Joseph T. Cochran

Jonathan Edwards and Hebrews

A Harmonic Interpretation of Scripture

V&R

The Jonathan Edwards Center at Yale University



© 2025 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525560952 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647560953

New Directions in Jonathan Edwards Studies

Edited by
Harry S. Stout, Kenneth P. Minkema
and Adriaan C. Neele

Volume 9

Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht

© 2025 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525560952 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647560953

Joseph T. Cochran

Jonathan Edwards and Hebrews

A Harmonic Interpretation of Scripture

Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht

© 2025 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525560952 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647560953

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek:
The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data available online: https://dnb.de.

© 2025 by Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Robert-Bosch-Breite 10, 37079 Göttingen, Germany, an imprint of the Brill-Group (Koninklijke Brill BV, Leiden, The Netherlands; Brill USA Inc., Boston MA, USA; Brill Asia Pte Ltd, Singapore; Brill Deutschland GmbH, Paderborn, Germany; Brill Österreich GmbH, Vienna, Austria)
Koninklijke Brill BV incorporates the imprints Brill, Brill Nijhoff, Brill Schöningh, Brill Fink, Brill mentis, Brill Wageningen Academic, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Böhlau and V&R unipress.

All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system, without prior written permission from the publisher.

Typesetting: le-tex publishing services, Leipzig
Cover design: SchwabScantechnik, Göttingen

Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Verlage | www.vandenhoeck-ruprecht-verlage.com
E-Mail: info@v-r.de

ISSN 2566-7327
ISBN 978-3-647-56095-3

© 2025 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525560952 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647560953

For my beloved wife, Kendall N. Cochran

"He that would know the workings of the New England mind in the middle of the [eighteenth] century, and the throbbings of its heart, must give his days and nights to the study of Jonathan Edwards."
— George Bancroft
Quoted in Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*, 298.

© 2025 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525560952 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647560953

© 2025 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525560952 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647560953

Contents

Endorsements 11

Acknowledgments 13

List of Abbreviations 15

Introduction 17
The Hebrews 12:22–24 Sermon Series 22
A Harmonic Interpretation of Hebrews 25
Overview of Chapters 27
Contribution 31

1. The World of Hebrews 33
Navigating the Works of Edwards for the Study of Hebrews 33
Scholars of Hebrews in the World of Edwards 48
The Worth of Hebrews in the World of Edwards 53
Conclusion 59

2. The World of Harmony 61
Harmony in the Natural World of Jonathan Edwards 62
Harmony in "Things to Be Considered" 64
Harmony in "Beauty of the World" 68
Harmony in "The Mind" 69
Harmony in the Metaphysics of Jonathan Edwards 73
Harmony in the "Miscellanies" 74
Harmony in *Religious Affections* 81
The Harmony of the Old and New Testament 84
Conclusion 91

3. Divine Revelation in Hebrews 93
Harmonizing Divine Revelation to History 94
Harmonizing Divine Revelation with Typology 103
Typology in the Typological Notebooks of Edwards 110
Typology in Sermons, "Notes on Scripture", and the "Blank Bible" 113
Harmonizing the Word of God to the Mind of God 117
Harmonizing and Heeding the Word of God to Stir Affections 124

© 2025 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525560952 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647560953

Conclusion ... 127

4. Creation and Creatures in Hebrews ... 129
The End of Creation and the Created World ... 129
Creation Conveys the Father's Delight and Love for the Son ... 133
Angels ... 136
Humanity ... 142

5. Trinity in Hebrews ... 147
Deistic Context for Trinitarian Reflection ... 147
The Trinity ... 150
The Immanent Trinity ... 151
God's Attributes and Decrees ... 153
The Principle of Grace ... 157
The Economic Trinity ... 159
Hebrews and Harmonic Interpretation Fortified the Doctrine of the Trinity ... 161
Trinity and Typology ... 162
Christological Typology ... 162
Noahic Typology ... 163
Melchizedekian Typology ... 167
Tabernacle Typology ... 170
Spirit Typology ... 171
The Lexical and Typical Trinity ... 174

6. Redemption in Hebrews ... 177
Covenant of Redemption ... 177
Covenant of Grace ... 181
Atonement ... 187
"Christ's Sacrifice" ... 189
Psalm 40, Hebrews 10:5 and Satisfaction Theory ... 192
The Harmonic Character of Redemption ... 196

7. Justification in Hebrews ... 199
The Arminian Occasion to Defend Justification by Faith Alone ... 199
Union with Christ ... 205
Justification by Christ ... 210
Perseverance in Christ ... 216
The Ecology of Justification ... 221
The Christocentric Ballast to the Harmony of Justification ... 227

© 2025 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525560952 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647560953

8. Spiritual Living in Hebrews 229
The Nature of Virtue, Beauty and Love 229
Mimicking the Spiritual Life of Christ 242
A Beatific Vision for Spiritual Living 247
A Journey to Heaven 252
The Ecology of Spiritual Living 255
Ethical Foundation for Spiritual Transformation 260

9. The Church in Hebrews 261
The Identity of Those "in" the Church 261
An Humble Inquiry 261
The Church Militant and Triumphant 267
Apostates, Those Sent "out of" the Church 270
The Pastor "over" the Flock 279
The Ministry of the Word and the Extraordinary Office of Women Exhorters 280
Watchman for Souls 281
Standing Over at Judgment 285

10. The Doctrine of Last Things in Hebrews 289
The Final Judgment and Hell 290
The Day of Judgment and "The Importance of a Future State" 294
Hell 298
Heaven 305
Second Coming 311
Defender of Hell and Champion of Heaven 317

Conclusion 319
Prolegomena, Divine Revelation, Creation and Creatures 321
Trinity and Redemption 323
Justification and Sanctification 324
The Church and The End 325
Seeking God in Scripture 326
The Grammatical Habit of Harmony in Hebrews 328
The Logical Harmony of Philosophy and Theology 329
The Rhetorical Disposition of Retrieval and Apologetics 330
Integrative, Agile and Exportable 331

References 335

Index of Person 357

© 2025 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525560952 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647560953

Index of Subjects 361

© 2025 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525560952 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647560953

Endorsements

Jonathan Edwards devoted more of his life to studying the Bible than many people realize, and while his notes on the Bible can seem haphazard, Cochran shows that his approach to the Bible was anything but that. Instead, Cochran underscores how Edwards interpreted the Bible through a harmonic lens, capturing its prophetic-fulfillment harmony, its typological harmony, and its doctrinal harmony in his engagement with Scripture. Cochran's study of Edwards's reading of the book of Hebrews offers an instructive foray into Edwards's harmonic interpretation of Scripture and really his entire theological program. In a world where life feels increasingly dissonant, the harmonic thinking of a theologian such as Edwards offers an integrated way of viewing reality.
David P. Barshinger, Ph.D.
Senior Editor and Director of Book Editorial, Crossway
Author of *Jonathan Edwards and the Psalms*

Polymath is a way of describing both Edwards and Cochran in this book, for both authors range widely to demonstrate how our experience of the Scriptures and of the world may be harmonized. The world may be less random than we think! Theological and pastoral topics are addressed using the book of Hebrews, and in Cochran's fine prose complicated debates find elegant exposition. I learnt something on every page!
Rev. Rhys Bezzant, Ph.D.
Principal
Ridley College, Melbourne
Author of *Jonathan Edwards and the Church* and *Jonathan Edwards the Mentor*

Cochran's work elucidates many of the facets of Edwards's mind in tandem with the Book of Hebrews. *Jonathan Edwards and Hebrews* offers a fine piece of original scholarship; a piece much needed in the world of Edwards studies.
John T. Lowe, Ph.D.
University of Louisville
Co-editor of *Jonathan Edwards within the Enlightenment*

© 2025 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525560952 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647560953

Cochran's study of Jonathan Edwards's engagement with the book of Hebrews builds productively on the recent surge of interest in early modern Protestant exegesis and in Edwards as a biblical theologian. But it does more than that, for Cochran shows how Edwards's use of Hebrews reaches into nearly every aspect of his thought: ontology, prophecy, typology, aesthetics, practical theology as well as metaphysics, issues of faith and practice, the nature and destiny of the church—even mysticism. Those who would try to isolate one aspect of Edwards's thought can here learn the lesson that one cannot touch a strand without vibrating the entire web, such are the suggestive and sensitive connections.
Kenneth P. Minkema, Ph.D.
Editor, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*
Director, The Jonathan Edwards Center
Yale University

Jonathan Edwards's exegesis was neglected by most scholars before the twenty-first century. Thanks to the outstanding work of people like Cochran, though, this problem is now being rectified. We will never understand Edwards's intellectual life until we pay due attention to his work with the Bible. And we will not understand Edwards's work with the Bible until we see how he handled the New Testament book of Hebrews, which he thought showed Christians how to read the Bible whole. Cochran's work is a must read for those who think, teach, and write about colonial America's most important thinker.
Douglas A. Sweeney, Ph.D.
Dean of Beeson Divinity School
Samford University
Author of *Edwards the Exegete*

Cochran masterfully weaves together the theological richness of Jonathan Edwards's exegesis of Hebrews, offering profound insights into Edwards's harmonic interpretive method. As the first comprehensive exposition of Edwards's numerous writings and sermons on Hebrews, this book significantly advances our understanding of Edwards's theological depth, in areas such as Christological and natural typology, covenant theology, the doctrine of the Trinity, among others, while illuminating the profound connections between the Old and New Testaments. An indispensable resource for any serious student of Edwards.
Rev. Lisanne Winslow, Ph.D.
Fairfield University
Author of *A Great and Remarkable Analogy: The Onto-Typology of Jonathan Edwards*

© 2025 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525560952 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647560953

Acknowledgments

This work would not have been brought to publication had it not been for pivotal figures who invested time to shape me into a better man and scholar. Any shortcomings of this research are surely my own.

The leadership and staff of Calvary Memorial Church, especially Todd Wilson and Gerald Hiestand, provided employment, space, and time to study during doctoral coursework. Two other colleagues at Calvary, Manfred Karoli and Eric Redmond, listened and cared for me when I needed it. Additional thanks are extended to the pastor theologians in my Center for Pastor Theologians ecclesial fellowship. You have patiently and thoughtfully engaged my essays on Edwards for years.

The scholars at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School have provided exemplary mentoring, accountability, and excellence. I would not have developed a vast love for Christian history without John Woodbridge's admonishment. Marty Klauber offered outstanding professional, personal, and scholarly mentoring during and after doctoral studies. Scott Manetsch inspired accuracy and precision in thought and writing. Doug Sweeney invested a generous amount of time and other resources to initiate me into the field of Jonathan Edwards studies. It was an honor to partner with him at the Jonathan Edwards Center, as well as to enjoy many meals and hospitality in his home. More than an exceptional doctoral advisor, he has been a model scholar and leader to me.

Ken Minkema's willingness to serve on my doctoral committee and see this monograph to publication is a testimony of his steadfast service to Jonathan Edwards studies. This project benefited from his expertise and attention to detail. He published a series of Jonathan Edwards's sermons on the Epistle to the Hebrews, which have been an asset to this study. He also guided two of my journal articles into publication at *Jonathan Edwards Studies*, each of which clarified this study and its contribution to the field.

I am grateful to institutional support from Trinity Christian College (Palos Heights), Wheaton College, and Purdue University Northwest, and the teaching mentors from those institution. Dean John Fry at Trinity Christian College provided lecturing opportunities from 2019–2021. Melissa Harkrider and Karen Johnson provided mentoring at Wheaton College from 2020–2024. Associate Dean and History Chair, Mike Lynn cheered me on and marshalled Purdue University financial and research support in ways unexpected to bring this work to publication and to develop me professionally.

A scholarship awarded the opportunity for my wife and I to join other students of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School on a Jonathan Edwards tour of New England.

© 2025 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525560952 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647560953

A few small scholarships from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School allowed me on two occasions to write and deliver papers through the Evangelical Theological Society, the Center for Pastor Theologians, and to publish my article with *Jonathan Edwards Studies*. The Center for Pastor Theologians provided honorariums for articles presented and published in their journal. Logos provided a digital collection of the Yale *Works of Jonathan Edwards* for my doctoral studies. Michael Butera entrusted me with a complete hardbound collection of the Yale *Works of Jonathan Edwards*, a priceless gift I shall cherish.

I have had the pleasure of serving the historical guild as an officer of the Conference on Faith and History and its Social Media Coordinator. Oversight, mentoring, and camaraderie provided by Jonathan Den Hartog, Beth Allison Barr, Rick Kennedy, Elesha Coffman, and Chris Gehrz have been a treasure for over five years. Numerous historians have sharpened my understanding of Edwards and have read part or all of this manuscript. I am grateful for the collegial spirit of David Barshinger, Rhys Bezzant, Robert Brown, Ava Chamberlain, Oliver Crisp, John Lowe, Michael McClymond, Stephen R. C. Nichols, John Saillant, Stephen J. Stein, Kyle Strobel, Obbie Todd, Peter Thuesen, Rachel Wheeler, and Lisanne Winslow. I am grateful to the expertise each contributed as I gleaned from their learning. Profuse thanks are offered to Zak Tharp, who indexed this monograph in record time. Another historian, Chris Allison, makes mention as not only an outstanding American historian but a first-rate neighbor.

Final thanks go to family. I am grateful for the constant support and accountability of my parents. They have been there in various ways when our family had need. Weekly conversations and updates from them have brought me joy each week. Dearest thanks go to my immediate family, the five most valued people in my life. Thank you Chloe, Asher, Adalie, and Clara for brightening my day and inspiring me to lead and model virtue, affection, and love with a charitability and patience that only children can draw from a father. Finally, thank you, beloved Kendall, for cheering me on and providing the space and time in the late nights, early mornings, and long weekends to complete this study. You are a strong, lovely, and beautiful woman, who deserves this monograph's dedication.

© 2025 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525560952 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647560953

List of Abbreviations

JES	Jonathan Edwards Studies
OHJE	Oxford Handbook of Jonathan Edwards
WJE	Works of Jonathan Edwards
WJEO	Works of Jonathan Edwards Online
WJF	Works of John Flavell
WJO	Works of John Owen

© 2025 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525560952 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647560953

© 2025 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525560952 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647560953

Introduction

Jonathan Edwards (1703–58) lived in a period characterized by increased skepticism towards metaphysics and the enchanted world. His rapidly changing intellectual world emphasized rationalism, which utilized the five senses to empirically construct the natural world. Edwards lived geographically on the frontier edge of the Atlantic World. He dwelled at the margin of this intellectual movement, which put him at a disadvantage to influence it. However, this "age of reason" influenced him. His formal education and study was shaped by Cambridge Platonists and English natural and moral philosophers such as Newton, Locke, Berkeley, and Hutcheson. He leaned into the tension of capitalizing on the strengths of this "age of reason" while championing a historic, orthodox, and Reformed vision of God, revelation, and redemption. As one caught seemingly between two worlds, Edwards looked to the Holy Scriptures as a harmonic source for the natural world he sensed, and the metaphysical world revealed to him.[1]

During his brief pastorate in New York, the *Personal Narrative* recalled an enthusiasm for studying Scripture: "I had then, and at other times, the greatest delight in the holy Scriptures, of any book whatsoever. Oftentimes in reading it, every word seemed to touch my heart." He continued, "Used oftentimes to dwell long on one sentence, to see the wonders contained in it; and yet almost every sentence seemed to be full of wonders." His first biographer, Samuel Hopkins, referred to Edwards as one who "studied the Bible more than all other books." When Sereno E. Dwight published *Notes on Scripture*, he commended his great-grandfather's "regular and diligent study of the Sacred Scriptures."[2]

---

1 This "Age of Reason" experienced rapid shifts in biblical interpretation as critical interpretive methods developed. Gerald R. Cragg says: "The atmosphere of the age encouraged the critics of the churches to venture on more and more explicit assaults on traditional beliefs…At the outset the attacks were peripheral. Men did not directly criticize the Bible, but raised questions about chronology." *The Church and the Age of Reason, 1648–1789* (New York: Penguin, 1960), 47. Historians have since come around to critique the payout of the critical method. David Steinmetz advanced a famous thesis in favor of the "Superiority of Pre-critical Exegesis." *Taking the Long View: Christian Theology in Historical Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 3. Also see Hans Frei, *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative: A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974); Michael C. Legaspi, *The Death of Scripture and the Rise of Biblical Studies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); Avihu Zakai, *Jonathan Edwards's Philosophy of History*, 92–95, 118–127; Avihu Zakai, "The Age of Enlightenment" in *The Cambridge Companion to Jonathan Edwards*, edited by Stephen J. Stein (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 80–99.

2 *WJE*, 16:797. Samuel Hopkins, *The Life and Character of the Late Reverend Mr. Jonathan Edwards, President of the College of New-Jersey* (Boston: S. Kneeland, 1765), iii, 40. Sereno E. Dwight, ed., *The*

© 2025 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525560952 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647560953

Until recently, his interpretation of Scripture had been neglected in Edwards studies. Robert E. Brown's contribution to *The Princeton Companion to Jonathan Edwards* begins: "Jonathan Edwards' biblical interpretation is the subject most neglected in the study of his writings and intellectual pursuits, and the subject most deserving attention by scholars and admirers alike." Stephen R. C. Nichols echoes Brown's sentiment in his study on Edwards's view of the relationship between the Old and New Testament. Nichols says, "There remains at present a lack of scholarship of the Bible in the thought of colonial pastor-theologian, Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758)." Nichols continues, observing that people study Edwards as a "philosopher, scientist, rhetorician and religious psychologist … Less familiar, however, is Edwards the interpreter of Scripture." The testimony of Edwards, his family, and friends demonstrated that this had been a gross oversight in Edwards studies. Douglas Sweeney comments that for centuries there appeared to be a disinterest in Edwards's exegesis: "Three hundred years after his birth, half a century into what some have called the Edwards renaissance, few have bothered to study Edwards's massive exegetical corpus." Yet, the Bible was his daily staple. Brown, Nichols, and Sweeney have been among a handful of recent scholars that took this assertion seriously and attempted to fill this lacuna. These studies have been instrumental in constructing a more complete depiction of the Northampton Sage.[3]

While a rounded depiction of Edwards as a biblical exegete has emerged, there are still complexities to be explored. Simply put, there lacks consensus concerning Edwards's interpretive methodology. For instance, Brown's *Jonathan Edwards and the Bible,* presents an Edwards who engaged in textual critical and exegetical work with biblical languages. Stephen Stein argues that Edwards's engagement in the study of Scripture employed biblical language studies and typological interpretation in his *Notes on Scripture* and the *Blank Bible*. McClymond and McDermott's massive work on Edwards's theology argues that Edwards employed a spiritual exegesis of Scripture. On the other hand, Oliver Crisp counters that the doctrinal emphasis was the backbone of Edwards's exegesis. As a *via media* to Stein and Crisp, Adriaan

---

Works of President Edwards: With a Memoir of His Life, vol. 1 (New York: S. Converse, 1829–1830), 57.

3 Robert E. Brown in "The Bible", *The Princeton Companion to Jonathan Edwards*, edited by Sang Hyun Lee (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 87. Stephen R. C. Nichols, *Jonathan Edwards's Bible* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2013), 1. Douglas A. Sweeney, *Edwards the Exegete: Biblical Interpretation and Anglo-Protestant Culture on the Edge of the Enlightenment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 7. For an additional scholar, see Donald S. Whitney, *Finding God in Solitude* (New York: Peter Lang, 2014). He commented: "Care should be taken not to overlook the essential fact that prayerful study and prolonged meditation on the text of the Bible was the supreme means by which Edwards sought to know and experience God and to pursue conformity to the person and work of Jesus Christ." Whitney, *Finding God in Solitude*, 81.

© 2025 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525560952 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647560953

Neele asserts in *Before Jonathan Edwards* that Edwards's study of Scripture resonates with the exegetical and theological work of the Reformed-Scholastics.[4]

These examples demonstrate the range of views on Edwards's approach to exegesis. Robert Jenson's passing observation about Edwards's exegesis reveals why there are multiple interpretations about his exegetical methods. Jenson observes: "Edwards' *biblical exegeses* are almost always faithful to the texts, within the limits of then available information, in stark contrast to those of his opponents." Jenson pluralized exegesis. This is telling and accounts for the proliferating theses on Edwards's exegetical methodology. There is no current consensus on Edwards's complex exegetical methodology because his exegesis cannot be reduced to a singular method. Since his interpretive methodology lacks consensus and multiple theses describe his hermeneutic, there is still much room for exploring his exegetical methods in order to build upon the positive strides taken recently to elucidate it.[5]

---

4 Robert E. Brown, *Jonathan Edwards and the Bible* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2002). "Edwards's most explicit and sustained engagement with the Bible as a commentator, however, occurs in the entries contained in his two major commentaries, the *Notes on Scripture* and the "Blank Bible." … Edwards studied the text of the Bible very closely, sometimes turning initially to the Hebrew and Greek for a firsthand examination of the ancient texts." Stephen J. Stein in "Edwards as Biblical Exegete", *The Cambridge Companion to Jonathan Edwards,* ed. Stephen J. Stein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 184. McClymond and McDermott, *The Theology of Jonathan Edwards*, 175–180. Stein has also argued for Edwards's emphasis on deriving the spiritual sense of Scripture. See "Quest for the Spiritual Sense: The Biblical Hermeneutics of Jonathan Edwards," *Harvard Theological Review* 70 (1977), 107–109. "Although he followed the Puritan model of elucidating text, doctrine, and application, Edwards's understanding of the role of the sermon in conversion, his religious psychology, and his insistence upon laying bare the idea (in the Lockean sense of that term) before the minds of his hearers, meant *that getting clear the doctrinal content of his sermons was of particular importance to him*." Crisp, *Jonathan Edwards among the Theologians*, 145, emphasis added. Adriaan Neele, *Before Jonathan Edwards: Sources of New England Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019).

5 Robert Jenson, *America's Theologian: A Recommendation of Jonathan Edwards* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 145, emphasis added. In addition to the works cited in this section on Edwards's exegesis, there are a number of scattered chapter contributions in compendiums and journal articles that explore Edwards's exegesis. See Stephen J. Stein, "The Spirit and the Word: Jonathan Edwards and Scriptural Exegesis" in *Jonathan Edwards and the American Experience*, edited by Nathan O. Hatch and Harry S. Stout (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 118–30; Douglas A. Sweeney, "'Longing for More and More of It'? The Strange Career of Jonathan Edwards's Exegetical Exertions"; Robert E. Brown, "The Sacred and the Profane Connected: Edwards, the Bible, and Intellectual Culture"; and Stephen J. Stein, "Jonathan Edwards and the Cultures of Biblical Violence" in *Jonathan Edwards at 300: Essays on the Tercentenary of His Birth*, ed. Harry S. Stout, Kenneth P. Minkema, and Caleb J. D. Maskell (Lanham: University Press of America, 2005), 25–64; Douglas A. Sweeney, "Jonathan Edwards, the Harmony of Scripture, and Canonical Exegesis," *Trinity Journal* 34, No. 2 (Fall 2013): 171–207; Douglas A. Sweeney, "The Biblical World of Jonathan Edwards," *Jonathan Edwards Studies* 3, No. 2 (2013): 221–268; Michal Choinski, "A Cognitive Approach to the Hermeneutics of Jonathan Edwards's Sermons," *Jonathan Edwards Studies* 4, No. 2 (2014): 215–227; Douglas A. Sweeney, "Edwards on the Divinity, Necessity and Power of the Word of God in the World"; Stephen

© 2025 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525560952 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647560953

The vast corpus of Edwards offers significant space to explore his exegesis, and there has been much renewed interest by scholars to engage in this task. Some scholars have reflected on Edwards's exegesis to correct a general exegetical oversight or radical aspects of his thought—such as his idealism, occasionalism, and what some might call hyper-typology. Others have examined his work with a particular text or genre of texts as a form of discovery. These scholars wished to see the exegetical practices and conclusions of Edwards emerge from his writings.[6]

R. C. Nichols, "Jonathan Edwards and the Bible: Christ, the Scope of Scripture" in *Jonathan Edwards for the Church: The Ministry and the Means of Grace*, ed. William M. Schweitzer (Watchmead, Welwyn Garden City: EP Books, 2015), 163–204; Ryan Hoselton, "Jonathan Edwards, the Inner Witness of the Spirit, and Experiential Exegesis," *Jonathan Edwards Studies* 5, No. 2 (2015): 90–120; Darren M. Pollock, "The Exegetical Basis of Jonathan Edwards' Cessationism," *Jonathan Edwards Studies* 5, No. 2 (2015): 121–137. Also see the entries on Allegorical Method, Allegory and Typology, Biblical Languages (Hebrew and Greek), Exegesis, Hermeneutics, Scripture (Exegetical Sources), Scripture (Word of God), in *The Jonathan Edwards Encyclopedia*, ed. Harry S. Stout, Kenneth P. Minkema, Adriaan C. Neele (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017).

6 See the following: Stephen J. Stein, "'Like Apples of Gold in Pictures of Silver': The Portrait of Wisdom in Jonathan Edwards's Commentary on the Book of Proverbs," *Church History* 54 (1985): 324–337; Glenn R. Kreider, *Jonathan Edwards's Interpretation of Revelation 4:1–8:1* (Dallas, TX: University Press of America, Inc., 2004); William A. Tooman, "Edwards's Ezekiel: The Interpretation of Ezekiel in the *Blank Bible* and *Notes on Scripture*," *Journal of Theological Interpretation* 3, No. 1 (Spring 2009): 17–38; Stephen J. Stein, "Cotton Mather and Jonathan Edwards on the Epistle of James: A Comparative Study," in *Cotton Mather and Biblia Americana—America's First Bible Commentary: Essays in Repraisal*, ed. Reiner Smolinski and Jan Stievermann (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 363–82; Jeongmo Yoo, "Jonathan Edwards's Interpretation of the Major Prophets: The Books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel," *Puritan Reformed Journal* 3, No. 2 (2011): 160–192; David P. Barshinger, "Making the Psalter One's 'Own Language': Jonathan Edwards Engages the Psalms," *Jonathan Edwards Studies* 2, No. 1 (2012): 3–29; Mark A. Noll, "Jonathan Edwards' Use of the Bible A Case Study (Genesis 32:22–32) with Comparisons," *Jonathan Edwards Studies* 2, No. 1 (2012): 30–46; Andrew T. Abernethy, "Jonathan Edwards as Multi-Dimension[al] Bible Interpreter: A Case Study from Isaiah 40–55," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 56, No. 4 (December 2013): 815–830; Catherine Sider Hamilton, "Jonathan Edwards, Paul, and the Priority of Holiness: a variant reading," *The Journal of Theological Interpretation* 7, No. 1 (Spring 2013): 1–20; David S. Lovi and Benjamin Westerhoff, *The Power of God: A Jonathan Edwards Commentary on the Book of Romans* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2013); John Serré, "'Buying and Selling: One of Those Improvements of Human Society'—Jonathan Edwards on Ezekiel 22:12," *Jonathan Edwards Studies* 3, No. 1 (2013): 3–24; David P. Barshinger, "Spite or Spirit: Jonathan Edwards on the Imprecatory Language in the Psalms," *Westminster Theological Journal* 77, No. 1 (Spring 2015): 53–69; David P. Barshinger and Douglas A. Sweeney, *Jonathan Edwards and Scripture: Biblical Exegesis in British North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018); Philip Smith, "'A Shadow of Death' Jonathan Edwards and the Book of Job," *Jonathan Edwards Studies* 8, No. 2 (2018): 96–114; Drew Hunter, "Hebrews and the Typology of Jonathan Edwards," *Themelios* 44, No. 2 (August 2019): 339–352; Ricky F. Njoto "The Lord's Supper in the Hands of a Sensitive Preacher: The Bible in Edwards' Sermons on 1 Corinthians 10," *Jonathan Edwards Studies* 9, No. 2 (2019): 28–59; Joseph T. Cochran, "Jonathan Edwards's Harmonic Interpretation of Hebrews 12:22–24," *Jonathan Edwards Studies* 10, No. 1 (2020): 20–47.

© 2025 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525560952 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647560953

Another interpretive methodology Edwards employed included viewing redemptive history as a hermeneutical key to Scripture. Thirty sermons on *A History of the Work of Redemption* revealed how Edwards harnessed this interpretive framework for a biblical and historical theology. In reference to his historical, exegetical, and theological account of redemptive history, Douglas Sweeney says:

> Edwards read most of Scripture in relation to its overarching story of redemption in and through the secular world. *Some contend that this was his most prevalent exegetical move*, one that shaped all other ways he handled holy writ (informing his instincts as to the "plain" sense, the contours of the canon, the importance of preaching Christ from nearly all its nook and crannies, and the purpose of its pedagogy).[7]

One exemplar of renewed engagement in Edwards's exegetical practices and a proponent for this particular technique is David Barshinger. He defends Edwards's redemptive-historical interpretation of Scripture with his study, *Jonathan Edwards and the Psalms*. Barshinger convincingly demonstrates that Edwards employed a redemptive-historical interpretive strategy for the book of Psalms. Though this was one technique Edwards used to approach exegesis, it certainly was not his only technique.[8]

Douglas A. Sweeney presents four models or habits for Edwards's exegesis in his seminal work, *Edwards the Exegete*. In his "stereoscopic study" of Edwards's exegesis he presents these four models successively and pairs them with case studies. These four habits are (1) canonical, (2) typological, (3) redemptive-historical, and (4) pedagogical. Sweeney's study proved to be so productive that an edited compendium by Barshinger and Sweeney followed in which fourteen experts of Edwards studies provided further case studies on his exegetical habits. Barshinger explains in the introduction to *Jonathan Edwards and Scripture* that such an approach "lets Edwards speak for himself. It also avoids the impulse of forcing contemporary categories on him, instead acknowledging one of the differences between his world and ours." Delving into Edwards's notebooks, sermons, and treatises does permit him to speak for himself. Yet, in order for such a project to be productive, clear objectives and constraints must be set.[9]

---

7 Sweeney, *Edwards the Exegete*, 138, emphasis mine.

8 David Barshinger, *Jonathan Edwards and the Psalms: A Redemptive-Historical Vision of Scripture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 5, 26.

9 Regarding Sweeney's stereoscopic approach, he says: "By viewing Edwards on the canon in this stereoscopic way—pairing his work on canonicity with an instance of his habit of reading individual Scripture texts in light of the whole canon—we enhance our estimation of the most basic, common form of his interpretation of Scripture, laying a theological groundwork for our study of some other forms of exegesis later." Sweeney, *Edwards the Exegete*, 55. *Jonathan Edwards and Scripture*, 7.

© 2025 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525560952 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647560953

One opportunity for such an exercise exists with the Epistle to the Hebrews. Edwards preached thirty-eight sermons on Hebrews. He referenced this epistle at least 1,805 times across his 73 volume corpus. There are 110 cross references to Hebrews across the Old and New Testament of the "Blank Bible" and 105 Hebrews entries in the "Blank Bible." There are 49 cross references to Hebrews in "Notes on Scripture" and 14 Hebrews entries in "Notes on Scripture." There are 24 references to Hebrews in his "Typology Notebooks." Suffice to say this epistle provides ample textual evidence to re-examine Edwards's exegetical methodology. This signature New Testament epistle also welcomes more opportunity to induce a richer understanding of Edwards's exegesis. Thus, this study presents an argument for Edwards's exegesis of Hebrews.[10]

The Hebrews 12:22–24 Sermon Series

The Connecticut River Valley revival occurred from 1734–35. Northampton, a frontier town on the margin of the British colonial Atlantic World, emerged from anonymity because of Edwards's account of the revival. He published *A Faithful Narrative* in 1737 from London. It had two London printings before its third printing and first publication in Boston in 1738. As revival enthusiasm declined, Edwards devoted his energy to studying patterns of revival. A number of "Miscellanies" entries written during the last half of the 1730s indicated his interest in revival patterns, or what he referred to as "effusions of the Holy Spirit" throughout his sermon series on *A History of the Work of Redemption*. Edwards envisioned turning this 1739 sermon series into a treatise that fused a philosophy of history and biblical theology into a singular presentation on the work of redemption.[11]

---

10 This number is based on a "Quick Search" for "Heb" in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* (edwards.yale.edu/archive?path=aHR0cDovL2Vkd2FyZHMueWFsZS5lZHUvY2dpLWJpbi9uZXdwaGlsby9zaG93cmVzdF8/a3dpYy42LjEuMTI3MjUuMC45OS53amVv, accessed February, 20, 2020).

11 See the following "Miscellanies" entries for Edwards's interest in revival: "Miscellanies" No. 695 "Perseverance," *WJE*, 18:276–281; No. 703 "Sin Against the Holy Ghost," *WJE*, 18:309–314; No. 705 "Free Grace. Justification," *WJE*, 18:321; No. 706 "Sin Against the Holy Ghost: Why Unpardonable," *WJE*, 18:321–330; No. 707 "Sin Against the Holy Ghost" *WJE*, 18:330–332; No. 711 "Perseverance," *WJE*, 18:340–41; No. 712 "Justification. Faith. Moral and Natural Suitableness," *WJE*, 18:341–342; No. 713 "Infinite Evil of Sin. Worthlessness of Our Holiness. Free Grace. Justification," *WJE*, 18:343–344; No. 714 "Free Grace. Justification by Faith Alone," *WJE*, 18:344–346; No. 722 "Visible Church," *WJE*, 18:351; No. 724 "Preparatory Work," *WJE*, 18:352; No. 726 "Perseverance," *WJE*, 18:352–353; No. 729 "Perseverance," *WJE*, 18:353–357; No. 734 "Preparatory Work," *WJE*, 18:359; No. 750 "Perseverance," *WJE*, 18:398; No. 755 "Perseverance," *WJE*, 18:403–404; No. 757 "Justification by Faith Alone," *WJE*, 18:404–405; No. 758 "Dispensations. Testaments. Justification by Faith Alone," *WJE*, 18:405; No. 763 "Absolute Decrees. Sincerity of God's Invitations," *WJE*, 18:409–410; No. 773 "Perse-

© 2025 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525560952 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647560953

In April and May of 1740, Edwards preached eight sermons on Hebrews 12:22–24. He offered these sermons as his most extensive treatment of a passage from Hebrews. Ultimately, this series constituted eight of the thirty-eight sermons Edwards preached from this epistle, which comprised approximately 20 percent of his Hebrews exposition. Edwards put a premium value on the doctrinal capital that Hebrews 12:22–24 afforded his congregation, and he used this content to interact with doctrinal themes throughout Hebrews.[12]

He left inklings of his desire to preach this series in the conclusion of "Sermon Seven" in *A History of the Work of Redemption*. David had taken the city of Jerusalem and established it as his capital. Edwards believed that "this city of Jerusalem is … the greatest type of the church of Christ in all the Old Testament." He derived evidence from historical events for this claim to typological supremacy. Important aspects of God's mission to redeem the church took place in Jerusalem, which was a historically sacred space for the church. The church first gathered and met there

---

verance," *WJE*, 18:422–424; No. 774 "Perseverance," *WJE*, 18:424–425; No. 780 Justification," *WJE*, 18:449–450; No. 783 "Justification," *WJE*, 18:466; No. 790 "Signs of Godliness," *WJE*, 18:474–488; No. 792. "Justification," *WJE*, 18:495; No. 793. "Justification," *WJE*, 18:495; No. 794 "Christ's Righteousness. Justification," *WJE*, 18:496; No. 795 "Condition of Salvation. Holy Life. Perseverance," *WJE*, 18:496–497; No. 799 "Perseverance," *WJE*, 18:498–500; No. 800 "Signs of Godliness," *WJE*, 18:500–501; No. 807 "Work of Redemption the Greatest of God's Work," *WJE*, 18:510; No. 808 "Justification by Faith Alone. Perseverance of Faith," *WJE*, 510–512; No. 814 "Progress of Redemption," *WJE*, 18:523–525; No. 818 "Grace, How a Principle in the Heart," *WJE*, 18:528–530; No. 819 "How Evangelical Obedience influences in the Affairs of Justification," *WJE*, 18:530–531; No. 820 "Justification," *WJE*, 18:531; No. 823 "Perseverance," *WJE*, 18:534–355; No. 825 "Covenant of Grace and Redemption," *WJE*, 18:536–537; No. 829 "Justification," *WJE*, 18:539–540; No. 831 "Justification by Faith," *WJE*, 18:543–546. Also see Avihu Zakai, *Jonathan Edwards's Philosophy of History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003). In the same reply to the trustees of the College of New Jersey, Edwards discussed his intention to write *A History of the Work of Redemption*: "I have had on my mind and heart (which I long ago began, not with any view to publication) a great work, which I call *A History of the Work of Redemption*, a body of divinity in an entire new method, being thrown into the form of an history, considering the affair of Christian theology, as the whole of it, in each part, stands in reference to the great work of redemption by Jesus Christ; which I suppose is to be the grand design of all God's designs, and the *summum* and *ultimum* of all the divine operations and degrees; particularly considering all parts of the grand scheme in their historical order." *The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 16, Letters and Personal Writings*, ed. George S. Claghorn (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 727–728. Later John Erskine convinced Jonathan Edwards Jr. to have *A History of the Work of Redemption* published in Scotland. The two collaborated to edit Edwards's sermons and bring them to publication in 1774. For an account of the publication of this work see Jonathan Yeager's study *Jonathan Edwards and Transatlantic Print Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 117–120.

12 Cf. *Sermons by Jonathan Edwards on the Church, Volume 1: How Christian Are Come to Mt. Sion*, ed. Kenneth P. Minkema, R. Craig Woods, and Thomas Koontz, with an introduction by Wilson H. Kimnach (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2019).

© 2025 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525560952 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647560953

after Christ's resurrection, and it was there that the Holy Spirit poured out on the day of Pentecost. He concluded "Sermon Seven" with: "Thus God chose Mount Sion when the gospel was to be sounded forth as the law had been from Mount Sinai." This notable allusion to Hebrews 12:22 along with the marginal notation to "enlarge on this comparison more fully" in his sermon notebook for "Sermon Seven" indicated Edwards's future intent to preach this series. The Hebrews 12:22–24 series preached in the spring of 1740 was this enlargement. In fact, though this series was not truly part of *A History of the Work of Redemption*, it is very interesting that the first sermon included Edwards's notational marker for "Redemption." The presence of this symbol may indicate that Edwards intended to include at least some of this content in his "great work" on *A History of The Work of Redemption*.[13]

These eight sermons revealed how Edwards employed redemptive history to elucidate key doctrines of systematic theology. This series demonstrated that the history of redemption functioned as an optimal way to convey the doctrines of heaven and Angelology (Sermon 545), ecclesiology (Sermon 546), Trinitarianism (Sermon 547), anthropology (Sermon 548), covenant (Sermon 549), and atonement (Sermon 550). Edwards marshaled Hebrews 12:22–24 to stimulate his congregation's understanding of the relationship between redemption history and vital doctrines of the Christian faith, so that they might recognize who God is, the great end to which he works, and their role in redemptive history. Thus, his Northampton congregation functioned as a secular and militant ectype for the archetype of the heavenly and triumphant church. As a type, the church in Northampton shadowed forth the beautiful, true, and better reality of its antitype, the new Jerusalem.

Of course, this redemptive-historical and systematic study could not have been achieved had Edwards not first championed a harmonious understanding of the Old and New Testament. All his biblical-theological and systematic work was undergirded by his ability to negotiate continuities and discontinuities between the two testaments. Edwards had an uncanny knack for coherently harmonizing the Old and New Testament. This habit became the lynchpin that held his biblical and systematic theology together in the Epistle to the Hebrews. The Hebrews 12:22–24 sermon series represented Edwards's program for interpreting the rest of Hebrews. For this reason, nearly all of the chapters in this study contain a discussion of one of the sermons from this series. The remainder of this study unpacks how Edwards practiced a harmonic interpretation of Hebrews through the course of his life.

13 These comments about Jerusalem should resonate with anyone familiar with the four-fold sense of Scripture interpretation: literal-historical, allegorical, tropological, and anagogical. "Sermon Seven," in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 9, A History of the Work of Redemption*, ed. John F. Wilson (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1989), 213, n. 1.

© 2025 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525560952 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647560953

A Harmonic Interpretation of Hebrews

The sermon series on Hebrews 12:22–24 demonstrated his attention to redemption history. This series grounded the force of the text on a call to respond to God's great work of redemption. Yet, the rich theological commentary in this series revealed his acumen with doctrine. As he approached Hebrews, Edwards integrated exegetical study, biblical theology, systematic theology, and practical theology to orient the church into an encounter with God. He utilized Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience as sources for understanding God *qua* Triune, the Bible *qua* Scripture, and himself *qua* image of God. He employed the canon, creed, and culture as guides for connecting to the Creator. He made these corollaries defensible amid his intellectual context, and he did so by reading Scripture and preaching sermons as an encounter with God, just as the precritical, Reformed tradition supposed.[14]

Edwards's harmonious view of Scripture facilitated the integration of exegetical and theological study with rational and empirical thought. His ability to harmonize the Old and New Testament enlivened the study of Hebrews. The argument and contribution of this study is that Edwards employed a harmonic interpretive methodology for the Epistle to the Hebrews. His notebooks, sermons, and treatises treated Hebrews as a theological tome, which presented a coherent story across both testaments. In order for Edwards to properly construe Hebrews, he approached this text as one who had mastered the interpretation of vast portions of Israel's story; he reoriented that story in light of his mastery of interpreting Jesus's story in the gospels; and, finally, he appropriated his harmonic strategy to reconcile these two testament's chief storylines—the one of Israel and the one of Jesus—in order to instruct the church in the biblical and systematic doctrines contained in Hebrews.

His harmonic strategy for interpreting Hebrews was built on three principles. First, Edwards presented how the Old Testament prophecies were fulfilled in the person and work of Jesus Christ; Hebrews addressed many of these prophecies, which played a fundamental role in the argument of this epistle. Second, Edwards typologically interpreted the Old Testament; as he engaged in this practice, Hebrews invited him ample opportunity to typologically engage the text. Third, Edwards harmonized Christian living and doctrine found in both testaments; Hebrews again had choice passages demonstrating this harmony. Thus, Hebrews is a remarkable case-study for demonstrating Edwards's particular kind of canonical exegesis, which I have dubbed harmonic exegesis. This study proffers that the harmonic

14 Steinmetz, "Superiority of Pre-critical Exegesis" in *Taking the Long View*, 1–14; Craig A. Carter, *Interpreting Scripture with the Great Tradition: Recovering the Genius of Premodern Exegesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018), 32; John Webster, *Holy Scripture: A Dogmatic Sketch* (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 72.

© 2025 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525560952 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647560953

habit of exegesis was the dominant method Edwards exercised when interpreting Hebrews.[15]

Careful, biblical, and theologically thick interpretation were hallmarks of Edwards. Conrad Cherry called Edwards "a man of the book" who "turned to the Bible of both testaments as the authoritative source of his critical and constructive reflections." He continued:

> His sermons, even his most revivalistic ones, were carefully constructed monuments to biblical exegesis, as they followed the tripartite scheme of clarification of biblical text, elaboration of doctrine implicit in the text, and application of text and doctrine to the lives of his hearers.[16]

An analysis of Edwards's interpretive study of Hebrews demonstrates the accuracy of Cherry's assessment and how worthy Edwards's thought is for the task of theological retrieval. Edwards regarded theology as a task, which required careful study, employing both reason and revelation. Thus, there is a beautiful harmony and coherence between Edwards's philosophical, theological, and scriptural reflections. For not only did Edwards perceive harmony across the canon of Scripture, but he also testified to the harmony between nature and revelation. In fact, Edwards grounded reality in both a harmonious ontology of relations, as well as an active functional ontology, all of which had epistemological consequences for how the human mind functions and reasons. Yet, as E. Brooks Holifield put it, "any adequate theology required a revelation above the capacity of reason." Hence, Edwards prioritized God's revelation in Scripture as the grounds for theology, and theology became more coherent as scriptural exegesis remained harmonious between the two testaments.[17]

Edwards's interpretation of the Epistle to the Hebrews is accessible and ought to be accessed. Since he is arguably the most illustrious American theologian, with over 73 volumes of material, there is much material with which to test this thesis concerning Edwards's interpretation of this epistle. Furthermore, this study demonstrates *ressourcement* of Edwards is a fruitful endeavor. As this work will demonstrate, his exegesis benefits interpreters today. Those who wish to explore

---

15 See Sweeney, *Edwards the Exegete*, chapters 3, 4, and 6. Joseph T. Cochran, "Jonathan Edwards's Harmonic Interpretation of Hebrew 12:22–24," *Jonathan Edwards Studies* 10, No. 1 (2020): 20–47.

16 Conrad Cherry, "Symbols of Spiritual Truth: Jonathan Edwards as Biblical Interpreter," *Interpretation* 39, No. 3 (July 1985): 263, 264.

17 On Edwards's harmonious ontology of relations, see Joseph T. Cochran, "Jonathan Edwards and His World of Harmony," *Jonathan Edwards Studies* 13, Nos. 1–2 (2023): 23–44. Chapter two of this monograph has adapted and integrated this research into it. E. Brooks Holifield, *Theology in America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 108.

© 2025 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525560952 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647560953

Edwards's thought but do not quite know how to access it will find much support and guidance from this project.[18]

Overview of Chapters

This study adds to the growing body of literature examining Jonathan Edwards's exegesis. Its structure is topically arranged based on major doctrinal themes that demonstrate Edwards's harmonic approach to interpreting Hebrews. This approach was selected rather than a *lectio continua* approach because many of these themes are repeated through the course of this epistle. Thus, it is more fitting to cull this data and organize it thematically so as to avoid repetition and to make the material more accessible for readers who wish to do quick dips into selected content on Edwards and Hebrews.

Chapter 1 explores the world of Hebrews in the world of Edwards. It begins with an introduction and tour of the corpus of Edwards, which is followed by summarizing the major interlocutors with which Edwards engaged in his study of Hebrews. This chapter concludes with reflection on the value of Hebrews in the world of Edwards, examining introductory aspects to Hebrews such as how Edwards and his interlocutors viewed this book's authorship, recipients, and its major thematic value for readers in the eighteenth century.

Chapter 2 presents the purpose of harmony in the world of Edwards. This chapter associates the significance of harmony in his natural philosophy and theology to its purpose as an exegetical habit. By examining Edwards's earliest jottings on philosophy in his commonplace notebooks, his rich harmonious ontology of relations is recovered, which provides the philosophical and theological framework for his harmonic exegesis. As this discussion continues, the extant writings of Edwards, which were to be used in his forthcoming "great work," *The Harmony of the Old and New Testament*, is understood as not just a treatise but a presentation of three vital exegetical principles for inhabiting the world of the canon and integrating it into redemption history.

---

18 The history of interpretation is a rich field to plumb. Two compendiums of historical and theological retrieval include R. Michael Allen, ed, *Theological Commentary: Evangelical Perspectives* (New York: T&T Clark, 2011) and Jon C. Laansma and Daniel J. Treier, eds., *Christology, Hermeneutics and Hebrews: Profiles from the History of Interpretation* (New York: T&T Clark, 2012). For more on theological retrieval see W. R. Michael Allen and Scott R. Swain, *Reformed Catholicity: The Promise of Retrieval for Theology and Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2015); David Buschart and Kent D. Eilers, *Theology as Retrieval: Receiving the Past, Renewing the Church* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2015); Kevin J. Vanhoozer and Daniel J. Treier, *Theology and the Mirror of Scripture: A Mere Evangelical Account* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2015); Gavin Ortlund, *Theological Retrieval for Evangelicals: Why We Need Our Past to Have a Future* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2019).

© 2025 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525560952 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647560953

This chapter then introduces the key unpublished manuscripts that provide substantive evidence for Jonathan Edwards's harmonic interpretation of the Bible. These manuscripts include "Miscellanies" Nos. 891, 922, 1067, 1068, 1069, and the "Harmony Notebooks." "Miscellanies" Nos. 891, 922, 1067, and 1068 are vital for conceptualizing the first habit of harmonic interpretation, the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy in the New Testament. The second habit of harmonic interpretation, typological fulfillment of the Old Testament in the New Testament, relies upon "Miscellanies" No. 1069. The "Harmony Notebooks" provide guides to harmonizing the genius and spirit of the doctrine and precepts of Scripture from the Old Testament through the New Testament, which is the third habit of harmonic interpretation. The remaining chapters of *Jonathan Edwards and Hebrews* demonstrate how these three habits of harmonic interpretation were the predominant interpretive methodology Jonathan Edwards employed to interpret the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Chapter 3 enhances our understanding of Hebrews as a piece of God's divine revelation. This chapter perceives the harmony and typology of divine revelation while also noting the function of human affections in relation to divine revelation. This chapter distinguishes Edwards's use of the *prisca theologia* and his philosophy of history. It proceeds to articulate the function of prophetic fulfillment and typology in recounting the history of redemption. "Miscellanies" No. 333 and "Blank Bible" entries for Hebrews 1:6, Hebrews 2:6, and Hebrews 3:6–4:11 develop crucial corollaries with the Old Testament Psalms 97, 8, and 96, respectively, to demonstrate how Hebrews harmonized the Old and New Testament. An introduction to the immediate history of typology in the Puritan tradition segues into interaction with choice selections of Edwards's "Typological Notebooks." These notebook selections retrieve Old Testament types fulfilled in the New Testament, which are explicated by Hebrews. Furthermore, a selection of sermons—"Christ's Sacrifice", a sermon on Hebrews 9:12 (No. 20); his sermon series on Hebrews 12:22–24, "How Christian Are Come to Mt. Sion"; and an unpublished Stockbridge sermon on Hebrews 3:7–4:11, along with corresponding comments in the "Blank Bible" and "Notes on Scripture" for each sermon—illustrate Edwards's employment of typology for his harmonic interpretation of Hebrews. Finally, the sermons of Edwards on "The Importance and Advantage of a Thorough Knowledge of Divine Truth", "Heeding the Word, and Losing It", and "Blank Bible" entry on Hebrews 2:1 explain how this epistle invites readers to access and respond to divine revelation.

Chapter 4 studies the doctrines of creation and creatures in Hebrews by examining creation first, followed by God's two rational creatures, angels and humans. This chapter looks at the use of Hebrews in the dissertation *Concerning the End for Which God Made the World*, which is followed by examining his Sermon on Hebrews 2:7–8 (No. 699) and accompanying "Blank Bible" entries for Hebrews 2:7 and Hebrews 2:8. These texts recover Edwards's understanding of a second pur-

© 2025 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525560952 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647560953

pose for God's creation, which is to display the Father's joy and delight in his Son. Chapter 4 continues by consulting a series of "Miscellanies" covering Edwards's speculative thought on the function, fall, and confirmation of the angels. His public views on the angels are confirmed by the sermon, "How Christians Are Come to an Innumerable Company of Angels." A series of sermons and "Blank Bible" entries assist in comprehending his understanding of human creatures. Sermon on Hebrews 12:29b (No. 670), Sermon on Hebrews 2:15 (No. 907) and "Blank Bible" entry on Hebrews 2:11 illuminate some of the basic assumptions of the Creator/creature distinction. "How Christians Are Come to the Spirits of Just Men Made Perfect" and corresponding "Blank Bible" entries, as well as a few "Harmony Notebooks" entries augment this understanding of human anthropology.

Chapter 5 examines the Trinity in Hebrews. This chapter begins by briskly providing an overview of the Trinitarian thought of Edwards from "Miscellanies" No. 96, "Discourse on the Trinity", and chapter 3 of "Treatise on Grace." The sermon "God Is a Consuming Fire" demonstrates his understanding of the real attributes of Christ and the Holy Spirit. "How Christians Are Come to God the Judge of All" introduces the distinction Edwards made between the Father as judge and the Son as mediator. Christological typology is then explored by accounting for his Noahic, Melchizedekian, and tabernacle typology. This is followed by his account of Spirit typology. Noahic typology depended on Hebrews 11:7. Sermon on Hebrews 11:7 (No. 796), "Notes on Scripture" No. 297, "Blank Bible" entry on Hebrews 11:7, and "Miscellanies" No. 1069 framed out Noahic typology for Edwards. Melchizedekian typology emerged from "Types of the Messiah", "Shadows of Divine Images" No. 132, and "Blank Bible" entries Hebrews 4:14, Hebrews 7:3, and Hebrews 7:16. Spirit typology is derived from "Images of Divine Things", "Harmony Notebooks", "Discourse on the Trinity", and "Treatise on Grace."

Chapter 6 covers the doctrine of redemption in Hebrews. This chapter first approaches the doctrine of redemption through the covenant theology of Edwards. "Miscellanies" No. 1062 introduced the covenant of redemption. Then this chapter develops his covenant theology chronologically across his "Miscellanies." Sermon on Hebrews 9:15–16 (No. 534) plays a vital role in illustrating the distinction between the covenant of redemption and the covenant of grace in his covenant theology. The Hebrews 12:22–24 sermon on "How Christians Are Come to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant", also illuminates the significance of covenant theology for the doctrine of redemption. This chapter then discusses atonement theory. The two views of the atonement prominent in his interpretation of Hebrews are penal-substitution and satisfaction. The atonement theory of Edwards is organized around his early Sermon on Hebrews 9:12 (No. 20), called "Christ's Sacrifice" and a study of Psalm 40 and Hebrews 10:15. However, other significant sermons come into play for explicating his atonement theory. They include Sermon on Hebrews 9:13–14 (No. 495) "Christ's Sacrifice Made Acceptable" and "How Christians Are Come to

© 2025 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525560952 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647560953

the Blood of Sprinkling." Likewise, these sermons have corresponding entries in the "Blank Bible" or "Notes on Scripture", and some of these entries are also tagged to the "Miscellanies."

Chapter 7 presents Edwards's understanding of justification in Hebrews. The first section of this chapter sets the context in which Edwards defended his view of the doctrine of justification and introduces two of his early works on the subject: his Masters Quaestio (1723) and his early published discourse, *Justification by Faith Alone* (1738). The doctrine of union with Christ is presented in Sermon on Hebrews 2:16 (No. 797), which has an accompanying entry in the "Blank Bible." "Blank Bible" entries Hebrews 3:1 and Hebrews 3:14 also address union with Christ. His Sermon on Hebrews 2:16 (No. 797) and Sermon on Hebrews 6:7 (No. 854), plus entries in the "Blank Bible" on Hebrews 6:12, Hebrews 6:15, and Hebrews 6:19, and his "Miscellanies" No. 1280 on "Justification" all represent his views on justification by Christ. The sermon "Persevering Faith" and "Blank Bible" entries on Hebrews 10:37, Hebrews 10:38, Hebrews 11:5–6, and Hebrews 11:6 discuss the enduring subject of perseverance in Christ. This chapter concludes by examining an ecology of salvation in his Sermon on Hebrews 6:7 (No. 854). This exposition requires returning to *Justification by Faith Alone* to examine the role of instrumentality in the doctrine of justification.

Chapter 8 approaches the matter of spiritual living in Hebrews. This chapter begins by developing Edwards's ethical vision in contrast to that of the benevolism of the British moral philosophers contemporaneous to him. *The Nature of True Virtue* and "Charity and Its Fruits" are two key texts for demonstrating Edwards's ethic and connecting it to his thought on spiritual living. Hebrews 2:10 is a pivotal text in *The Nature of True Virtue*. Similarly, Hebrews 13:8 is a valuable Scripture related to "Charity and Its Fruits." This chapter then turns to discuss four critical aspects of the doctrine of spiritual living in the thought of Edwards on Hebrews. Those four aspects include mimesis, the beatific vision, the journey to heaven, and the ecology of spiritual living. A Sermon on Hebrews 12:2–3 (No. 256) modelled the role mimesis played in spiritual living. Language of perception in Edwards's Sermon on Hebrews 12:14 (No. 285) expressed the role of the beatific vision for godliness. Edwards cast the Christian life as a travel narrative to heaven in a Sermon on Hebrews 11:13–14 (No. 299). Finally, just as Edwards developed an ecology of justification, he also provided an ecology of spiritual living from the second preaching unit of Sermon on Hebrews 6:7 (No. 854) and Sermon on Hebrews 6:8 (No. 858).

Chapter 9 accounts for Hebrew's depiction of the church. "How Christians Are Come to the General Assembly of the Church of the Firstborn Witness in Heaven" and entries on Hebrews 12:22–24, Hebrews 12:23, and Hebrews 13:14 in the "Blank Bible" as well as "Notes on Scripture" No. 289 on Hebrews 13:12–14 and the "Harmony and Genius Notebook" entry on Numbers 14:4, 24 discuss the doctrine of

© 2025 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525560952 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647560953

the church, militant and triumphant. The topic of apostasy is covered by examining Edwards's expositional work on Hebrews 6:8 as well as his notebook entries on the "Warning Passages" in Hebrews. Thus, "Blank Bible" and "Notes on Scripture" entries on Hebrews 6, 8, and 10; "Miscellanies" Nos. 475, 689, 703; and "Images" No. 188 and "Scriptures" No. 10 in "Images of Divine Things" attend to the matter of apostasy. Reflections on the church pastor and his flock are found in the sermons "The Great Concern of a Watchman for Souls" and "God's People Should Remember Them That Have Been Their Ministers"—each of which have parallel entries in "Blank Bible" entries on Hebrews 13:17 and Hebrews 13:7–8, respectively.

Chapter 10 concludes this study by approaching matters regarding the doctrine of last things in Hebrews. Sermon on Hebrews 9:28 (No. 957) and accompanying notes from the "Blank Bible" and "Notes on Scripture" present material on the second coming. Edwards's sermons on "The Importance of a Future State" and his "Blank Bible" entry on Hebrews 3:13 cover future judgment. To explore the topic of hell this study turns to select "Miscellanies" and his Sermon on Hebrews 2:3. The wealth of material on heaven focuses on the sermon "How Christians Are Come to the Heavenly Jerusalem" and Sermon on Hebrews 11:16a (No. 1105). Corresponding material in the "Blank Bible" and other "Blank Bible" entries on Hebrews 2:5, Hebrews 8:5, Hebrews 9:1, and Hebrews 9:11 build out more of his perspective on heaven.

This book concludes with a review of the argument for each chapter as well as the evidence which supported that argument. The conclusion includes a discussion on the grammar of the world and Word, logic of philosophy and theology, and rhetoric of retrieval and apologetics in his thought. Edwards employed this grammar, logic, and rhetoric to fashion a harmonious world and harmonize the Old and New Testament. The harmonic interpretive techniques are rehearsed one last time to demonstrate a methodological hermeneutic that becomes apparent over the course of this study.

Contribution

Scholars have studied general and select issues on the exegesis of Edwards. Likewise, they have studied his understanding of various doctrines. This work will certainly consult these secondary interpretations—correcting, confirming, and expanding on the literature which preceded this work. This project also devotes considerable energy towards primary sources as the overview indicates. References to Hebrews will be consulted across his corpus of notebooks, correspondence, sermons, and treatises, thus presenting the most thorough elucidation of Edwards's interpretation of Hebrews. No one has performed a study of Edwards's interpretation of Hebrews. While others like Sweeney, Nichols, and Barshinger have observed Edwards's use of

© 2025 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525560952 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647560953

canonical exegesis, until now no one has demonstrated a case study of how Edwards's particular kind of canonical exegesis worked, nor has anyone differentiated his method of canonical exegesis as singularly unique and worthy of its own neologism, harmonic exegesis.

This study consults both the unpublished and published sermons of Edwards on Hebrews. The unpublished sermon books of Edwards are often overlooked in Edwards studies. A feature of this study includes drawing attention to this valuable sermonic literature, which conceptualizes his interpretive methodology in the accessible format with which it was delivered to his congregation. Twelve of the thirty-eight sermons on Hebrews located in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University have been unavailable online. As a result, largely they have gone overlooked. I am grateful to the Jonathan Edwards Center at Yale, particularly Kenneth Minkema and Adriaan Neele, who have graciously given me access to these sermons.[19]

Interaction with Edwards's interpretation of Hebrews includes corollaries between Edwards and other pre-modern interpreters. Interlocutors to be discussed in chapter 1 and who will appear repeatedly throughout the rest of this study include: John Owen, Matthew Poole, Philip Doddridge, and Richard Kidder, among others.

19 Much of Edwards's corpus is available online at yale.edwards.edu, but some material is not, such as these unpublished sermons on Hebrews listed by Scripture text followed by sermon number: Sermon on Heb. 5:7–9 (No. 631); Sermon on Heb. 12:29b (No. 670); Sermon on Heb. 2:3 (693h); Sermon on Heb. 2:7–8 (No. 699); Sermon on Heb. 13:17 (No. 707); Sermon on Heb. 11:7 (No. 796); Sermon on Heb. 2:16 (No. 797); Sermon on Heb. 11:16a (No. 1009); Sermon on Heb. 6:20 (No. 1043); Sermon on Heb. 11:16b (No. 1105); Sermon on Heb. 3:7–[4]:11 (No. 1187).

© 2025 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525560952 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647560953

1. The World of Hebrews

Before delving into Edwards's interpretation of Hebrews, it is vital to become oriented with the works of Edwards and the world of Hebrews. This chapter orients readers to Edwards's vast corpus, introducing the kinds of texts that he wrote and the role of Hebrews in each of those texts. It then turns to key conversation partners Edwards invited into his study of Hebrews. After all, there were key interpreters of Hebrews Edwards consulted as reliable interlocutors for this epistle. Finally, this chapter notes introductory aspects of Hebrews—including what Edwards thought of its authorship, recipients, date, and key components of the text that interested him.

Navigating the Works of Edwards for the Study of Hebrews

Edwards wrote vigorously producing thousands of pages of material over the course of his life. Altogether, the Yale University Press critical edition of his works is 26 volumes in print, and edwards.yale.edu is home to an additional 47 volumes of digital content, all critically edited by staff and volunteers from the Global Jonathan Edwards Centers. These writings include personal notebooks of speculative research and theological reflection, sermon notebooks, letters and correspondence, and manuscripts of published treatises on occasional subjects. It is beneficial to be familiar with the writings Edwards produced, their function, and what kind of consideration should be given to the medium of these writings, for there is a difference in how we ought to treat the speculative thoughts in a private notebook versus what Edwards might have preached publicly to his congregation in Northampton or published to a transatlantic audience with a bookseller in Boston or London.

The nature of his notebooks had meaning to him. For instance, "Images of Divine Things" collected typological observations from history, Scripture, and nature—indicating the value Edwards placed on typology. His notebooks on natural philosophy collected observations on the external world and how the senses perceived this world and integrated it into the intellect. These notebooks developed thoughts on epistemology and ontology. Another example of one of his notebooks is "Notes on the Apocalypse", which included speculative observations on the book of Revelation.

The medium of his writings had a bearing on how readers ought to privilege those writings. For instance, published treatises ought to be privileged over notebooks, for these were his final and authorized thoughts on matters. They were

© 2025 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525560952 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647560953

subject to correction or development only if Edwards chose to do so in later editions of these publications. On the other hand—his correspondence, various commonplace notebooks, and unpublished sermon notebooks consisted of Edwards's speculative thought. These texts were private, semi-public, or public working documents—where his ideas were tested on colleagues and congregants. Much of this content later appeared in his published works, though this material underwent revision and refinement from his many editors through the centuries. Some of his notebooks were drafts of forthcoming manuscripts. Nonetheless, they were *drafts*, and the ideas contained in these drafts were subject to correction and change.

All this considered, it is fitting to orient readers to these writings before delving too deeply into his interpretation of Hebrews. It is easy for the uninitiated to get lost in his vast corpus, and it is somewhat challenging, even dangerous, to retrieve this literature without understanding the distinctions between one kind of document from another. The first collection of media introduced here are interconnected documents, and they are treated in the following successive order: "The Catalogue of Reading", "Account Book", "Blank Bible", "Notes on Scripture", "Typological Writings", and "Miscellanies." Special attention is given to these sources' explicit references to Hebrews. A caveat should be added. Edwards did not always cite Hebrews in his writings. For instance, Edwards referred to Melchizedek nine times in the "Miscellanies" No. 1069 "Types of the Messiah." All instances of Melchizedek cite Psalm 110 rather than Hebrews. Nonetheless, all his thought on Melchizedek in this notebook is pertinent for exacting his typological interpretation of this figure in Hebrews. Still, Edwards cites Hebrews in his writings hundreds of times, and careful attention to these references reveals noteworthy patterns that emerge in his thought about this epistle.[1]

The "Catalogue of Reading" and "Account Book" may seem like peculiar collections today, but these texts were commonplace in the intellectual world of Edwards. The "Catalogue" recorded books that interested Edwards. Either he wished to read these books, wished to acquire them, or he wished to record where he first stumbled across them. Perhaps he accessed a book via Yale's library, or he discovered a title of interest advertised in a broadside or newspaper. Perhaps he stumbled across it

1 Throughout this section, the terms "reference" and "cross-reference" refer to instances Edwards cited Hebrews. His normal shorthand for Hebrews is "Heb" plus the scripture citation, for instance: Heb 1:6, *WJE*, 18:59. Sometimes he referenced multiple chapters and verses in one reference, for instance: Heb 3:7–9, 8–19 and 4:1–3, 6, *WJE*, 20:117. In my count, I distinguish every unique chapter and verse-passage combination, regardless of whether there are multiple references to the same concept in his thought. Thus, there are four instances at *WJE*, 30:117: Heb 3:7–8, Heb 3:8–19, 4:1–3, and 4:6. All data sets are based on searches for both the term "Hebrews" and Edwards's shorthand "Heb."

© 2025 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525560952 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647560953

in a bookseller's store, or one of his trusted booksellers, pastoral colleagues, or his literary agent or printer commended the title to him.[2]

Regardless, the "Catalogue" points readers to interlocutors Edwards found compatible or intriguing. Frequently, books were entered in the "Catalogue" numerous times, the final of which, indicated he had finally purchased the title. Inspiration for the "Catalogue" may have come from the example of Samuel Johnson, a tutor at Yale prior to Edwards. Peter Thuesen has noted that the entry numbers in the "Catalogue" were not original to Edwards but were a later addition. His "Account Book" had a utilitarian function. Edwards recorded books from his library lent to neighbors, congregants, colleagues, and mentees in the "Account Book." It revealed which books he commended to others and documented what works he owned, something the "Catalogue" did not necessarily do.[3]

Edwards's "Catalogue" and "Account Book" contained titles of value to his study of Hebrews. Most notable were his records on Owen's *Exercitations on Hebrews*. In entry No. 681 of the "Catalogue" Edwards indicated interest in Owen's *Exercitations*. According to his "Account Book", he lent volumes three and four to Mr. Cotton Smith in November 1753. Matthew Poole's *Synopsis criticorum aliorumque sacrae scripturae interpretum* in five volumes significantly augmented Edwards's understanding of Scripture and benefited his study of Hebrews as well. He recorded his interest in this title in entry No. 151 of the "Catalogue." Edwards acquired each volume of Philip Doddridge's *The Family Expositor* as it came to publication. He carefully annotated into the "Blank Bible" references to this set. He first referenced *The Family Expositor* in entry No. 290 of the "Catalogue." Entry No. 405 indicated Benjamin Colman gathered interest for a Boston printing of *The Family Expositor* in 1738, and "Catalogue" entry No. 468, dated between February 18, 1744/5 and July 15, 1746, contained an excerpt from the first volume's preface. Edwards lent the third volume on Acts to Mr. Smith Taylor on May 8, 1754. The fourth source that amplified Edwards's study of Hebrews was Richard Kidder's *A Demonstration of the Messias*. Edwards lent this set to Joseph Bellamy in December of 1757.[4]

---

2 Both notebooks are found in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Volume 26, Catalogues of Books*, ed. Peter J. Thuesen (London; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008). For more on the literary world of Jonathan Edwards, see Jonathan Yeager, *Jonathan Edwards and Transatlantic Print Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).

3 Peter J. Thuesen, "The Sources for Edwards's Thought" in *Oxford Handbook of Jonathan Edwards*, ed. by Douglas A. Sweeney and Jan Stievermann (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2021), 72.

4 "Catalogue," *WJE*, 26:304: "[681.] dr owens Exercitations about the Priesthood of X. mention'd in his Expos. on ~~the~~ Hebrews. Chap. 9. 14. p. 384.a. John Owen (1616–83), Independent minister and Puritan theologian, *Exercitations on the Epistle to the Hebrews* …, 4 vols. (London, 1668–84), AB, DC (first 3 vols.). Each folio volume has a different title. "Exercitations about the Priesthood of X" refers to vol. 2, *Exercitations on the Epistle to the Hebrews. Concerning the priesthood of Christ*.… (London, 1674), cited by Owen in vol. 3, *A continuation of the Exposition of the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews*.…

© 2025 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525560952 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647560953

Benjamin Pierpont, brother-in-law to Edwards, gave the "Blank Bible" to him after abandoning Christian ministry in 1730. This unique text included 398 sheets of trimmed foolscap interleaved and hand sewn with pages of a small King James Version of Scripture. This book, unlike his other notebooks, had a tan, leather hardcover. Though Pierpont handcrafted this media and its earliest notes were his,[5] once Edwards received this gift, he devoted the next 28 years to adding 5,500 notes and entries to the "Blank Bible." Steven Stein explained:

> As a synoptic commentary, the "Blank Bible" is filled with highly disparate materials bearing on the understanding, interpretation, and application of the biblical text. No simple summary of the contents is possible, for the commentary ranges widely across textual, linguistic, syntactical, historical, theological, polemical, devotional, and personal issues.[6]

This text was an exegetical treasure trove of his theological interpretation of Scripture. Frequently, the "Blank Bible" functioned as a canonically arranged, annotated bibliography of studies in secondary sources. Books from his "Catalogue" and "Account Book" were cited throughout it. Edwards used the "Blank Bible" as the central hub of personal study, cross-referencing other notebooks, redirecting himself or any pastoral apprentice to entries in "Notes on Scripture" or the "Miscellanies" related to the current entry. Likewise, his other notebooks frequently referred to the "Blank Bible", demonstrating that the heartbeat of Edwards's thought was Scripture.

(London, 1680), p. 384. (Edwards's citation of page "384.a" is a reference to the errors in pagination in Owen's volume.)" "Account Book" entry for November 4, 1753: "Lent to Mr. Cotton smith five books of Commentaries on Scriptures. One on the Prophets one on Ephesians Manton on James & two vols of Owen on Hebrews, Novem 4, 1753." *WJE*, 26:341. "[151.] [Pooles] synopsis on the Apocalypse Matthew Poole (1624–79), Nonconformist biblical scholar, *Synopsis criticorum aliorumque S[acrae] Scripturae interpretum*, 5 vols. (London, 1669–76)." *WJE*, 26:146. "[290.#] Bibliotheca Literaria <mentioned to me formerly by dr Johnson also mentiond by dr Doddridge… Philip Doddridge (1702–51), English Independent minister, *The family expositor; or, A paraphrase and version of the New Testament:with critical notes, and a practical improvement of each section …* , 6 vols. (London, 1739–1756)." *WJE*, 26:177, 203. "[405.†] dr. doddridges Family Expositor of which I have the Proposals for printing by subscription from dr Colman Philip Doddridge (1702–1751), *Family Expositor.*" *WJE*, 26:209. "[67] Lent to mr. Smith Taylor on original sin Doddridge on Acts & Dickinson on the 5 Points. May 8 1754." *WJE*, 26:328. "Kidder, Richard (1634?–1703), bishop of Bath and Wells, *A demonstration of the Messias. In which the truth of the Christian religion is proved especially against the Jews*, 3 vols. (London, 1684–1700)… [74] Decem. 22. 1757. Lent to Mr. Bellamy Bp. Kidder—& 6 Scots Magazines. last received containing the summaries of Political Affairs." *WJE*, 26:335.

5 Note that "Blank Bible" entries on Hebrews 8:4, Hebrews 8:6, Hebrews 8:7, Hebrews 8:8, Hebrews 8:10, Hebrews 8:11, Hebrews 8:12, and Hebrews 8:13 are all in Benjamin Pierpont's hand. These entries do not appear in *WJE*, 24 and are not consulted in this study. See *WJE*, 24:1250.

6 "Blank Bible," *WJE*, 24:23.

© 2025 Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht | Brill Deutschland GmbH
ISBN Print: 9783525560952 — ISBN E-Book: 9783647560953