

Postmodern Interpretation among Chinese Biblical Scholars: Three Case Studies (An abstract)

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This paper studies the interpretative works of three Chinese biblical scholars, Archie Lee, Philip Chia and Yiu-Wing Fung, introducing and analyzing one article by each of them, and examining the postmodern traits of these authors.

In one of Lee's representative studies, he applies cross-textual hermeneutics on Isa. 56-66, reading in it the situation of postcolonial Hong Kong. With his hermeneutical method, Lee treats the biblical text and the reader's situation interchangeably as text and context. With this approach, the Scripture does not hold precedence over any other cultural texts or situations. While Lee never claims to be a postmodern biblical scholar, his method takes us a step closer to postmodern interpretation. One may also want to question his view on the biblical text as Scripture.

In the example taken from Chia's works, Chia investigates Jeremiah and asks two questions: why did God abandon His temple and why did He not give guidance to Jeremiah after the destruction of Jerusalem. Chia answers these questions by reflecting, respectively, on the meta-narrative of God's presence and the hybridity of the prophet's identity. He interprets the temple's destruction as

the deconstruction of the meta-narrative of God's presence among the Jews. At the same time, however, by affirming that God is present through Jesus Christ, Chia actually upholds another meta-narrative, namely, God's presence with man, from Tabernacle times to the New Testament church, and the new heaven and the new earth, in line with traditional biblical theology.

In his book, *Victim and Victimizer*, Fung utilizes Derrida's deconstruction of binary oppositions in his interpretation of Joseph's claim of "God's providence" in his life. In his reading of the biblical narrative, Fung rejects Joseph's claim. That is, Joseph's claim of divine good is actually of the same nature as human evil. In this way Fung exposes the "ugly" side of this traditionally admired figure.

What one can see in these three cases are mild postmodern inclinations. Their works display seriousness rather than playfulness.