

Identity and Idolatry: The Image of God and Its Inversion (New Studies in Biblical Theology)

By Richard Lints



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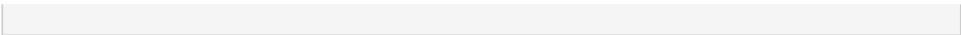
One of Desiring God's Top 15 Books of 2015 "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." (Genesis 1:27) Genesis 1:26-27 has served as the locus of most theological anthropologies in the central Christian tradition. However, Richard Lints observes that too rarely have these verses been understood as conceptually interwoven with the whole of the prologue materials of Genesis 1. The construction of the cosmic temple strongly hints that the "image of God" language serves liturgical functions. Lints argues that "idol" language in the Bible is a conceptual inversion of the "image" language of Genesis 1. These constructs illuminate each other, and clarify the canon's central anthropological concerns. The question of human identity is distinct, though not separate, from the question of human nature; the latter has far too frequently been read into the biblical use of 'image'. Lints shows how the "narrative" of human identity runs from creation (*imago Dei*) to fall (the golden calf/idol, Exodus 32) to redemption (Christ as perfect image, Colossians 1:15-20). The biblical-theological use of image/idol is a thread through the canon that highlights the movements of redemptive history. In the concluding chapters of this New Studies in Biblical Theology volume, Lints interprets the use of idolatry as it emerges in the secular prophets of the nineteenth century, and examines the recent renaissance of interest in idolatry with its conceptual power to explain the "culture of desire." Addressing key issues in biblical theology, the works comprising New Studies in Biblical Theology are creative attempts to help Christians better understand their Bibles. The NSBT series is edited by D. A. Carson, aiming to simultaneously instruct and to edify, to interact with current scholarship and to point the way ahead.



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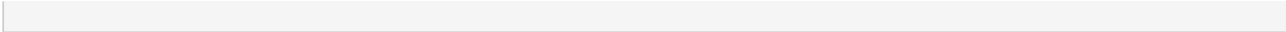
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Editorial Review

Review

"I am grateful that Lints wrote this book, and I commend it to others for a better understanding of this significant issue of the image of God and idolatry. The rich themes of the book have significant practical implications for Christians." (G. K. Beale, Themelios, April 2016)

"In *Identity and Idolatry*, Richard Lints shows himself to be an exceptional thinker who combines the sensitivities of a theologian with that of a philosopher and interpreter of the Bible. He not only speaks of ideas in the abstract but shows how these ideas forge the way we think and act. I recommend this book to all thoughtful Christians." (Tremper Longman III, Robert H. Gundry Professor of Biblical Studies, Westmont College)

"Begin with the *imago Dei*. . . . Work that out across the canon, and you discover that light shines on many topics, not least the nature of idolatry. This book manages to blend some elements of systematic theology with careful biblical theology to produce a study that is wonderfully evocative." (D. A. Carson)

"This is an outstanding read and I heartily recommend it to you. Rather than treating various aspects of human nature as so many other theological anthropologies do (body, soul, spirit, mind, emotions, will, et al.), this is a thorough treatment of human identity from the angles of systematic and biblical theology. It's about who we are versus what we are." (Paul D. Adams, In Christ Jesus, November 29, 2015)

About the Author

Richard Lints (PhD, University of Notre Dame) is the Andrew Mutch Distinguished Professor of Theology and Vice President for Academic Affairs at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. An ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church in America, he is an accomplished church planter and has served in a variety of other pastoral positions. He is a frequent preacher and conference speaker and is on the board of the Gospel Culture Center, serving as its Theologian in Residence. Lints is the author or editor of books such as *Renewing the Evangelical Mission, Progressive and Conservative Religious Ideologies: The Tumultuous Decade of the 1960s*, *Personal Identity in Theological Perspective*, *The Westminster Dictionary of Key Terms in Philosophy and Their Importance in Theology* and *The Fabric of Theology: A Prolegomenon to Evangelical Theory*. In addition to teaching at Gordon-Conwell, he has lectured at Yale Divinity School, the University of Notre Dame, Trinity College (Bristol, UK), Westminster Theological Seminary and Reformed Theological Seminary. He and his wife Ann reside in Magnolia, Massachusetts, and have three grown children.

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