WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE BLESSED?
New Book in the Short Studies in Biblical Theology Series
Examines the Bible’s Teaching about Divine Blessing

WHEATON, Ill.—The idea of blessing is familiar in today’s cultural vocabulary. A quick search on the social media platform Instagram yields over 120 million photos tagged with the hashtag #blessed. Among the results are snapshots of beautiful scenery, smiling families, delicious meals, and shiny new cars. While these posts may casually attribute these “blessings” to God or a generic higher power, are health, wealth, and success actually the measure of true divine blessing?

In *Divine Blessing and the Fullness of Life in the Presence of God* (Crossway, October 2020), theologian William R. Osborne unfolds the Bible’s teaching of divine blessing from the creation narrative in Genesis to the new creation in Revelation. “Does the Bible teach that faithful Christians will experience divine blessing through health and wealth?” asks Osborne. “In order to answer this question, we must develop a sound biblical theology of blessing. Instead of grabbing one quick verse and claiming that this verse promises prosperity and health, we want to understand the idea of blessing as it is presented within the whole scope of God’s word. Just like themes such as law, sacrifice, and covenant, the theme of blessing must be understood within the full biblical story, if it is to be understood biblically at all.”

Osborne argues that God’s blessings have always been both spiritual and physical because they are based on the reality of the fullness of life in the presence of God. He examines biblical texts, considering three different contexts in which the idea of blessing appears in the Old and New Testaments:

• To Bless as an Action
• A Blessing as a Thing
• Being Blessed as a State of Being

After laying the contextual framework, *Divine Blessing and the Fullness of Life in the Presence of God* takes readers through the overarching story of redemption in Scripture, showing how God’s design of blessing is woven throughout—from the story of creation, through God’s promises to Abraham and covenant with Israel, to the new covenant of the New Testament, and finally in God’s future and eternal blessings for his people.

Osborne writes, “From Genesis to Revelation, God’s plan has been to create life for his people in his presence. Our brief study through the Old Testament
and into the New has revealed that while the language of divine blessing may change, the biblical focus on the subject remains the same. God’s plan to bless reached its fulfillment in the son of Abraham, who was the Son of God. For those of us united to Jesus by faith, we are to live as a blessing to the world in this present age while longing for our eternal blessings in the world to come.”

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

William R. Osborne (PhD, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary) serves as associate professor of biblical and theological studies at College of the Ozarks in Point Lookout, Missouri. He is the author of Trees and Kings, coauthor of A Book-by-Book Guide to Biblical Hebrew Vocabulary, and coeditor of Riddles and Revelations. He is on the editorial board of the Journal for the Evangelical Study of the Old Testament, a publication he cofounded, and has authored many articles and reviews.

---

Founded in 1938, Crossway is a not-for-profit global Christian publishing ministry that publishes gospel-centered, Bible-based content to honor our Savior and serve his church. Crossway seeks to help people understand the all-encompassing implications of the gospel and the truth of God’s word—for all of life, for all eternity, and for the glory of God alone. Crossway is the global publisher of the ESV® (English Standard Version®) Bible, more than 1,000 Christian books, and an extensive list of gospel literature. For additional information, visit crossway.org.

# # #