



# God's Design, 4th Edition: A Focus on Old Testament Theology

*Elmer A. Martens*

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How does one summarize the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament? How might one determine the message of the Old Testament with others? This book attempts an answer to these questions. The answer is taken from a single Scripture passage, Exodus 5:22-6:8, which is here considered a theological "Table of Contents" for the Old Testament. In addition to such topics as Deliverance, Community, and Experiencing God, the book has an extended discussion on "Land," a subject which deals with a wide range of interests but which only rarely receives attention in books on biblical theology. The current edition features reflections and a set of discussion questions following each of the seventeen chapters--a boon for university and seminary teachers and students, and of large help for church study groups.

"Taking his cues from a key biblical text (Exodus 5:22-6:8), in *God's Design*, Elmer Martens has seized upon basic threads of biblical theology and woven them into a magnificent tapestry of divine grace and redemption encompassing the entire Bible. Through his careful exegesis of individual texts, judicious synthesis of fundamental theological concepts, and an engaging literary style, readers learn how the motifs of salvation, covenant, divine revelation, and land all play together in God's grand design of creation and redemption. Martens' presentation is neither overly technical nor esoteric; on the contrary, he often pauses to guide us in relating biblical theology to life. I am delighted that through the republication of this volume another generation of readers of Scripture will have ready access to his brilliant work."

--Daniel I. Block, Gunther H. Knoedler Professor of Old Testament, Wheaton College

"*God's Design* provides the best traits of a good Old Testament Theology: thematic focus on God and his work with his creation and his people; clear, concise writing by a veteran scholar; sound and irenic evangelical teaching; and a method that can be used by students, pastors, and scholars. Martens' wise, careful, and helpful volume deserves wide use. I am grateful for this fourth edition, and look forward to introducing my students to it."

--Paul House, Beeson Divinity School of Samford University

"Elmer Martens has captured the essential message of the Old Testament in *God's Design*. The diachronic presentation of key biblical themes illuminates the nuances and development of God's revelation. Each of the four main themes is complex and draws on the scholarship of many others in order to offer an informed theological perspective on the First Testament. The fourth edition intensifies the attention given to the contemporary relevance of the biblical message. *God's Design* is a logical sequel to Old Testament survey studies and an excellent textbook for college students."

--R. Jerome Boone, Professor of Old Testament and Christian Formation, Lee University

"Built around four rich themes, *God's Design* is a most stimulating and useful study of the coherence of Old Testament theology. Not only is it a good introductory textbook, but it has opened up for me new vistas on how to bridge between exegesis and systematic theology."

--Ian W. Payne, Principal and Head of Theology, South Asia Institute of Advanced Christians Studies (SAIACS)

Elmer A. Martens is President Emeritus and Professor Emeritus of Old Testament at Fresno Pacific

University Biblical Seminary (formerly Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary). In addition to Bible commentaries (e.g, *Jeremiah*), three of his many articles appear in his *Festschrift* edited by former student Jon Isaak, *The Old Testament in the Life of God's People* (2009). An active church member, he has taught internationally in twelve countries.

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