beginning of wisdom in The Fear of the Lord, we've been looking at Genesis chapter 1 to 3, and all the themes of wisdom packed into those chapters, the way that the law fits into the theme of wisdom and how it plays out.

Different themes that are associated with wisdom within the historical narratives, and how the wisdom material, which seems very odd and disparate, it has a more poetic form rather than a prosaic form, it has a different form of revelation than the revelation that we're used to in Thus Says the Lord that we might find in the book of Leviticus or elsewhere. It's also something that seems to be closer to the secular wisdom that you might find within pagan ancient Near Eastern cultures. So trying to think about how that body of material fits into the Biblical canon as a whole, that's been one of the things we were looking at in the past week.

That's kept me occupied in the little free time that I had, but now I have a bit more and I want to get back to regular podcasting. Not least a series that I have coming up that I'll tell you about in a moment. I've had a heavy reading load, some very interesting books I've been reading, I might share with you about them at some point.

I've got a new article coming out in the next few days about New Atheism and what happened to the movement, responding to a post by Scott Alexander on Slate Style Codex blog. I've got various preaching and speaking events coming up. And I thought I'd share with you some of the books that I've been enjoying lately, particularly, well just a couple of the books that I've been enjoying lately.

I've found that the time that I have lately, I've not had the same time to read for pleasure. I've had to read a lot of things that are just part of my research or things that I need to read to review. And having time to just devote to reading books all the way through has been difficult.

So I've been using reference volumes a bit more. Lots of commentaries and then some other things that I might tell you about. One book that I've really appreciated, when I was in the US, I bought a copy of the new NET Bible, which is an absolutely amazing volume.

It carries within it almost 2,500 pages, jam-packed with translator's notes, study notes, and with various other notes that assist the reader. Things such as text critical notes. So if you're a researcher, if you're someone who wants to get into the details of the text and the translation, then it's an absolutely wonderful resource.

I've spent a lot of time with this and the notes can fill much of the page. It's not the notes that you'd usually expect with a study Bible. The sort of notes that are very much about interpretation and theology.

They're more about the text itself, getting into the nitty-gritty of the translation. So I found that immensely useful. Some of the study notes that it has give archaeological or other historical background.

That can be very useful. Now, along with that, I've been enjoying reading this book, or dipping into this book, Reformation Worship. It's called Liturgies from the Past and the Present.

It's by Jonathan Gibson and Mark Erne Gay. They are the ones that edit it. And it contains a collection of different liturgies and liturgical texts from Reformation history and onwards.

Now, it's introduced with essays on worship and the reformation of worship that you see in the Reformation era. And then some of the ways in which worship has developed. It's a very useful resource for people who want to dip into some of the Reformed liturgical tradition.

And see some of the riches that are within there that have often been forgotten or lost or neglected. There is a great wealth within our tradition that just is not tapped as it ought to be. So get into some of these liturgies.

And this book is a great place to start. It's a really useful resource. And I've found it quite interesting just to dip in and out of it and see some of the things that have been written in the past.

Now, along with those books, I've also enjoyed a book that has sparked a new project idea. And this is the new ACNA Book of Common Prayer. It's an absolutely wonderful volume.

This is a leather-bound volume. And I've found myself using it a lot myself. And also thinking, how could I get other people to use this resource? It's available online in PDF format, so you don't have to buy anything.

If you wanted to buy it, I highly recommend this leather-bound version. It's a beautiful book. But you can download the text online.

And I'll give the link to that below. Now, the benefit of this book is it has the daily office within it. Morning and evening prayers.

And it encourages you to spend time each day in prayer and the reading of Scripture. It doesn't take long. But every day, as you get into the habit of spending time in prayer, following this particular order of prayer, reading Psalms, and then reading particular passages of Scripture, you start to get a grasp for Scripture.

And you start to get into the habits of worship and prayer in ways that you would not do otherwise. It's a sort of training structure that will help you to develop a routine and really good habits for your Bible reading. I find this very helpful myself.

So I was thinking, how can I encourage other people to do this? One way that occurred to me was to have a short podcast every single day that goes through the readings for the morning and prayers. There are two passages selected each day. And I'll go through each one of those, read out the passage, and just give a few notes that will direct people in their meditation, reflection, and understanding of those passages.

And I was hoping that over a period of a couple of years, as I went through the morning and then the evening prayers and the readings attached, I would cover most of the biblical text and give people a really good resource to get into the text for themselves, to think about the text throughout the day, meditate on some of the questions, and learn how to read the text and meditate upon the text in a way that maybe they haven't done before. So this is one of my New Year's projects. I'm hoping that this will be possible.

It's going to be a challenge. It involves podcasting every single day. I'm not going to do a video for that.

I'm going to do a podcast, or at least that's the current plan. I might do a video at some point with just an image of the text that I'm working through. But if you're interested in making this possible, it really is quite a significant commitment.

It's going to take about 10 to 15 minutes for each podcast episode. And it's going to be a significant commitment in time and other things for me. And if you would like to make this possible, please consider supporting.

I want to extend the work that I'm doing here as much as possible, to be involved in more consistent and lengthy projects, to have some interesting variety of shows that I do, some good interviews, some more specialist studies of particular books, and then spending time answering questions, along with this new series. So if you would like to make that possible, and at the moment I'm just seeing if this is feasible. If there is enough interest, I really want to go ahead with this.

But please consider supporting. Other ways that you can support are by buying books from my wishlist. I'll put up a link to my wishlist.

Every time I'm doing a series, I have to invest in books that help me research for the topic. So for instance, I have coming up a new series on the Gospel of Matthew. I'll be going through the entirety of the Gospel of Matthew.

But commentaries are really expensive. If you've ever had to fork out for commentaries, you can be spending, for the really good technical commentaries, £100 a pop. It's quite expensive.

So please consider either donating by buying one of those commentaries for me, or donating to the show. It really makes that sort of larger project possible. I want to do this well, and if you can help me on that, it really makes a difference for me.

And it's encouraging also to know that people are invested in what I'm doing. I also really appreciate feedback. If there are any ways that you think I can improve things, things that you'd like to see me do more of in the future, changes that you'd like to see made, whatever.

Any ideas you have that I could expand into, whatever it is. Please give those in the comments, or put them on my Curious Cat account. I really appreciate that sort of feedback.

And it helps me to improve. So, if you would be interested in this series on going through the Daily Office, please mention your interest in the comments. Just send me a note on Curious Cat.

Consider supporting me using my Patreon or my PayPal account. Or consider buying one of the books for my research. Thank you so much for your support and for your viewership.

It really is great to have an audience of people to engage with. And I hope that this is truly an engagement where we're not actually just, I'm not just speaking at you, but I'm encouraging you to look at the text more deeply yourself. Because scripture is something that is exciting to me, and I want other people to be excited about it too.

So if you find any of this helpful, but think of a way that it could be improved, please tell me. If there's some way that you would like me to change things, please tell me that too. Thank you very much.

And Lord willing, you'll be seeing a lot more of me in the future. Look forward to the series on Matthew. And maybe start reading the book of Matthew for yourself again, so that you're refreshed in your mind about the text.

And then we'll get into it in the next couple of days. God bless and thank you for listening.