John Goldingay has recently written several short, popular level books. IVP Academic published his *Do We Need the New Testament?* (2015) and *A Reader’s Guide to The Bible* (2017). In both books Goldingay argues the Old Testament (or First Testament in Goldingay’s book) is the foundational for a proper understanding the New Testament. As he observed in *Do We Need the New Testament?*, few Christians would actually question the need for the First Testament, but they are usually ignorant of the contents beyond the basic “Sunday School” stories. Goldingay rightly observes, “in a sense, God did nothing new in Jesus” (*Do We Ñeed the New Testament?*, 12).

This new book from Eerdmans develops this theme from a slightly different angle. In order to connect the New Testament to the First Testament, Goldingay lays out a series of themes (Story, Promises, Ideas, Relationships and Life) and develops three or four New Testament texts to illustrate how New Testament writers stand on the foundation of the Law and Prophets. This is the point of the title, Jesus and the writers of the New Testament not only read the First Testament, but use it as the bedrock for their theology and practice. For each of his themes, he will begin with a text from Matthew and then expand to other New Testament texts to show the importance of the First Testament for understanding the New Testament.

First, he argues Jesus is the climax of the story of the First Testament. In some ways canonical approaches to Scripture have helped theologians to keep the whole story of the Bible in mind, but not everyone approaches the Bible with that narrative in mind. He begins his chapter with four examples which demonstrate how the New Testament writers were thoroughly immersed in the narrative world of the First Testament (Matthew 1:1-17; Romans; 1 Corinthians 10; Hebrews 11). Goldingay then traces the general narrative of the First Testament.

Second, the First Testament contains the promises fulfilled in Jesus. Although this is clear in the first two chapters of Matthew where there is a “fulfillment formula,” the story of Jesus in the Gospels constantly points the reader back to the First Testament. After surveying the fulfillment texts in Matthew 1-2, Goldingay then turns to the promise-fulfillment motif in Luke-Acts. The chapter concludes with a survey of the Prophets with special attention to these promise.

Third, the First Testament provides the images and metaphors the New Testament writers employ to understand Jesus. Goldingay offers the example of Jesus’s baptism where the words from heaven echo the First Testament reminding the reader this is the same God who spoke the similar words to Abraham. In fact, the whole story is rich with metaphors drawn from the First
Testament. He then turns to Romans, Hebrews and Revelation in order to show these three diverse writers (and genres) all draw on the First Testament as a metaphorical database. The chapter concludes with a nine page biblical theology of the First Testament in the new.

Fourth, the relationship of God and his people in the New Testament is drawn from the First Testament. Goldingay points out many parallels between Jesus’s relationship with God and the wilderness generation (Matthew 4:1-11) and the Beatitudes. He relates the Beatitudes to the Psalms as a response to God, then shows how other New Testament writers use the Psalms (Ephesians 5-6; Revelation 4-5; Hebrews 11). He concludes with a series of meditations on how God’s people respond to their God in both testaments (Remembering; Studying; Commitment; Celebrating; Protesting; Interceding, Arguing; Confessing; Trusting; Questioning; Thanking).

Finally, Goldingay also argues in this book the First Testament is the foundation for Jesus’s moral teaching. He returns to the Sermon on the Mount in order to discuss Jesus’s interpretation of the Law and interprets for his disciples. Goldingay then offers a brief overview of New Testament ethics in terms of virtues (integrity, for example) rationales (experience, for example) and topics (wealth for example). Each of these examples show the New Testament writers stand on the foundation of the First Testament, although some seem to stretch the original text to fit the New Testament ideal For example, Jesus clearly demands servant leadership from his disciples and demonstrates this by washing their feet (John 13). This kind of servant leadership is clear in the Pauline letters as well. But does the First Testament really support this idea? Goldingay says “in Eden Garden everyone was a servant” (p. 245). Possibly, but that is not at all evident in Genesis 2-3. His illustrations are mostly negative (the kings were not servant leaders) so God promises a real servant will come in the future (Isaiah 53).

**Conclusion.** The title *Reading Jesus’s Bible* is somewhat misleading, but the subtitle (“How the New Testament Helps Us Understand the Old Testament”) captures the essence of this book well. The book is an attempt at an integrated, whole-canon understanding of God and our relationship with him in the present era. Goldingay continues to promote the significance of the First Testament for Christians and this book will help readers to see the connections between the Old and the New. In fact, for Goldingay, there is no “Old and New,” the whole canon is the story of God.

NB: Thanks to Eerdmans for kindly providing me with a review copy of this book. This did not influence my thoughts regarding the work.