



M. Laubscher

REVIEW – THE MISSION OF PREACHING: EQUIPPING THE COMMUNITY FOR FAITHFUL WITNESS

P.W.T. Johnson, *The mission of preaching: Equipping the community for faithful witness*

(Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2015). 239 pp. Price: R369

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Two contrasting experiences may be the best introduction I can give in reviewing this work. First, my scepticism – yet another book on missional theology. That, however, did not last long, because Patrick Johnson thoroughly met this with his scholarly well-informed and theologically carefully considered mind and ideas. Surely, this is not simply another disciple on the bandwagon of flavour-of-the-month missional theology who tries to be relevant and trendy, and secretly longs “for the good old days of Christendom”, unconsciously seeking power and cultural influence. Rather, this book creatively challenges current critics and disciples of missional theology. Moreover, both sceptics and enthusiasts of the contemporary stream of thought within homiletics have a great deal to consider. In fact, one of the main contributions of this work is that it not only perceives the need for a critical discussion between the field of missional ecclesiology and testimonial homiletics, but also brings significant theological depth and crispness into this newly explored interdependency.

This is clearly visible in the structure and flow of the book’s argument. Johnson sets up the dialogue by first introducing three significant and influential homiletic proposals that resort under testimonial preaching, namely Thomas Long’s *The witness of preaching* (without the pun!); Anna Florence Carter’s *Preaching as testimony*, and David Lose’s *Confessing*

Martin Laubscher, University of the Free State

Jesus Christ: Preaching in a postmodern world. Before engaging the current literature on missional theology/ecclesiology, he analyses in detail and reflects on a fairly significant part of Karl Barth's very mature ecclesiology dealing with the "Holy spirit and the sending of the Christian community" (which entails the key concepts of vocation, witness, and turn to the world). This is followed by another introduction (Chapter 3) that discusses Lois Barrett *et al.*'s eight patterns of witness in missional congregations. All of the previous then comes together in Johnson's creative proposal in the fourth and last chapter where he introduces his "A missional homiletic of witness": "Preaching confesses Jesus Christ, through a missional interpretation of scripture, in order to equip the congregation for its witness to the world" (Johnson, 2015:22, 140).

The title of the book is, in this instance, fairly aptly formulated and revealing. All those critics who fear that missional theology will ultimately reduce or instrumentalise theology to serve the agenda of mission(al theology), or that "if everything is mission, then nothing is mission", can already sense an awareness of their reservations in the title. This is not a book on why we need more missional preaching ("the preaching of mission!" or even worse the preaching of "missional theology!"), or on how to preach (thematically, technically and strategically) more missional ("missional preaching"), but it is rather a thoughtful grapple with the idea that the practice of preaching is not only of critical importance to missional theology (and vice versa), but it is also, among others, a missional practice within itself! Like Charles Campbell made us aware that, before we consider the "preaching of ethics", we need to grasp the ethics of preaching (preaching in itself is an ethical practice/response), or as Stanley Hauerwas showed, the church does not have a social ethic, but it is that, this work at least is also making us aware that mission (like ethics, social ethics, public theology, political theology, and so on) is not something we first do, but in fact "something" we first and foremost "is". Thinking of preaching as being missional obviously does not imply that it is only a missional practice, or that all preaching should eventually become missional (or even being more missional), but rather that it cannot be practised without being critically informed, connected, embodied and orientated regarding a particular "mission" we sense in all theology. The mission of preaching is an excellent example of how to do theology more theologically in re-connecting fields, loci and disciplines for a more wholesome and integrated theological witness.

Missional ecclesiology (read: the mission of theology) can no longer continue without this homiletic turn, and homiletics now needs to turn (as David Lose rightly mentions in the foreword) (Johnson 2015:11) from performative to formative homiletics, because, although preaching involves

a preacher, it surely does not start with him/her, nor is it about him/her, but rather an ecclesial (communal and pneumalogical) activity. Our mission is to preach the gospel, and it does not simply introduce vocation, witness, commission and a turn towards the world, but it also involves the whole community in being for the entire world. Both kinds of witness and mission are thus enacted and signified. On the one hand, we know that we do not preach primarily or fundamentally in response to the need of the world, because “the primary impetus and basis for the preaching of the gospel is God’s gracious activity in Jesus Christ” (Johnson 2015:167). On the other hand, “[m]issional preaching must arise from this daily witness, center it in the confession of Jesus Christ, and kindle further witness as the community scatters again” (Johnson 2015:212).

The questions and implications are in the end quite challenging and thought provoking. Besides the reaffirmation of missional hermeneutics’ guiding presence in the way we read (and academically study!) scripture (or any other text thereafter), or the practical-theological issue of reforming ordination regarding (whose!) criteria-and-authority as determinative in “allowing” or “licencing” people to preach, or the “ironic discourse perspective” (Johnson 2015:139-140), with which he introduces the fourth and last chapter, I have indeed found the focus on the content of confession very compelling and insightful. For all the enthusiasts doing (and even preaching!) missional theology, he correctly highlights that we should not mistake or substitute a quality of Jesus Christ for Jesus Christ himself (Johnson 2015:175). The distinctions are quite subtle and peculiar, but in the end of crucial importance – like that Christ is not only the incarnation of God’s will and kingdom, but also the incarnation and revelation of God himself (as well as the real man) (cf. Johnson 2015:178). Or, still regarding confessing Christ, but only from a different angle, we should be careful not to confess Christ only as the inauguration of God’s Kingdom, because “[y]es, Christ inaugurates God’s reign and rule, *but he is also its fulfilment and completion.*” [Italics mine] (Johnson 2015:178). In this instance, the crucial theological insight to discern is that the church in no way replaces, prolongs, supplements, complements or even continues God’s revelation in Christ, but “only” witnesses to everything that is already fully reconciled in Christ Jesus. What we confess obviously matters and will determine how we confess (approach and receive the world)!

The high quality of the work, however, not only elicits appreciation and impression, but also invites a few critical observations and questions to consider. I am not so sure whether Johnson (and others) sufficiently appreciated Barth’s turn to the world. He correctly shows how the church is relative to the world in Barth’s theology (Johnson 2015:89; see also CD IV/3.2, 826), so that I cannot imagine that the church-world relationship

in Barth's or any "Missional Homiletic of Witness" could predominantly or exclusively be a one-directional movement. The Christian community's commission not only entails a sending into the world, but also leaves room for a reception, listening, openness towards the world. The fact that the church cannot claim or master Christ, but continuously needs to receive Him anew, allows, in principle, a greater openness and receptiveness in the way we missionally engage the word and they perceive and receive our witness. I am of the opinion that part of the problem lies with the way in which Johnson interprets contextual specifics and particularity – and to get to the actual issue that I miss in Johnson's work and also in the remainder of the missional literature, is that Trinity and *Missio Dei* are often mentioned in the same breath, but then the next move/implication is not actualized to interpret the *Missio Dei* as *Missio Trinitatis*. In this instance, we are not dealing with a general or generic God who sends and witnesses, but rather with a very particular and specific God that all of a sudden highlights key concepts such as fecundity, ec-stasis, ec-centric living, affirmation of the other, self-gifting and otherness, hospitality, and so on, whereby contextual particularity and specifics are much more appreciated as being central to the mission of theology and preaching. Ultimately, Johnson is quite correct to show how Christian witness is essentially an ecclesiological and pneumatological activity, but the discussion in Barth's ecclesiology (and everything else within the doctrine of reconciliation) reaches its climax under the prophetic office. The prophetic nature and dynamic of such a missional homiletic of witness obviously needs more reckoning off.

In conclusion: I fully recommend this work to both critics and enthusiasts of missional theology, anyone unfamiliar or acquainted with the actuality of Karl Barth's ecclesiology for the 21st century, and, of course, to all interested or concerned about the mission of preaching. Surely it is not whether, but rather what kind of missional theology and preaching we are called to do in our various contexts. We cannot but continuously read and interpret our contexts theologically, and this is surely a very helpful and insightful contribution to our ongoing task at hand. In both contexts, we are perhaps beyond the captivity of Christendom's church and state dynamics, but there is also the Christendom of the church-and-market pact where the gospel is traded, commodified and cheaply for sale in the current commercialised church business. Therefore, this work is of such timely arrival for the witness and mission of theology and preaching in church and society in various places nowadays.



H.C. van Zyl

RESENSIE – HEEL ISRAEL ZAL BEHOUDEN WORDEN: EEN KRITISCH ONDERZOEK VAN DE GANGBARE EXEGESE VAN ROMEINEN 11

B. Maljaars, *Heel Israel zal behouden worden. Een kritisch onderzoek van de gangbare exegese van Romeinen 11, speciaal vs. 26.*
Soesterberg: Uitgeverij Aspekt. ISBN 9789461536167

Rom 11:25-26a lui (1983-Afrikaanse Vertaling): “²⁵Ons staan hier voor ’n geheimenis, broers, en ek wil hê julle moet weet wat dit is, sodat julle nie te selfversekerd sal wees nie. Die verharding het oor ’n deel van Israel gekom en duur totdat die volle getal uit die heidennasies in die koninkryk ingegaan het; ²⁶en op hierdie manier sal die hele Israel gered word.”

Dit gaan oor die interpretasie van “... en op hierdie manier sal die hele Israel gered word.” Volgens Bram Maljaars vorm hierdie frase, veral die woorde “die hele Israel”, die sleutel tot die verstaan van Rom 11. Hy is passievol daaroor dat daar afstand gedoen moet word van die huidige gangbare eksegese van Rom 11:26 en teruggekeer word na die tradisionele interpretasie. Daarom sê hy in sy voorwoord dat sy boek noodwendig polemies van aard is – gemik daarop om die gangbare eksegese te bestry – maar dat dit tog ook op ’n ewewigtige manier al die relevante standpunte aan die orde wil stel en sy leser op ’n wetenskaplike manier van sy interpretasie wil oortuig.

Volgens Maljaars is die gangbare eksegese vandag dat “die hele Israel” (πᾶς Ἰσραήλ) verwys na die volk Israel in die nasionale sin van die woord en dat daar vir Israel steeds ’n eskatologiese hoop van redding in die toekoms is, iets soos ’n massale volksbekering. Maljaars is egter van mening dat

Prof Hermie C van Zyl (emeritus), Departement Nuwe Testament, Universiteit van die Vrystaat

daar teruggekeer moet word na die tradisionele siening dat $\pi\acute{\alpha}\varsigma$ Ἰσραήλ verwys na geestelike Israel, wat uit beide die gelowige oorblyfsel van Israel (die Jode wat in Christus glo) en die gelowiges uit die heidendom bestaan, wat saam die kerk van Christus uitmaak, van wie Abraham die vader, die hemelse Jerusalem die moeder en Christus die Hoof is wat die eenheid tussen alle gelowiges bewerkstellig.

Maljaars gaan van die standpunt uit dat Paulus in die Romeinebrief deurgaans 'n onderskeid tref tussen twee soorte Israel – etniese Israel en geestelike Israel – en dat hierdie twee mekaar nie volledig oorvleuel nie. Eersgenoemde bestaan uit almal wat Israëliete of Jode is kragtens geboorte; laasgenoemde is diegene in Israel wat hulle spesifiek deur geloof en lewenswandel verbind aan die Verbondsgod, en in die nuwe bedeling in Christus as die Messias glo. In hierdie sin van die woord kan almal, ook nie-Jode, deel word van geestelike Israel. Maljaars toon uitvoerig aan hoe die onderskeid tussen die twee Israel's nie net steek hou vir die Romeinebrief nie, maar ook steun vind in die res van die Nuwe Testament. Verder, dit bou ook voort op die Ou Testament waar Paulus die grondgedagtes vir sy siening oor die twee Israel's kry.

Uitgaande van sy siening oor die twee Israel's voer Maljaars aan dat die huidige gangbare eksegeese nie rekening hou met bepaalde teksverskynsels in Rom 11 nie en daarom allerlei teenstrydighede en inkonsekwentheid tot gevolg het. Hy lig die volgende uit:

- Waarom sê Paulus: En so sal die *hele* Israel gered word, en nie net bloot: en so sal *Israel* gered word, nie? Waarom voeg hy “die hele” by? Volgens Maljaars bedoel Paulus met “hele Israel” ’n andersoortige Israel as etniese Israel. Dis ’n teruggrype na Rom 9:6 waar Paulus sê dat nie almal wat van Israel afstam, werklik Israel is nie. Die moontlikheid moet oopgehou word dat Paulus met “die hele Israel” ’n geïkoneerde formulering aanwend, te midde van ’n hoofstuk waar deurgaans net na “Israel” verwys word. Hierdie formulering sou dan na geestelike Israel verwys.
- Die OT aanhaling in Rom 11:26b-27 ondersteun nie die gedagte dat die hele etniese Israel gered sal word nie. Beide Jes 59:20 en Jer 31:33 – die OT gedeeltes wat Rom 11:26b-27 onderlê – het op die oog mense uit Israel wat hulle tot God bekeer en nie die hele etniese Israel nie.
- Die huidige gangbare eksegeese laat nie reg geskied aan die woord “so, op hierdie manier” ($\text{o}\acute{\upsilon}\tau\omega\varsigma$, ’n bywoord van wyse) in Rom 11:26 nie, maar moet dit noodwendig met ’n bywoord van tyd (“hierna”, “vervolgens”) vertaal. Vir laasgenoemde gebruik Paulus egter ander Griekse woorde as $\text{o}\acute{\upsilon}\tau\omega\varsigma$. Die bywoord van wyse, $\text{o}\acute{\upsilon}\tau\omega\varsigma$, veroorsaak egter dat die frase “en op hierdie manier sal die hele Israel gered word” noodwendig

terugverwys na "... en duur totdat die volle getal uit die heidennasies in die koninkryk ingegaan het ...". Die redding van die Jode is dus nie iets wat eers ná die redding van die heidene gebeur nie, maar vind op dieselfde manier plaas as die heidene se redding. En beide heidene en Jode se redding het reeds plaasgevind of is besig om te gebeur. Vir beide groepe is dit nie iets wat eers êrens in die toekoms voltrek sal word nie.

- Die gangbare eksegeese van Rom 11:26 keer die volgorde van redding om: eers die heidene, dan die Jode. Maar dit is duidelik uit Paulus se argumentasie in Romeine dat die volgorde eerder is: eers die Jode, dan die heidene (vgl Rom 1:16; 2:10; kyk ook Hand 3:26; 13:46). 'n Latere, massale bekering van die Jode as etniese volk tot God is daarom teen die heilshistoriese orde soos deur Paulus beskryf en soos dit in feite plaasvind.

In dieselfde trant toon Maljaars nog ander inkonsekwentheid en teenstrydighede van die gangbare eksegeese in Romeine aan. Hy beperk hom egter nie net tot die argument in Romeine self nie, maar wys ook uitvoerig daarop dat die konsep van 'n massale bekering van etniese Israel aan die einde van die tyd nie steek hou met die res van die Nuwe-Testamentiese eskatologie of Ou-Testamentiese profesieë omtrent Israel se toekoms nie. Nêrens in die Bybel tref mens die gedagte aan dat Israel op 'n ander manier as die heidene deel kry aan God se redding nie. Om etniese Israel se toekomstige massale bekering dus in Rom 11:26 in te voer, sou in stryd wees met die algemene trant van 'n Bybelse eskatologie.

Dit is duidelik dat Maljaars hom deeglik in die onderwerp ingegrawe het. Sy uitgebreide bibliografie en die manier waarop dit in die boek figureer, getuig van groot belesenheid oor die onderwerp. Hy voer 'n omvattende, konsekwente en sluitende argument, en daarvoor moet hy volle krediet kry. Enigeen wat hom met hierdie onderwerp wil bemoei, sal moeilik hierdie studie kan verbygaan. Tog het mens die ongemaklike gevoel dat daar net te konsekwent op elke slakkie van die sogenaamde gangbare eksegeese sout gegooi word. Nie al Maljaars se argumente is ewe oortuigend nie; sommige sou ook ewe goed ten gunste van die gangbare eksegeese aangewend kon word. Mens het ook die gevoel dat Maljaars se eksegetiese benadering so 'n bietjie uit die "ou skool" kom. Op 'n polemiese manier, weliswaar getemper, word 'n bepaalde standpunt met akademiese en retoriese drif beredeneer. Maar daar word min ruimte gelaat vir onsekerhede en dubbelsinnighede in die teks self. Móét Paulus altyd met Paulus saamstem? Is daar nie 'n stuk emosie en misterie in Paulus se hantering van sy Joodse volksgenote wat aan die einde van Rom 11 deurslaan wat ook verreken moet word nie? Mens mis bietjie hierdie "eksegetiese empatie" in Maljaars se ondersoek.

Die Jode se redding hoef nie in terme van 'n massale bekering êrens in die toekoms te manifesteer nie, maar Paulus se wroeging oor sy volksgenote se heil mag ook nie in die eksegetiese weggedeneer word nie. Die teks self laat ruimte vir meer as net die een siening wat Maljaars so sterk bepleit.

Nietemin, Maljaars moet gelukkig word met die kritiese vrae wat hy aan die gangbare eksegetiese van Rom 11:26 stel. Dis 'n deeglike studie waarvan kennis geneem sal moet word.



M. Laubscher

REVIEW – PATHWAYS IN THEOLOGY: ECUMENICAL, AFRICAN AND REFORMED

P. Naudé, *Pathways in Theology: Ecumenical, African and Reformed*
Van der Westhuizen, H. (Ed.)
(Stellenbosch: SUN PReSS, 2015). 371 pp. Price: R425.
ISBN: 978-1-920689-64-3.

What a welcome addition to the existing trend of collecting and clustering articles within the work of some significant theological scholars in South Africa! Sun Media (publisher) and Henco van der Westhuizen (editor) have done us a huge favour in compiling this selective contribution of Piet Naudé's articles to his fellow pilgrims on the pathways of theology within the ecumenical, African and reformed church to whom we all belong.

Why do I say so? Why do I really want to stress and emphasize this point so much? Obviously one is aware that this is not 'new work', because, except for the one sermon, the other 25 articles have all been published, read and discussed between 1986 and 2014. What then is the real significance of such a project and publication? First, both publisher and editor sense and recognize something of the importance and significance of Naudé's contribution to the current scholarly theological landscape. There is simply no way in which the last three decades of systematic theology (in South Africa, but also on the pathways indicated) can be discussed without the recognition and contribution of Naudé's work and influence. Secondly, and Naudé himself admits and points to the fact that "Hopefully they serve as an example of reflections on the ground-breaking events in South Africa leading up to 1994 and beyond, including a theological understanding of our current situation in a constitutional democracy." (Naudé 2015:1). This is a very handy tool in terms of how one particular theologian theologized, developed, changed his mind (and those of others), contributed, differed, and so forth within a *very dynamic social context* of the past three

Martin Laubscher, University of the Free State

decades. Thirdly, and both author and editor do not refer to this in the foreword and introduction, but surely are aware of the challenge that we cannot continue to do theology without being self-conscious and critical of the (post-) apartheid condition of our disciplines and work. This book – along with the other publications in the series on Dirkie Smit, John de Gruchy, Bernard Latagan, and so on – really helps interrogate, map and reconstruct both the archaeology and the genealogies of our discipline's past and present condition. Receiving a text like this within a (still) very dynamic societal context that is fairly receptive and critical of transforming theological knowledge, surely must be welcomed!

Against the above background and challenge, the title of the book is quite revealing. There are at least five critical remarks to make in terms of the book's title and content. First: The days of doing comprehensive and traditional systematic theology are clearly not the pathway on which we no longer find ourselves, but rather one where “[w]e will learn to live in fragile, pluralist theoretical constructs, doing eclectic and not systematic theology.” (Italics original) (Naudé 2015:233). This telling sentence towards the end of a 2004 article on “Is there a future for scholarship” not only characterizes his thought at the time, but actually comments and summarizes the title and approach of his work. From start to finish, there is no switch from (a systematic) pathway towards (constructive and eclectic) pathways, but rather a creative originality (contextual and societal consciousness accompanied with ecclesial roots) in his work that results in various pathways, namely *ecumenical, African and reformed*.

Second: The three pathways could easily have been named as church, public and contextual. The role of the *church* – whether ecumenical in scope, from within the context of southern Africa, or rooted in reformed origin, tradition and confession – is of main concern and crucial importance in Naudé's theology. Various pathways of the church and church theology are what we find in his work. However, that being said, the editor rightly points to this in his foreword (Naudé 2015:ix-xi). This particular kind of church theology simultaneously portrays a very specific kind of *public* theology. Throughout his work, there is a social, contextual and public antenna and awareness that church/ecclesial/catholic theology should be able to perceive and raise the broader questions for theology and church. Briefly, different descriptions and clusters of the pathways in his theology are possible, but the critical thread that runs throughout all of them is an acute and integrative awareness for all three the publics of academia, church and society.

Third: Following from the above is the critical ability to integrate, re-connect and explore creative potential and tension in embracing multiple identities and being simultaneously both. Put differently: There is a critical

awareness that understanding and exploration of the one necessarily begs for understanding, appreciation and exploration of the other. In his work, there is a dynamic embrace and interaction between church and public, dogmatics and ethics, doxology and praxis, liturgy and life, reformed and ecumenical, *lex orandi* and *lex credendi*, African and European, patriarchal and womanist, prophetic and priestly, critical and committed, and so on. Briefly, there is a creative and explorative intra-, inter- and multidisciplinary approach in his theological work that seeks a more integrative and wholesome theology.

Fourth: One is not surprised to hear the voices of the marginalized people and themes in his work. Whether it is on the pathway of ecumenical, African or reformed theology, voicing the challenges and engaging the relevance of liberationist, feminist, African/oral theology for the publics of church, society and academia in a particular context, the voices and faces of particular people come to the fore. On the ecumenical pathway, a voice says: "In short, ecumenical reception is neither the signature on a contract nor the distant reception of a text, but an embrace of love among sister churches [quoting Houtepen]." (Naudé 2015:26). On the African pathway, he is quite vocal in his critique on Villa-Vicencio's *Reading Barth in South Africa*: "Villa-Vicencio (and others) thus make two mistakes: their concern for the poor and oppressed is a selective one, omitting any acknowledgement of the oppression of a literate society, and they continue this oppression by the very fruits of their labour." (Naudé 2015:137). On the Reformed pathway, he allows the *Belhar Confession* (and, by implication, our sisters and brothers, fellow believers and pilgrims on the same pathway!) to voice itself within the DRC family and ecumenical sphere with the clear insight into the tragic revelation of the DRC's reception:

... the DRC declares that issues such as unity among Christians, reconciliation and justice are matters of great importance *for the DRC in particular*. ... For outsiders it creates the impression that, as far as matters of confession are concerned, the 'foreign' topics associated with Marcionism, Arianism, Epicureanism and Pelagianism (Belgic/Netherlands Confession of faith) or Arminianism (Dordt) are for the DRC closer to the core of faith than unity, reconciliation and justice (Naudé 2015:92, 316).

Briefly, a critical engagement and sensitivity for the marginalized and voiceless resulted in a recurring critical edge in Naude's work.

Fifth: Describing the contextual nature of his work on the pathway of being "African" is such a contentious issue that it may sound slightly pretentious, because although there are articles that clearly indicate this (see 2.1-2.3 on "oral theology, "Zionist theology" and "Jesus as *nanga*?"), the remaining five articles on the "African pathway" deal predominantly with

feminist interpretation and liberation theology's relevance for our context at the time. Obviously, there is an awareness for doing theology in the South African context, but that does not necessarily qualify it as being "African" contextual theology. Put differently, there is the same (if not more!) evidence that the contextual nature is (also) Eurocentric in orientation, being done by a White male, and that the particular contextual pathway's identity could have been more self-critical and sensitive towards this.

In conclusion: I sincerely recommend this work as a critical resource and tool in determining systematic theology in South Africa's past, present and future condition. The second forthcoming volume on *Pathways in Ethics* is eagerly awaited.



P. Verster

RESENSIE – LIEFDE VOOR ISRAËL NADER BEKEKEN: VOOR HET EVANGELIE ZIJN ALLE VOLKEN GELIJK

S. Paas, *Liefde voor Israël nader bekeken:
Voor het Evangelie zijn alle volken gelijk.*

Kampen: Brevier, 2015), pp 207. Prys onbekend, ISBN 978-9-49158-372-8
(Sagteband)

Die vraag hoedat die Bybel – en in besonder die Nuwe Testament – die Jode hanteer, is al indringend bespreek. Hoe die kerk Jode moet benader het deur die eeu uiteenlopende reaksies ontlok. Steven Paas hanteer hierdie sake op bevatlike wyse in hierdie werk. Alhoewel dit in baie opsigte populêr aangebied word, kom daar wel indringende bespreking van veral Luther se standpunt voor. Hy poog ook om 'n duidelike eie standpunt daar te stel.

Heel aan die begin vra hy die vraag of die Jode, dus die na-Bybels Israel, die uitverkore volk van God is. Hy is van mening dat hierdie vraag die plek van Israel in die kerk raak asook die persoonlike geloof en die teologie. Indien God twee uitverkore volke het, is die sending onder Jode meteens nie meer nodig nie.

'n Ander saak wat hy dan oek dadelik aan die orde stel, is die berugte anti-Semitisme (Jodehaat) wat reeds van die vroegste tye voorkom, maar wat veral in die 19de en 20ste eeue verskriklike afmetings aangeneem het, en met nuwe herlewing daarvan in die 21ste eeu veral onder radikale Moslems voorkom. Dit lei tot nuwe benaderings aangaande die Jode waar hulle veral as slagoffers beskou word.

Paas wil veral 'n duidelike onderskeid tussen anti-Judaïsme en anti-Semitisme tref. Hy is van mening dat anti-Judaïsme iets heel anders veronderstel as anti-Semitisme. Anti-Judaïsme handel ten diepste oor die verskil tussen 'n wettiese religie en die Christelike evangelie en moet gehandhaaf word, anders sal die fundamente van die Christelike geloof geskad word. Hoeseer anti-Semitisme ookal afgewys moet word, is dit onmoontlik om nie die Judaïsme as wettiese godsdiens af te wys sonder om met die aanvaarding daarvan die Christelike evangelie te misken nie.

Luther se uitsprake, afwysing en selfs radikale verwerping van die Jode kom dan aan die orde. Vir Luther is Christus die een-en-al van die hele Bybel. Christus is die waarborg van die waarheid en die hele Skrif word daardeur bepaal. Die Ou Testament is ook boek van Christus wat die leser rig op Christus en ook van Hom getuig. Die Ou Testament is ook boek van Israel, maar die Mosaïese wet en geskiedenis van Israel is in Christus vervul. Die sleutel tot die Heilige Skrif is in die persoon van Christus alleen te vind.

Paas dui aan dat in die lig hiervan en die Joodse wettisme dat Luther hom verset teen die Judaïsme. In sy werke kom sulke skerp uitsprake voor dat hy as voorloper van die Nazisme beskou word. Alhoewel dit duidelik is dat Luther kind van sy tyd is en dat hy die Roomse kerk, die Islam en Jode almal as vyande van die ware evangelie beskou, kan verskeie van sy uitsprake nie aanvaar word nie en sou dit as onchristelik afgewys moet word. Dit raak egter nie sy wonderbaarlike beklemtoning van die redding uit genade nie.

Die sterk anti-Semitisme wat later voorkom, word ook deur Paas afgewys. Wanneer daar egter pogings is om die Judaïsme op 'n nuwe wyse te waardeer soos voorkom by onder andere Sanders, is Paas tog van mening dat reg aan Paulus nie geskied nie.

Paas self wil vanuit die genadeverbond van God in Christus riglyne gee. Dit beteken dat hy die Judaïsme nie kan aanvaar nie maar dat hy ewe-eens die anti-Semitisme radikaal afwys. God neem in die genadeverbond die inisiatief. God se liefde vir alle mense in Christus is die dryfveer van sy genadeverbond, maar tog is die genadeverbond voorwaardelik. In Christus word die heil aangekondig wat die verlossing bepaal. Alhoewel die heil vir almal is, is dit radikaal in Christus en kan die Jode nie meer aanspraak maak op die status van uitverkore volk van God te wees nie.

Hierdie werk bied heelwat stof tot nadenke. Deeglike besinning maak dit baie waardevol. Die gedeelte oor Luther is van hoogstaande gehalte. Sy onderskeid tussen anti-Judaïsme en anti-Semitisme is ook aanvaarbaar. Daar is egter die leemte dat hy nie aandui hoe Jode self oor sy standpunt

sal voel nie en ook dat hy om daardie rede nie die dialoog met die Jode ver genoeg voer nie. Daar sal ook geluister moet word na aansprake dat Judaïsme nie reg verstaan word indien dit as wettiese godsdiens beskou sou word nie. Die gesprek oor die interpretasie van Paulus sal ook nog diepgaande eise stel. Paas het egter die tafel gedek vir die verdere indringende dialoog oor die essensiële saak.

Die werk is nie slegs vir akademici bedoel nie maar kan ook met vrug deur ander lidmate gelees word.