

To Trish

לאִיִּכְבֶּה בְּלִילָה נְרָה:
(Proverbs 31:18)

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ABBREVIATIONS

<i>ABD</i>	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i>
<i>BAR</i>	<i>Biblical Archaeology Review</i>
<i>BASOR</i>	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
<i>BDB</i>	Brown, F., S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs, eds. <i>A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Oxford, 1907.
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
<i>EBC</i>	<i>Expositor's Bible Commentary</i>
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
<i>CT</i>	<i>Christianity Today</i>
<i>DBI</i>	<i>Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation</i>
<i>EncJud</i>	<i>Encyclopaedia Judaica</i>
<i>HBT</i>	<i>Horizons in Biblical Theology</i>
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>ICC</i>	<i>International Critical Commentary</i>
<i>IDB</i>	<i>Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i>
<i>IDBSup</i>	<i>Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible: Supplementary Volume</i>
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>ISBE</i>	<i>International Standard Bible Encyclopedia</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JNES</i>	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
<i>LXX</i>	Septuagint
<i>NICOT</i>	<i>New International Critical Commentary on the Old Testament</i>
<i>NIDOTTE</i>	<i>New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis</i>
<i>RevExp</i>	<i>Review and Expositor</i>
<i>SJT</i>	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
<i>SR</i>	<i>Sciences Religieuses/Studies in Religion</i>
<i>TDNT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i>
<i>TDOT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i>
<i>TWOT</i>	<i>Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament</i>
<i>ThTo</i>	<i>Theology Today</i>
<i>TSF Bulletin</i>	<i>Theological Students Fellowship Bulletin</i>
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
<i>VTSup</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum Supplements</i>
<i>WBC</i>	<i>Word Biblical Commentary</i>

WTJ
ZAW

Westminster Theological Journal
Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft

ABSTRACT

One does not have to read very far in the Old Testament to discover that war and warfare are frequently recurring motifs. Whether spiritualized, extolled in poetry, or reported in sparse narration, war is everywhere. One aspect of the ancient Israelite approach to war in the Bible is found in the Hebrew word *herem* (חרם, meaning “to place under a ban” or “devote to destruction”), a word that often calls for the complete annihilation of an enemy and is translated by some as “holy war.” The practice of *herem* assaults modern sensibilities with regard to right and wrong actions in times of war and thus has proven to be a hermeneutical dilemma. How can such passages inform modern readers when the armies of Israel “completely destroyed” their enemy (often including women, children, and livestock in the annihilation), not only with impunity, but with divine direction and blessing?

This dissertation examines the treatment of *herem* in the work of three prominent 20th century evangelical Old Testament scholars: Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., Peter C. Craigie, and Tremper Longman, III. As an exercise in the history of biblical interpretation, it specifically examines how these evangelical scholars interpret a problematic biblical concept for an audience that accepts the Bible as an infallible document which is authoritative for Christian life and practice. Based on an extensive review of their writings and personal interviews with Kaiser and Longman, it takes a close look at the hermeneutical strategies they share for interpreting *herem*, others that they reject, and still others that are unique to each scholar. Although clearly sharing a common interpretative tradition, each scholar represents a distinct way of negotiating the simultaneous demands of historical criticism and contemporary evangelical theology. Moreover, it also demonstrates that there is no monolithic evangelical approach to interpreting this problematic military convention; rather, the works of Kaiser, Craigie, and Longman indicate that there is a multiplicity of approaches to resolving perplexing biblical stories within evangelical Old Testament scholarship.