



The Politics of Yahweh: John Howard Yoder, the Old Testament, and the People of God (Theopolitical Visions Book 12)

John C. Nugent

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John Howard Yoder is most famous for arguing in *The Politics of Jesus* that a sound reading of the New Testament demonstrates the abiding relevance of Jesus to social ethics. However, it is seldom acknowledged that Yoder makes essentially the same argument with regard to the Old Testament. Throughout his extensive writings, Yoder offers a provocative interpretation of the Old Testament that culminates in the way of Jesus and establishes the ethical, ecclesiological, and historiographical continuity of the entire biblical canon. In *The Politics of Yahweh*, presented as a prequel to *The Politics of Jesus*, John C. Nugent makes Yoder's complete Old Testament interpretation accessible in one place for the first time.

Nugent does not view Yoder's interpretation as flawless. Rather, Nugent moves beyond summary to offer honest critique and substantial revision. His constructive proposal, which stands in fundamental continuity with the work of Yoder, is likely to provoke thought from theologians, biblical scholars, and ethicists. Even at points where readers disagree with some of his and Yoder's interpretations, they will be challenged to explore new perspectives and rethink common assumptions concerning the diverse and often confusing issues that arise from sustained reflection on the Old Testament.

“Making up for the paucity of attention to the Old Testament in ecclesiology, Nugent shows that Yoder's unique 'Israel-like view of the Church' substantially draws on the Old Testament as an essential part of the narrative arc in understanding God's work in forming a 'royal priesthood'—a mission that culminates in Christ and his body, the ecclesia. This is an important corrective to some recent rereadings of Yoder, which have no room to account for history—and particularly the history of Israel—in Yoder's missional ecclesiology. This is an important contribution to current debates.”

-James K.A. Smith
Calvin College

“It is beyond doubt that John Howard Yoder is a pivotal, defining force in contemporary theology, particularly as pertains to faith in the public domain. But Yoder is often thinly understood from his best-known work. This welcome volume pays close and fresh attention to the depth and rich scope of Yoder's interpretation, especially with reference to his careful reading of the Old Testament. The outcome is an awareness of Yoder's imaginative competence as a biblical theologian facing the demanding work of a Christian reading of the Old Testament. A plus of the volume is an extensive Yoder bibliography.”

-Walter Brueggemann
Columbia Theological Seminary

“In his many books and articles, and in a vast number of unpublished essays and lectures, John Howard Yoder encompassed virtually the entire theological curriculum. John Nugent, whose breadth is similarly impressive, has here provided a comprehensive summary and critical evaluation of Yoder's interpretation of the Old Testament, especially as it bears on the issue of 'pacifism,' or to be more precise, as Yoder and Nugent would have it, trust in God.”

-Ben C. Ollenburger

Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary

“This wonderful book is all I hoped for—and more. Nugent clearly knows Yoder's thought extremely well. With considerable intelligence and discernment, he has shown the vital importance of the Old Testament roots of The Politics of Jesus. But more than that, he has written a book that has great relevance for all Christians interested in the relationship between the Testaments, especially as related to the subject of peace.”

-Mark Thiessen Nation

Eastern Mennonite Seminary

John C. Nugent is Professor of Old Testament at Great Lakes Christian College. He is the editor of *Radical Ecumenicity: Pursuing Unity and Continuity after John Howard Yoder* (2010) and *The End of Sacrifice: The Capital Punishment Writings of John Howard Yoder* (2011).

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