



# **Sex, War, and "Sin": Humanity's Path from the Garden toward the City of a Holy God**

*James H. Gailey*

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An examination of the Hebrew Scriptures reveals the ethical situations in ancient Israel as a structural analysis, and exposes a covenantal triangle that features a dynamic of giving and receiving, taking and paying penalties, as a meme for human relationships. This can be applied to groups as well as individuals and is surprisingly applicable to life in the twenty-first century. Two senses of "Law"--natural scientific discoveries and the rules laid down by a divine creator--lead to frames for considering these covenantal relationships, and even the existence of "Sin." Are we bound to obey the rules laid down by God, or may we decide what is best for us?

"My venerable predecessor at Columbia Theological Seminary, James Gailey, has written a wallop of a book! His sustaining theme is 'sexuality and sin,' but he ranges broadly with an emancipated imagination over texts, contemporary critical literature, and most important, his own vivid memory and experience. Gailey has written a playful book that exhibits generosity of spirit, but compromises nothing of his critical capacity to read texts well. Readers will be led to a deep and fresh awareness of our world."

--Walter Brueggemann, Columbia Theological Seminary

"This book is written with great devotion and care. For many years, James Gailey, Old Testament scholar and keen observer of the human condition, has created a dynamic dialog between the ancient Judeo-Christian Scriptures and present-day concerns. He culls the scriptures to suggest a model of covenantal relations implied in the way Israel addressed sex, war, and sin. As people of our age wrestle with these same issues, the framework of covenant elucidated here, which includes transcendent presence, is welcome news."

--John T. Campbell, American Association of Pastoral Counselors

James H. Gailey is an ordained Presbyterian minister (PC USA) and Emeritus Professor of Old Testament Language, Literature, and Exegesis at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Georgia. He is author of *The Layman's Commentary: Micah, Habakkuk, Nahum, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malach*. Retired, he now lives in Cedar Mountain, North Carolina.

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