

BOOK REVIEWS

God, Marriage, and Family: Rebuilding the Biblical Foundation. By Andreas J. Köstenberger (with David W. Jones). Wheaton: Crossway, 2005, 448 pp., \$20.00 paper.

“For the first time in its history, Western civilization is confronted with the need to *define* the meaning of the terms ‘marriage’ and ‘family’” (p. 25). So states author Andreas J. Köstenberger, who, with the assistance of David W. Jones, has written *God, Marriage, and Family: Rebuilding the Biblical Foundation*. This sense of crisis and the need for definition sets the stage for this book and its central thesis—that the only way out of our present cultural confusion is a return to a biblical vision of marriage and family.

As Köstenberger observes, “What until now has been considered a ‘normal’ family, made up of a father, a mother, and a number of children, has in recent years increasingly begun to be viewed as one among several options, which can no longer claim to be the only or even superior form of ordering human relationships. The Judeo-Christian view of marriage and the family with its roots in the Hebrew Scriptures has to a certain extent been replaced with a set of values that prizes human rights, self-fulfillment, and pragmatic utility on an individual and societal level. It can rightly be said that marriage and the family are institutions under siege in our world today, and that with marriage and the family, our very civilization is in crisis” (p. 25).

In one sense, the statistics tell the story. The great social transformation of the last two hundred years has led to an erosion of the family and the franchising of its responsibilities. The authority of the family, especially that of the parents, has been compromised through the intrusion of state authorities, cultural influences, and social pressure. Furthermore, the loss of a biblical understanding of marriage and family has led to a general weakening of the institution, even among those who would identify themselves as believing Christians.

At the cultural level, Köstenberger suggests that the rise of a libertarian ideology explains the elevation of human freedom and a right to self-determination above all other principles and values. The quest for autonomy becomes the central purpose of human life, and any imposition of structure, accountability, boundaries, or restriction is dismissed as repressive and backward.

Within the Christian church, Köstenberger discerns what he identifies as a “lack of commitment to seriously engage the Bible as a whole” (p. 28). As he correctly observes, evangelical Christianity has no shortage of Bible studies, media production, para-church ministries, and the like. Yet, most Christians are woefully unaware of the deep biblical, theological, and spiritual foundations for marriage and the family that are central to the Christian tradition.

“Anyone stepping into a Christian or general bookstore will soon discover that while there is a plethora of books available on individual topics, such as marriage, singleness, divorce and remarriage, and homosexuality, there is *very little material* that explores on a deeper, more thoroughgoing level the entire fabric of God’s purposes for human relationships” (p. 28), he observes. To fill this void, Köstenberger and Jones, along with Mark Liederbach, who contributed sections on contraception and reproductive technologies, attempt to offer an integrative approach that would establish a biblical theology of marriage and family. The primary focus of Scripture, they assert, is “the provision

of salvation by God in and through Jesus Christ” (pp. 31–32). Nevertheless, the Bible also addresses an entire spectrum of issues related to marriage and the family—extended to issues such as human sexuality, gender, reproduction, parenthood, and more.

Köstenberger and his co-authors begin their consideration of marriage and family in the book of Genesis, establishing the starting point for these considerations in the doctrine of creation. Throughout the volume, a complementarian understanding of the relationship between men and women is affirmed, and the man and the woman, both created in the image of God, are assigned different responsibilities and roles.

Early in the book, Köstenberger makes an audacious claim: “Our sex does not merely determine the form of our sex organs but is an integral part of our entire being” (p. 27). This flies in the face of the postmodern claim that gender—indeed the very notions of male and female—are nothing more than the product of social construction and ideology. This complementarian arrangement is correctly grounded before the Fall and its consequences. Yet, Köstenberger gives careful attention to the effect of the Fall and the consequences that follow. Thus, sin and its effects becomes the explanatory principle for all confusion over gender, sexuality, marriage, and the integrity of the family.

In successive chapters, the book moves through a series of special topics, surveying the biblical material and presenting a systematic exposition of the Bible’s teachings. The authors balance considerations from both Testaments and deal honestly with the biblical narratives concerning biblical characters. Thus, the Patriarchs become examples of faithfulness, even as their own sin and misadventures in marriage and parenting are candidly observed. The authors use a very helpful outline format in setting out the various scriptural passages and their importance to each question. In this sense, they succeed in presenting an integrative model, pulling from a comprehensive reading of the biblical text.

For example, marriage and the roles of both husbands and wives is grounded in Genesis and then traced through the entire OT. Husbands are to love and cherish their wives, to bear primary responsibility for the marriage union and to exercise authority over the family, and to provide the family with necessities for life. The wife, on the other hand, is to present her husband with children, manage her household with integrity, and provide her husband with companionship. Contemporary readers may be shocked by the candor of Köstenberger’s presentation, but he grounds his arguments directly in the biblical text. Thus, readers are offered the opportunity to read the critical passages for themselves, and then to understand how Köstenberger framed his argument.

In an interesting section, Köstenberger acknowledges that, within six generations of Adam, the biblical vision of monogamy was at least occasionally compromised by the practice of polygamy. As Köstenberger observes, “While it is evident, then, that some very important individuals (both reportedly godly and ungodly) in the history of Israel engaged in polygamy, the Old Testament clearly communicates that the practice of having multiple wives was a departure from God’s plan for marriage” (p. 44). Further, the Bible is clear that individuals in the history of Israel who abandoned God’s design of monogamy and participated in polygamy did so contrary to the Creator’s plan and ultimately to their own detriment. The sin and disorder produced by polygamy, then, is further testimony to the goodness of God’s monogamous design of marriage as first revealed in the marriage of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. In light of contemporary confusions, this is a most helpful and accurate clarification. Similarly, Köstenberger deals honestly with the Bible’s teachings concerning deviant sexual practices, ranging from homosexuality and adultery to incest.

In another helpful section, Köstenberger differentiates between “traditional” and “biblical” visions of marriage. The traditional vision is deeply rooted in middle-class experience in America. The biblical vision is not dependent upon this traditional model.

Considering the nature of marriage, Köstenberger dismisses the notion of marriage as a sacrament or as a mere contract. Instead, he argues that marriage is rightly understood as a covenant, defined as “a sacred bond between a man and a woman instituted by and publicly entered into before God (whether or not this is acknowledged by the married couple), normally consummated by sexual intercourse” (p. 85). Thus, marriage is not merely a bilateral contract, but is a sacred bond. Moving from marriage to the larger family context, Köstenberger suggests that a biblical definition of family points to the structure constituted by “primarily, one man and one woman united in matrimony (barring death of a spouse) plus (normally) natural or adopted children and, secondarily, any other persons related by blood” (p. 93). Citing OT scholar Daniel Block, Köstenberger identifies the family in ancient Israel as patrilineal, patrilocal, and patriarchal. As Block helpfully suggests, the OT family might best be described as “patricentric.” In other words, the family is centered around the father.

In the NT, the structures of marriage and family are explicitly affirmed, even as the church is identified as the new family of faith. Nevertheless, the emergence of the church does not eliminate marriage, family, or the bonds and responsibilities established in creation.

In a helpful section originally contributed by Mark Liederbach, the authors survey questions related to procreation, contraception, and the use of advanced reproductive technologies. The authors write with sensitivity, but also warn against a superficial embrace of contemporary technologies as without moral and theological complication. Readers are advised to look carefully at the nature of reproductive technologies, as well as contraceptive choices, in order to evaluate such options in light of biblical principles and mandates.

Köstenberger also presents a wealth of material related to the structure of the family, parenthood, and the care and discipline of children. He deals honestly with the need for parental correction and discipline, and affirms the role of corporal punishment in the raising of the young. “*Of course* children will disobey—they are sinners!,” Köstenberger observes. “Parents rather should be expecting their children to sin, even after they have come to faith in Christ. Such an expectation is realistic and enables the parent to deal with each infraction calmly and deliberately, administering discipline with fairness, justice, and consistency” (p. 125).

The authors also provide a very helpful consideration of the biblical material concerning homosexuality. “The biblical verdict on homosexuality is consistent,” Köstenberger argues. “From the Pentateuch to the book of Revelation, from Jesus to Paul, from Romans to the Pastorals, Scripture with one voice affirms that homosexuality is sin and a moral offense to God. The contemporary church corporately, and biblical Christians individually, must bear witness to the unanimous testimony of Scripture unequivocally and fearlessly” (p. 223). In later chapters, Köstenberger deals with questions related to divorce and remarriage and to the roles and responsibilities of men and women within the church. Even those who disagree with this understanding of divorce and remarriage will appreciate his careful consideration.

Against the backdrop of civilizational crisis, Köstenberger concludes by arguing that this crisis is “symptomatic of an underlying spiritual crisis that gnaws at the foundations of our once-shared societal values.” Further, “In this spiritual cosmic conflict, Satan and his minions actively oppose the Creator’s design for marriage and the family and seek to distort God’s image as it is reflected in God-honoring Christian marriages and families” (p. 271).

Thus, recovery of a biblical understanding of marriage and family is itself a witness to the gospel and to the grace and mercy of God in giving humanity these good gifts for his good pleasure. Köstenberger and his co-authors are to be congratulated on a volume that takes the biblical text seriously and seeks to apply Scripture to contemporary

questions in a way that is neither arbitrary nor piecemeal. Their integrative approach will assist Christians to think through the most important issues of our day and, more importantly, lead their families to show the glory of God in the midst of a fallen world. This book should be welcomed and widely read.

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God, Marriage, and Family: Rebuilding the Biblical Foundation. By Andreas Köstenberger (with David W. Jones). Wheaton: Crossway, 2005, 448 pp., \$20.00 paper.

Stephanie Coontz, a social and political liberal, concludes her recent study by indicating lamentably that the “love revolution” in marriage has been as disruptive in the social sphere as the industrial revolution was to the workplace. These changes have brought the traditional institution of marriage into an irreversible upheaval and instability. As a result we are now reaping “an enormous personal toll” (*Marriage, A History. From Obedience to Intimacy or How Love Conquered Marriage* [Viking, 2005]).

Citing the absence of an up-to-date truly integrative and biblical treatment of the many related topics (marriage, divorce-remarriage, family, parenting, fertility-infertility, birth control, singleness, spiritual warfare, homosexuality, marriage, and church leadership) that would address this problem, Andreas Köstenberger and colleagues David Jones and Mark Liederbach from Southeastern Baptist Seminary (hereafter Köstenberger) have written this book for seminary students but also with pastors and lay study groups in mind (e.g. 50 pages are devoted to a set of study questions and answers).

The basic thesis of the volume is that the marriage crisis is at bottom a spiritual crisis that threatens our very civilization: “We firmly believe that the only solution is a return to, and a rebuilding of, the biblical foundations of these institutions. . . . The only way *forward is to return* to Scripture and to put God back at the center of marriage and the family—hence the title of our book, *God, Marriage, and Family*” (pp.19–20).

In the creation-fall texts (Genesis 1–3), marriage is seen as monogamous, heterosexual, durable, childbearing, and intrinsically embodying gender role complementarities, namely the husband’s loving but final authority over the wife and the wife’s willing submission to her husband’s leadership/headship. This marital creation gender order was reversed and subverted in the Fall and contributed to the essence of the original sin of Adam and of Eve.

The NT not only elaborates on how marriage functions redemptively but also opens up the validity of singleness as a calling for some with Paul, who as the prime example nevertheless affirms strongly *both* marriage and singleness.

Three historical models of marriage are then evaluated: sacrament, contract, and covenant. Köstenberger finds problems with the first two and defines marriage as “[a] sacred bond between a man and a woman instituted by and publicly entered into before God (whether or not this is acknowledged by the married couple), normally consummated by sexual intercourse” (p. 85). This view supports the permanence, sacredness, intimacy, mutuality (with role distinctions), and exclusiveness between the couple in biblical marriage.

Four chapters discuss issues related to “family” beginning with OT and NT teachings and examples and mainly stress the “roles” fathers, mothers, and children are divinely given in Scripture. The wife (and mother) is “functionally subordinated to her husband and male head of the household.” However, many of the same responsibilities (except public leadership) are shared by husband and wife. Procreation of children is an obli-

gation of husband and wife as is the children's training and scriptural instruction. Fathers additionally are seen in Scripture as responsible for their daughter's purity, security, dowry, marriage partner, and perhaps Scripture learning. Mothers could be quite industrious and innovative in the home setting as they provided for the children and brought income into the family (Proverbs 31).

Jesus, on the other hand, teaches the *relative* importance of the human family compared to the family of God and discipleship to him. Children are to be obedient to parents as a primer for their obedience to God. Fathers have the responsibility for disciplining their children, while mothers have the primary domestic role of bearing the children, rearing them, and managing the home. (The father's activities are mostly outside the home.) Older women are to mentor younger mothers (Titus 2:3–5). Younger women are to be pure, lovers of their husbands, and “devoted first and foremost to the home” (p. 122).

Abortion is contrary to Scripture since it is argued that in the Bible life begins at conception. Additionally, forms of contraception (this section by Mark Liederbach) are approved only if they prevent conception. Fertility enhancements are discussed and evaluated (e.g. artificial insemination, gamete intrafallopian transfer, in vitro fertilization, surrogacy). The material in this section is, of course, not directly biblical but is handled with competence, sensitivity, and in most cases with humility as to the certainty of the conclusions. Adoption is approved and encouraged.

Parenting methods, single parenting, physical discipline, and cultivating masculinity and femininity are addressed. Köstenberger is convinced also that marriage is a special arena of spiritual warfare in at least three areas: sexual temptation, unresolved anger, and the husband's inconsiderateness.

Included are discussions on singleness and homosexuality. In perhaps the longest chapter in the book (32 pages) the debatable question of divorce and remarriage is examined in detail. Finally, church leadership is considered, and the expression “husband of one wife” in 1 Tim 3:2 is understood as “faithful husband.”

A detailed bibliography and extensive, sometimes ponderous annotated footnotes for each chapter (96 in one chapter!) reveal that Köstenberger has dug deeply into a wide variety of sources, especially evangelical.

The piece provides a careful and competent survey of biblical materials touching on marriage and family. It is not primarily a theological development; for such, see the earlier but still helpful work by Stanley Grenz, *Sexual Ethics: A Biblical Perspective* (Dallas: Word, 1990).

While most of Köstenberger's interpretations and emphases will be welcomed by evangelicals (I certainly do), the frequently emphasized theme throughout the book of male rulership (“leadership” or “being in charge”) in marriage and in the family as the divine plan for all ages will be questioned by some evangelicals.

One such has asked recently: “What are Christians supposed to do when society itself shifts to egalitarianism? There is no longer a rationale for the woman to remain in the culturally expected role of dependence and submission. . . . When, under the providence of God and the ongoing, spreading influence of kingdom values, society opens up to the abolition of slavery or the emancipation of women, then Christians can rejoice and be in the vanguard of such change—as we have been in both causes. The irony remains precisely in Christians lagging behind society and still requiring a submissive role for women, a posture that now is a mirror image of the scandal that egalitarianism would have caused in the patriarchal first century” (John G. Stackhouse, *Finally Feminist* [Baker, 2005] 72).

Is not the biblical model much more radical? Is it not a view that balances personal freedom with institutional stability, a picture of two totally free and responsible persons who mutually surrender themselves to each other in the bonds of covenantal love?

Is it not a view deeply concerned about the servant-role of *both* partners seen in the union of one flesh that is lived out in the radical nature of community as seen in the eternal union of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit? Is it not a Trinitarian dance in which one partner moves in response to the other and both find together what it means to submit mutually (Eph 5:21)—a freedom exercised in the bonds of radical love—a model of marriage that finally looks neither patriarchal nor androgynous?

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Ancient Texts for the Study of the Hebrew Bible. By Kenton L. Sparks. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2005, xxxvii + 514 pp., \$39.95.

In recent years new anthologies of ancient Near Eastern texts have appeared (notably Walter Beyerlin, *Near Eastern Religious Texts relating to the Old Testament* [Westminster, 1978]; W. W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger, Jr., *The Context of Scripture* [Leiden: Brill, 1997–2002]; and Bill T. Arnold and Bryan E. Beyer, *Readings from the Ancient Near East* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002]), supplementing earlier standards (such as D. Winton Thomas, *Documents from Old Testament Times* [London: Thomas Nelson, 1958] and James B. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts relating to the Old Testament* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969]). Until now what has been lacking is a tool to conveniently and comprehensively access the primary and secondary literature attendant to these texts, a need now met in the exhaustive, clearly organized, and user-friendly compendium by Kenton Sparks.

The work consists of (1) a lengthy list of abbreviations of text editions and secondary sources—an important contribution in its own right—followed by (2) an introduction dealing with such matters as comparative literature, form criticism, and “generic theory,” a description of the nature and functions of literary genres from a number of different angles. This section is greatly abetted by a four-page run-on bibliography (Sparks modestly defines it as “select”) of all the important studies on genre as they relate to the OT. The third component preceding the consideration of texts themselves is a most informative chapter entitled “Near Eastern Archives and Libraries” (pp. 25–55). This provides an invaluable guide to the archaeological research that has yielded the archives, libraries, and other inscriptional repositories of all the major sites within which the texts in question find their provenance.

Sparks (without any expressed rationale) arranges his survey of the principal genres as follows: wisdom; hymns, prayers, and laments; love poetry; rituals and incantations; intermediary texts (i.e. omens and prophecies); apocalyptic and related texts; tales and novellas; epics and legends; myth; genealogies, king lists, and related texts; historiography and royal inscriptions; law codes; treaty and covenant; and epigraphic sources from Syria-Palestine and its environs. Within each of these the pattern in general is to address first the Mesopotamian texts, then the Egyptian, and finally West Semitic, Hittite, Persian, and others more peripheral to the main collections. This seems to be a sensible approach given the relative antiquity and abundance of the Mesopotamian and Egyptian literatures as compared to the rest.

Within each section the author begins with an introduction to the genre under consideration and then a brief entrée into that literary form in each of the regions that attest it. For example, in discussing wisdom (pp. 56–83) he points out the characteristics of Mesopotamian wisdom and then breaks it down into Sumerian (with attention to texts such as “The Instructions of Shuruppak” and “The Instructions of Urnirurtu”)

and Akkadian (“A Man and His God,” “Ludlul Bēl Nēmeqi,” and “The Dialogue of Pessimism”). The process is repeated with Egyptian texts (e.g. “The Instructions of Ptah-hotep,” “The Instructions of Merikare,” and “The Instructions of Amenemope”) and with the Aramaic (“Proverbs of Ahiqar”). The chapter (as well as the others) closes with a full and helpful bibliography pertinent to the subject matter just addressed.

One is pressed to find much with which to quibble in this groundbreaking and eminently useful publication. Having had it in my possession for only a few weeks, I have had occasion to turn to it and cite it numerous times and will without question find it ready at hand in the future. If there is a weakness, it is not in the concept behind the work and the collection of texts that make up its central substance. Rather, it lies (in my judgment) in the interpretation of the biblical data in light of the relevant ancient Near Eastern texts. Almost always when and where they intersect Sparks understands their connection against the backdrop of documentary and developmental hypotheses which, while acceptable in the larger world of critical scholarship, strike a jarring note in the ears of conservative readers who are committed to more traditional notions of the origin, nature, and transmission of biblical texts. Only a few examples must suffice.

In his treatment of ritual and incantation texts, Sparks proposes that “the Israelite *kippur* is sufficiently close to the Mesopotamian *kuppuru* to suggest that the Israelite ritual was intentionally fashioned to mimic the Mesopotamian practice,” an Israelite adaptation he supposes “would have been necessary during and after the exile” (p. 208). This obviously assumes both a post-exilic P source as well as the late development of a major element of Israel’s cultus, and there is no objective evidence for either (see also p. 210). Addressing Israelite prophetism, Sparks contends that though Neo-Assyrian evidence points to only a brief time lapse between the utterance of prophetic oracles and their subsequent enscription, the OT stands in “stark contrast” in light of the putative centuries of time between proclamation and publication (p. 22). Again, no evidence is marshaled to sustain such a contrast. Finally, the presumption (his word) is made that “the visionary materials in Daniel are pseudoprophetic and . . . were composed in response to the Hellenistic oppression experienced by the Jews during the second century B.C.E.” (p. 241). One could only wish for a more solid and objective basis for rejecting the ancient Danielic traditions than the felt need (if such it be) to integrate the biblical book into prevailing theories concerning the nature and origins of apocalyptic in the ancient Near Eastern world.

These few disclaimers (perhaps idiosyncratic but nevertheless important) should not by any means be viewed as diminishing the significance of Sparks’s work as a whole. Anyone interested at all in exploring the world of ancient Near Eastern literature and its relationship to the Hebrew Scriptures cannot afford to be without it.

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Military Practice and Polemic: Israel’s Laws of Warfare in Near Eastern Perspective.
By Michael G. Hasel. Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 2005, xix + 193 pp., n.p. paper.

According to Michael Hasel, nothing has caused more confusion than the descriptions of warfare outlined in the OT. This book is an attempt to clarify the meaning of the main passage in this debate, Deut 20:10–20. The author’s approach is organized into three chapters.

The first chapter presents a contextual, syntactical, and linguistic analysis of Deut 20:10–20 and evaluates the basis for the suggestion that the war prohibition in verses 19–20 should be viewed as polemic. Hasel concludes that Israel carried out warfare within the land of Canaan differently than warfare waged outside the Promised Land. This is a crucial point, since his contention is that the overwhelming assumption of modern scholarship that Deuteronomy originated in the seventh century as a result of the Josianic reform has caused this passage to be misunderstood and seen as a statement against the practices of the Assyrians in the first millennium.

This leads to an examination in the second chapter of the military strategies and practices of the Assyrians and Babylonians in the first millennium. A thorough study of textual and iconographic sources shows that while Babylonian tactics are not specifically detailed by the scribes, the Assyrians certainly did destroy fruit trees in the course of besieging a city, but this is shown to take place *after* the town was destroyed or *after* a failed siege was lifted, usually as a reprisal intended to destroy the life-support system of a city. Destruction of fruit trees did not take place before or during the siege. Hasel concludes that the use of fruit trees for the purpose of building siege works as prohibited in Deut 20:19–20 was not a practice common in Mesopotamia in the first millennium, and so the Israelite prohibition and the Assyrian practice are not true parallels.

The third chapter investigates the second millennium military practices of the Canaanites, Hittites, and the Egyptians to see if there are any instances of using fruit trees to construct siege equipment. As Hasel states (p. 95), with the recent trend in scholarship to view Israelite origins as an indigenous Canaanite development, it is surprising there have not been more studies focused on local Canaanite practices of warfare. But after an exploration of the extant textual and iconographic material, the author's conclusion is that while destruction or confiscation of grain is mentioned frequently, there is no reference to destroying fruit trees. Of course, silence does not mean this action did not take place, but Hasel believes it fits well with the similar contemporary practice in Hittite military operations to leave the fruit trees in place, and acquire the timber necessary for building siege equipment from the nearby forests.

But this changed when the Egyptian military practice was examined. A systematic study of the Egyptian textual sources and iconography shows without doubt that it was the strategy and tactic of the Egyptian military to use a besieged city's fruit trees to build siege equipment. And if, as Hasel sets out to show, the injunction against using fruit trees for this purpose is truly a polemic against this practice, then Deut 20:10–20 more naturally fits in a second millennium setting than the typically accepted setting in the first millennium.

This book is heavily documented, with the documentation presented as endnotes following each chapter. There is also an interesting appendix, where Hasel addresses a perceived violation of the injunction in Deut 20:19–20 against cutting down fruit trees in 2 Kings 3 during Israel's conflict with Moab. The book concludes with a 45-page bibliography as well as an author index and a subject index.

This book would be most helpful for a scholar who is interested in (1) the book of Deuteronomy; (2) Israel's guidelines for warfare; or (3) a study of this topic based on contemporary outside textual and iconographic evidence that gives Deuteronomy a second millennium provenience.

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Wondrous Depth: Preaching the Old Testament. By Ellen F. Davis. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005, xvii + 162 pp., \$19.95 paper.

Davis's motivation is to help address what she regards as "the gravest scandal in the North American church in our time—namely, the shallow reading of Scripture" (p. xi). Her immediate concern is to wed again in the church's life the activities of exegesis and homiletics. The general method she uses is "a convocation of preaching voices that stretch across the centuries," a "multigenerational community of readers" and "masters of the art," from whom we can learn "basic principles of biblical interpretation and communication of the gospel message" (pp. xiv–xv). And her measured goal, reflected in "premodern commentary and preaching," is to make "readers and hearers conscious of that *mira profunditas*," the "wondrous depth," of the Word of the living God.

The book is a series of four essays that initially took form as the 2003 Beecher Lectures at Yale Divinity School and are offered here only as "explorations of several aspects of biblical exegesis, hermeneutics, and preaching" (p. xiv). The first chapter is a case to read and preach the OT as Christian Scripture and not simply as an illustrative resource. She takes Dietrich Bonhoeffer as an example.

Chapter 2 turns to the nature of the Psalms as poetry and the implication this feature has for preaching them well. Specifically, Davis argues for a "from the inside approach to the psalms, reading with our hearts and not just our mouths and intellects" (p. 20). She points to John Donne and his sermon on Ps 63:7 as an exemplar of such "from the inside" reading and preaching of the Psalms.

Chapter 3 in general opens the question of meaning in the text beyond the simple historical and the intention of the original human author. Davis then raises the much-debated matter of preaching the OT Christologically, and argues that such "figural" reading is the only way properly to grasp and apply its moral sense and/or its meaning for the Christian life. Of course, she is eager to guard against sheer interpretive relativism, and so posits "imaginative precision" as the way forward—embracing "traditional modes of exegesis" and "modern methods of historical and literary analysis" as helpful, but also enlisting "the aesthetic faculty alongside the rational" and engaging "in non-discursive as well as discursive modes of thought" (pp. 68–69). Here Joseph Hall's *Contemplations* is a model to which she appeals.

Finally, chapter 4 focuses on Lancelot Andrewes's work, whom Davis considers "the best single example . . . of the preacher as traditional artist" (p. xv)—one who "clarifies the moral vision" of his hearers and enables them "first to see the truth of the gospel and then to desire to meet its challenge." Andrewes's masterful sermon on Lam 1:12 follows, and the book then closes with four of Davis's own messages illustrating in some way the argument of the essays.

The book's strengths include (1) its call for preachers to take their ministry of biblical proclamation seriously and engage in it earnestly, passionately, and with an integrity grounded in solid exegetical effort; (2) its emphasis on the OT as Christian Scripture; (3) its belief that God's Word is inexhaustible and ever capable of astonishing us, in transformative ways, by its truth and relevance; (4) its insistence that we stop treating the Bible one-dimensionally and for merely utilitarian ends; and (5) its reminder that Bible study is not a laboratory experiment or a mathematics equation, but reading and hearing the Word of God in the presence of the God whose Word it is and in whose hands our lives are held.

A noticeable drawback to the book relates to the "aspectual" nature of the material (first delivered as addresses), which provides no attempt, as the author concedes, to "unfold a single argument in linear fashion" nor to "offer a systematic treatment of the topic of Old Testament preaching" (p. xiv). One might suspect otherwise from the title.

Anyone seeking a more sustained train of thought on the matters here presented should look elsewhere (e.g. a much more comprehensive and coherent treatment of preaching and exegesis is Graeme Goldsworthy's *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture* and his latest entitled *Gospel-Centered Hermeneutics*). Perhaps a conclusion might have helped draw the various strands together, if only to paint a bigger picture.

Davis's postcritical approach to interpretation, however one may debate its philosophical/theological assumptions, is nevertheless refreshing in its invitation for us to return to the text and "learn how to see" so that we might never again (to our shame) be bored before the "wondrous depth" of God's Word. Clearly, the book raises some essential and productive questions about presupposition and methodology in both exegesis and homiletics. It is well written and worth reading.

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Old Testament Turning Points: The Narratives That Shaped a Nation. By Victor H. Matthews. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005, 208 pp., 18.99 paper.

Victor H. Matthews is professor of religious studies and associate dean of the College of Humanities and Public Affairs at Missouri State University in Springfield, Missouri. Matthews is an OT scholar who has made significant contributions to his field with previous books such as *The Social World of Ancient Israel*, *Old Testament Parallels*, and *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament*. In *Old Testament Turning Points*, Matthews identifies eight pivotal narratives that served to shape the identity of Israel as a nation. As the author recounts these landmark events, he does so with the hope of offering insider information implicit in the words of the story. He seeks to draw attention to subtle aspects of the author's purpose, thus making the reading of the text more fruitful. He invites the reader to savor critical moments in the narrative, noting, "In my selection of turning points, I looked for instances that go beyond just the recorded events in the history of the people. My aim is to emphasize those moments in time and space that are retold, recalled, and reckoned as essential to the identity of ancient Israel as a nation" (p. 8).

Matthews selects narratives that reach the very core of the identity of Israel as a covenant people. These narratives uniquely communicate aspects of the character of Yahweh and terms of the covenant promise in contrast to the capricious gods of Israel's neighbors, and terms of the covenant promise. "Each chapter therefore focuses on a significant event or story that in turn provides the primary hooks upon which to hang important biblical themes and traditions as they are employed in subsequent writings" (p. 8).

In each chapter Matthews points to echoes of certain aspects of the story found throughout the rest of the OT canon. He summarizes each of the pivotal narratives, providing excellent historical insights, references to extra-biblical literature, and helpful sidebars along the way. The volume is valuable in that the selected narratives act as signposts for the reader as he makes his way through the unfolding drama of the OT.

In chapter one, Matthews deals with the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the garden of Eden. He outlines and summarizes the story, giving special attention to the utopia, etiology, wisdom, gift-giving, and return themes contained in the narrative. In chapter two, the writer deals with the covenant Yahweh established with Abraham.

Here he examines the implications of the covenant with Abraham and Sarah, skillfully weaving in cultural and historical insights that are valuable to every expositor. Chapter three deals with the exodus from Egypt under the leadership of Moses. Here Matthews helps the reader understand why this narrative contains the most important event in Israelite salvation history and is the paradigm of God's future dealing with the covenant people. Chapter four traces David's rise to power as he conquered Jerusalem and made it his capital city. Israel made the transition from a tribal society to a centralized government. What started, however, as a political venture evolved into a story of Yahweh's presence. Jerusalem became a spiritual center as Yahweh chose to place his name there. Jerusalem served as the physical capital city and as the metaphorical perfect city.

Chapter five deals with Jeroboam's apostasy and the secession of the northern tribes. Jeroboam came on the scene as a David-like figure, rising from relative obscurity to catch the eye of the king because of his abilities. Like David, he was approached by a prophet and given a throne and a promise that God would build his house. Like David, he had to go into exile because of the king's jealousy. This comparison, however, served to magnify Jeroboam's evil. Jeroboam turned out to be the polar opposite of the man after God's own heart. Not only did he have no heart for the covenant, he led the nation into unprecedented idolatry. In the end he was more Aaron-like, quoting verbatim the words of Aaron spoken at the monstrous iniquity of the golden calf.

Chapter six summarizes the fall of Samaria to the Assyrians as a direct result of the sin of Jeroboam. Chapter seven traces the destruction of Jerusalem and the deportation of the people of Judah, exploring the events that led up to the deportation and the ways in which the story of Jerusalem's fall continued to be told for generations. The last chapter deals with the repatriation of the land under Cyrus.

The strength of Matthews's work is the storehouse of information the reader receives from the book. The author offers great insights in each chapter and does an exceptional job weaving together literary, sociological, and canonical perspectives as he explains each narrative. It offers something for the seasoned scholar as well as the beginning student of OT studies. Despite the fact that Matthews does not write from a perspective of OT unity, the book is well worth the read.

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The Reconstructed Chronology of the Divided Kingdom. By M. Christine Tetley. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005, xiv + 194 pp. \$45.00.

OT scholars beware—reading this book may leave you scrambling to change the dates for the period of the kingdom in all of your notes. NT specialists and others may wish to wait for the dust to settle. A revision of a 2000 doctoral dissertation at the Australian College of Theology, *The Reconstructed Chronology of the Divided Kingdom* by veteran missionary and theological educator Christine Tetley is described as “an absorbing labour of love in pursuit of the truth” (p. xiii). The book sets out the rather ambitious task of reconstructing the absolute chronology of the divided kingdom from the perplexing and seemingly contradictory data in the Hebrew and Greek traditions. Her sights are particularly aimed at the work of Edwin R. Thiele's famous *Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings* (3d ed.; Eerdmans, 1983) for his speculative theories based especially on his alleged failure to adequately account for the Greek textual evidence.

Tetley chastises Thiele repeatedly for inventing concepts and data to fit his pre-conceived system. Thiele is taken to task for his famous hypothesized co-regencies, accession and non-accession year dating, Nisan and Tishri new years, system switches, and other flights of fancy not based on hard evidence. But for Tetley, Thiele's biggest problem is his systematic preference for the MT and his downgrading of the Greek evidence. Perhaps the greatest strength of her work is the careful, detailed analysis of the Lucianic (L), Old Greek (OG), and especially the Lucianic minuscule manuscripts (boc₂e₂) found in the Larger Cambridge Septuagint. She argues that when the various Greek traditions are carefully scrutinized, they provide a much more coherent chronological system than the MT, whose secondary character in Samuel and Kings has been well known for a century. This suspicion has more recently been confirmed by the Qumran manuscripts in the case of Samuel. (Unfortunately Qumran yielded little in Kings.) One key insight is to note that Codex Vaticanus, our most ancient Greek source for Kings, is of mixed text-type, and only gives ancient evidence for the book of Kings in 1 Kgs 2:12–21:43; elsewhere in Kings it reflects the secondary *Kaige* Recension (KR).

Tetley's method is to assume the synchronisms between the kings of Israel and Judah during the divided kingdom period originally were based on annals that were historically accurate. The MT, unfortunately, is often corrupt. By analyzing the chronological systems of each of the ancient sources individually (chap. 3), Tetley concludes that the Lucianic minuscules boc₂e₂ and especially c₂ (to which she devotes chap. 4) contain valuable clues to the original text. That original text had a chronological system that was internally consistent and in harmony with external data and was far simpler than Thiele's complicated theory. A careful form-critical analysis of the regnal formulae suggests a means of distinguishing original from secondary texts (chap. 5). Tetley reconstructs the relative chronology of the divided kingdom based on eight criteria (p. 118): (1) a single dating system was used; (2) that dating system remained constant; (3) kings began to reign upon the death of their predecessor whenever that occurred during a year; (4) reigns were counted from the accession date; (5) the last years of reigns were rounded up or down; (6) each year except the last is a full year; (7) the partial last years can be estimated for length; and (8) co-regencies are not considered. Based on these principles, Tetley meticulously reconstructs the relative chronology of the divided kingdom (chaps. 7–8).

In chapter 9 Tetley drops her bombshell. She argues that the famous solar eclipse in 763 BC only establishes the Assyrian Eponym Canon (AEC) as reliable for dates after that event. The AEC cannot be trusted before that time. Using her reconstructed relative chronology for the DK as her base, Tetley then recalculates (and in some cases reinterprets) the synchronisms with Assyrian, Egyptian, and Tyrian chronology with earth-shattering results. Her absolute chronology is not arguing over a decade or a year. The kingdom splits in 981 BCE, not 931 or 922. Shishak campaigned against Rehoboam in 977 not 925. The battle of Qarqar is now 897 not 853. Joram, not Jehu, pays tribute to Shalmaneser III in 885, not 873, and the northern kingdom falls in 719/718, not 722/721. If Tetley is right, every standard Bible Survey, OT Survey, and OT introduction will have to be rewritten. New histories of Israel will be spawned. Egyptian chronology will be rewritten. The date of the exodus will be debated once again. Assyriologists will have nightmares.

But is Tetley right? I have some reservations. Her form-critical work sometimes seems to treat language too woodenly. Perhaps stylistic variations are not necessarily clear evidence of later textual corruption. She also accepts Cross's theories of text types rather uncritically. This affects her interpretation of the Greek evidence at certain points. She argues that *Iaua* in AEC for Shalmaneser III is not Jehu as traditionally assumed

but Joram, the grandson of Omri. I am not yet persuaded. She also invents certain data on the basis that it is necessary for her theory in a way all too reminiscent of what she accuses Thiele of doing. Tyrian king Pygmalion's 7th year is emended to 47th year for no other reason than her theory demands it (p. 171). She adds 22 years to the reign of Assyrian king Shamshi-Adad V for the same reason (p. 170).

The work is beautifully produced and well researched and written for which Tetley and Eisenbrauns are to be commended. Tetley probes scholarly sacred cows and she scrutinizes the speculative approach of Thiele. Evangelicals should be slow to dismiss someone who quite overtly assumes the general historicity of the narratives in Kings (p. 168) given the current debate between minimalists and maximalists regarding the history of Israel. Her careful work on the Greek sources is especially valuable even if I am hesitant to endorse it wholesale. Let the debate between the specialists begin, but may all the specialists write as clearly as Tetley does!

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Isaiah: God Saves Sinners. By Raymond C. Ortlund Jr. Wheaton: Crossway, 2005, 457 pp., \$27.99.

Raymond Ortlund identifies J. Alec Motyer and John N. Oswalt early on as influencing the direction of his commentary (p. 16). Indeed, Motyer and Oswalt's scholarly and conservative contributions to Isaianic studies provide the backdrop for Ortlund's analysis. Ortlund sees the message of Isaiah as being grounded in the reality that through Judah, the world was to learn of God's character and respond appropriately. Accordingly, God's revelation of himself and passion for saving sinners are among the unifying themes in this commentary.

Chapters 1–7 comprise the first major section. Ortlund introduces his readers to Isaiah and his theology (1:1). Isaiah confronted Judah's fraudulent worship, promoted salvation found only through Yahweh, and displayed God's broken heart (1:2–9). The author then describes Isaiah's confrontation with Israel's hypocritical worship and call for repentance (1:10–20) and moves to the urgent need to be redeemed (1:21–31) before considering the transformation of contemporary beliefs and values such as hope and humility needed in view of expectations for the future (2:1–22). Ortlund also notes the paradoxical issue of loss for the sake of gain in anticipation of the day of the Lord (3:1–4:6) before concluding with a discussion of the grace of God that accepts sinners and transforms them inwardly (5:1–30).

In the next section (chapters 8–12), Ortlund deals with themes such as the triumph of grace and God's loving response in spite of Judah's sinfulness (6:1–13). He discusses how grace prompts authentic faith borne from a sense of God's glory rather than fear of punishment (7:1–8:8) and highlights God's zeal to bring salvation into fullness (8:9–9:7). He considers God's wrath in respect to salvation as a means of both condemning the wicked and purifying the righteous (9:8–10:15), then concludes by relating Isaiah's vision of the messianic kingdom that replaces idolatrous images of God with a true and laudable image (10:16–11:16).

The third section encompasses chapters 13–16 of Ortlund's work. Ortlund focuses primarily on the theme of God's supremacy, delineating the proper response God's grace deserves (12:1–6). God's supremacy also relates to the justice and wrath that will attend the day of the Lord (13:1–20:6) and requires people to have both a realistic perspective

of God and an abiding hope in his redeeming grace (21:1–23:18). Ultimately, God will have the final word with the destruction of the sinful world (24:1–27:13).

Chapters 17–22 comprise the fourth section. Ortlund discusses Isaiah's call to trust God to fulfill his redemptive purposes (28:1–29). Trust is required when his methods seem inscrutable (29:1–24), and God gives patient attention to how we ought to think and live (30:1–33). Isaiah depicts God as the only genuine hope and stresses how our belief in him provides practical courage to face anything (chaps. 31–32). God meets anyone who repents, no matter how paltry or imperfect that repentance may be (chap. 33). Two distinct outcomes await those who trust him and those who trust in what this world offers (chaps. 34–35).

In chapters 23–25, Ortlund examines the literary bridge between chapters 1–35 and chapters 40–48. The text affirms that bold faith really works here and now (36:1–37:7), and the desire for God's glory can overcome evil (37:8–38). In contrast, human faith often fails (38:1–39:8).

Chapters 26–35 comprise the fifth section. Focusing on the theme of God's glory, Ortlund explains Isaiah's message of the future fulfillment of God's purposes (40:1–11), associating this with a depiction of the universe through the eyes of God (40:12–26) and its prospect of hope for the exiles (40:27–31) before probing the corrosive nature of the skeptical age in which we live and God's response to it (41:1–20). He also investigates God's reaction to idolatry (41:21–42:17) before tenderly portraying God as one who reforms people who have lost their purpose (42:18–43:21) and revives people who have lost their vitality (43:22–44:23). God will renew his people (44:24–45:25), whereas idolatry leads only to destruction (46:1–47:15). Meanwhile, God's grace toward his backward people continues (48:1–22).

Chapters 36–40 constitute the sixth section, introducing the second Servant Song (49:1–50:3) that focuses on spiritual liberation before discussing the third Servant Song (50:4–51:8) and its focus on the servant's sustaining ministry. Ortlund then focuses on Isaiah's call for hope and joy in suffering (51:9–52:12) as he contemplates Isaiah's portrayal of the success, suffering, and significance of the Lord's servant (52:13–53:12) and reflects on the miracles of God's grace expressed through that servant (54:1–55:13).

Chapters 41–48 comprise the last section. Focusing on the theme of revival, Ortlund notes Isaiah's description of the revival that anticipates God's kingdom (56:1–57:21). Revival is more than merely paying lip service or observing the correct rituals (58:1–59:13). The author then projects revival into the future and the global proliferation of the gospel (59:14–60:22) and focuses on both the joyful and wrathful elements of messianic expectation (61:1–63:14). He also discusses Isaiah's passionate longing for revival in light of God's immanence (63:15–64:12) and God's eagerness for intimacy with his people (65:1–25). He concludes with a description of genuine worship in the future when, at last, we are in God's presence (66:1–24).

One shortcoming of the book is that the numerous historical references lack detailed explanations. Consequently, readers will have to search other works to grasp the significance and impact of these events.

Ortlund explains the book of Isaiah's significance and customizes it for the pulpit. Hence, this commentary would best be utilized by one in such a ministry. Like other volumes in the *Preaching the Word* series, this book makes the biblical message preachable. Ortlund presents the implications and relevance of Isaiah for modern man, addressing the great doctrines of sin, salvation, and sanctification along the way. I am heartened to see a scholar tackle a book of such weight and complexity as Isaiah in a realistic and resourceful way.

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Jesus and His Death: Historiography, the Historical Jesus, and Atonement Theory. By Scot McKnight. Waco: Baylor University Press, 2005, ix + 451 pp., \$59.95.

In teaching courses on Jesus, I have often asked this question: "Would it matter if Jesus had died in a rickshaw accident in Calcutta or by a stray bullet in inner-city Los Angeles or as a tuberculosis victim in Addis Ababa as long as he died as the sinless Son of God?" My purpose in asking this question is to provoke students to consider the way in which evangelical soteriology is often abstracted from the historical circumstances in which Jesus lived and died, cut off from the story of Israel and often even from the story of Jesus' own life. Many evangelicals have never considered the way in which the individual confession that "Jesus died for me," or the universal confession that "Jesus died for the world," is tied in Scripture to the particular story of God's dealings with Israel. The reticence of evangelicals to take up the study of the historical Jesus is perhaps symptomatic of the real challenge that such study presents to evangelical theology. This is not to say that evangelical soteriology need be threatened by the study of Jesus as a person with aims and intentions that were sensible within a first-century Jewish context. Rather, it is simply to point out that much evangelical soteriology is formulated in such a way as to take little or no account of Jesus' own understanding of his death. Against this tendency, Scot McKnight's work faces squarely the historical question of Jesus' understanding of his death. There is much to praise in McKnight's work, but its greatest contribution is the clarion call to anchor soteriology in the mission of Jesus, especially in Jesus' interpretation of his death. Not all will be happy with McKnight's conclusions, but this should not lead readers to back away from the central concern of the book, which McKnight presses with considerable force: to root early Christian soteriology in Jesus' own understanding of his death.

The primary conclusion of McKnight's study is that Jesus understood his death as a Passover sacrifice that provided protection for his disciples from the judgment that was about to fall on Israel. He arrives at this conclusion in four strides. The first of these is to set out the historiography that undergirds the study and to survey the prior research into Jesus' consciousness and interpretation of his death.

In the second part of the book, he argues the case that Jesus went to his death knowingly. Jesus' mission was more than a mission to die, but, particularly following John's death, Jesus understood that he would not only share the fate of Israel's prophets but would die as part of the eschatological tribulation. Here are the first hints that Jesus not only anticipated his death but that he interpreted it as well. As in his baptism, so also in his death, Jesus understands himself to be Israel's representative: in the one, as the representative penitent Israelite; in the other, as the first to run the gauntlet of the final ordeal, leading his followers through death to vindication. His characteristic way of speaking about himself as the corporate Son of Man of Daniel 7 further suggests that he viewed his death as that of Israel's representative.

The third step of the argument amounts to an extended consideration of the authenticity of Mark 10:45. Though it is a Son of Man saying, McKnight regards the evidence that Jesus thought of himself as the Servant who gives his life as a ransom for many to be "negligible." This is a conclusion to which he arrives with palpable reluctance. Again and again he probes the text from various angles; again and again he determines the evidence to be less than compelling. McKnight considers the various biblical roles that Jesus may have used to understand his mission and death. Though he finds scraps of scripts from the Tanakh that probably go back to Jesus, including Moses, Elijah, Joshua, Micah, and the Son of Man, he does not believe "that Jesus saw in the Servant of Isaiah a figure of prophecy whose destiny he was to fulfill, particularly with respect to his death" (p. 224). Jesus may have made reference to the Servant to understand God's purposes for his life, but this is hardly characteristic or distinctive and provides

insufficient warrant for finding in Mark 10:45 a window onto Jesus' view of his own death or concluding that Jesus saw himself as the Servant who bears the sins of others and is crushed by the Father's wrath.

Finally, McKnight analyzes the traditions surrounding the last supper. McKnight follows John in placing Jesus' death on Passover. Against Mark, the last supper is not the Passover but one of the meals of Passover week. Mark, though, is not wholly unjustified in referring to this meal as Passover because Jesus evokes themes in the conduct of the meal which anticipate Passover. McKnight regards a reduced core of the words of institution—"this bread is my body, this cup is my blood"—to be certainly authentic. The idea, however, that Jesus' death instituted a "new covenant" and secured "the forgiveness of many" belongs to the early church. "Jesus' theory of atonement then is that his own death, and his followers' participation in that death by ingestion, protects his followers from the Day of YHWH, which in the prophets especially is often described as the wrath of YHWH" (p. 339). It is in this sense—a sense that many will find sharply curtailed alongside the usual perception of Jesus as one who bears the sins of others—that Jesus regarded his death as vicarious. His death deflects God's wrath from those who participate in that death, but there is no sense in which Jesus becomes the object of God's wrath. McKnight concludes the book by arguing that representation is the primary way in which not just Jesus but the writers of the NT understand the atoning significance of Jesus' death. Substitution—though not necessarily *penal* substitution—may be understood as part of representation. Summarizing Paul's view, McKnight comments, "I see *representation* as 'inclusive/participatory substitution' and *substitution* as 'exclusive substitution.' Substitution, then is a 'one for many' and an 'instead of' place-taking, and at times it *might* carry along with it the notions of penal substitution and satisfaction—though it need not" (p. 347; italics his).

If the primary strength of McKnight's book is to call attention to the need to incorporate Jesus' understanding of his death into our interpretation of its saving significance, there are other features of the study that deserve commendation as well. First, though most readers of this review will take as given that Jesus both anticipated his own death and reflected on its significance, these assumptions would be denied by many—a denial that lies beneath the relative neglect of the topic. McKnight's robust argument that Jesus invested his death with saving significance counters a broad swath of historical Jesus scholarship that, particularly in North America, scarcely regards this as even a possibility. Viewed in this context, McKnight's work will be seen by many to be decidedly conservative. Second, McKnight's exploration of the rich diversity of ways in which the significance of Jesus' death was understood first by Jesus and then by the NT writers serves as an important reminder that the achievement of the cross was not simply to effect a change of forensic status in the mind of God. Such presentations of the saving significance of Jesus' death remain remarkably common. Third, against the tendency of many to attribute to the early church all material that suggests reflection on the OT, McKnight's study demonstrates the fruitfulness of exploring Jesus' reliance upon the OT to understand his mission and the role of his death in that mission.

If the study has strengths there are also elements of the argument that may be questioned. First, McKnight's overall portrait of Jesus does not simply leave aside material that he thinks may have originated with the evangelists rather than Jesus but actually conflicts with this material. His portrayal of Jesus' interpretation of his death depends very much on the success of his argument that Jesus did not see himself as the suffering Servant of Isaiah, never uttered the substance of Mark 10:45, and did not regard his death as a sacrifice that established God's eschatological covenant with Israel (Mark 14:24). On each of these issues, McKnight seems to regard the evidence as finely balanced. So, for instance, at various points in his argument against the authenticity

of the ransom saying in Mark 10:45, which runs across most of the second half of the book, McKnight pronounces the evidence for and against authenticity a stalemate. It is a bit disconcerting, then, to realize that the argument is substantially weakened, even undermined, if the evidence that McKnight regards as rather evenly balanced were to tilt slightly the other way. Perhaps the evidence *would* have tilted the other way for McKnight had he widened the scope of his investigation into whether or not Jesus placed himself in the role of Isaiah's suffering Servant. For instance, one thinks of: (1) the difficulty of saying (with McKnight) that Jesus associated himself with the Servant of Isaiah 53 but only insofar as "he identifies with those who have been misclassified"; (2) the close association between the cup of wrath that Israel must drink in Isaiah 51 (which McKnight does believe informed Jesus' anticipation of his death) and the wrath borne by the Isaianic Servant in Isaiah 52-53; (3) the close, perhaps inextricable, connection between the passion predictions (which McKnight regards as authentic but exclusively part of the Son of Man traditions) and the theme of servanthood.

Second, even outside of evangelical scholarship, there is a growing awareness that Jesus believed himself to be Israel's Messiah. Yet, although McKnight affirms that Jesus believed himself to be the Messiah, he makes surprisingly little attempt to relate Jesus' messianic consciousness to the anticipation of his impending death. McKnight successfully shows the extent to which Jesus understands his death to commence the eschatological distress and to fall within the tradition of Israel's persecution of its prophets. However, if Jesus understood himself not simply as another prophet, martyr, or righteous sufferer, but as the Messiah, we are brought back to the question of the raw materials that Jesus used to reflect on his death specifically as Israel's Messiah. Here we must not ignore the growing body of evidence that connections between the suffering Servant and messianic identity were already being made within Judaism prior to Jesus. If Jesus understood himself both to be Israel's Messiah and as one who dies to save his people, it seems extraordinary that he would not have connected these roles.

Third, McKnight's conclusions downplay penal substitution as the central feature in the understanding of the significance of the cross whether by Jesus or the NT writers. Certainly, McKnight's affirmation that Jesus regarded his death as vicarious and saving will strike many historical Jesus scholars as extraordinary, but McKnight is reluctant to say that penal substitution adequately captures the heart of how either Jesus or the NT writers understood his death. One senses that it is at this point that the lines of the story of God's dealing with Israel within which McKnight rightly seeks to place the mission of Jesus and his understanding of his death become slightly blurred. The story within which Jesus situates his mission and understands his death is the story of Israel coming under the judgment of God because of its guilt and sin and of God acting to forgive that sin in order to effect Israel's restoration. In McKnight's representation, Jesus views his death as the provision of protection from impending wrath on Israel, but it is not clear that Jesus also thought of his death as satisfying God's wrath, thereby expunging Israel's guilt and securing Israel's forgiveness and restoration. If Jesus understood his death as the climax of the story of Israel's restoration, it is not obvious from McKnight's account how Jesus' death serves as a crucial moment in the accomplishment of that restoration. Certainly, much of the exploration of all that it means for Israel to experience this eschatological salvation is left to the writers of the NT, not least in the confession that Israel's crucified Messiah is the Savior of the world. However, given the abundant evidence that Jesus viewed his mission and death as the climax of God's action to effect Israel's restoration, is it difficult to suppose that Jesus viewed himself as one who, in the face of God's wrath, bore the sins of Israel?

Though this is a book from which all should learn, it is not a book with which many will be happy. Some will think it says too much about Jesus; others will think it says too

little. In terms of McKnight's own view of the atonement, perhaps it is best to regard this book as a kind of interim report—a further work on atonement by McKnight is reportedly forthcoming—as McKnight does not believe that all that Jesus thought about his death is all that can be said. Whether through approval or dissent, one can hope that readers will find in McKnight's ongoing exploration of the atonement a stimulus both to a greater understanding of Jesus' death and a heightened zeal to proclaim its saving significance to the ends of the earth.

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The Parables of Jesus. By Luise Schottroff. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006, viii + 288 pp., \$18.00 paper.

Luise Schottroff, professor of NT and feminist theology in the University of Kassel in Germany, has distinguished herself most with books applying feminist or liberationist hermeneutics to the Bible and with works of social-scientific criticism of the Scriptures. A whole spate of untranslated German essays, many of them from an earlier stage of her career, has also demonstrated her conversancy with parable studies. Here Schottroff draws on all these backgrounds to craft a three-part volume with twenty-nine short chapters on all the major (and several minor) parables in the Synoptic Gospels. She admits that she has reversed her thinking on several fronts, resulting in a combination of approaches that does not quite fit any other established mode of parable interpretation.

Perhaps employing Dodd's famous description of the parables' pedagogy as teasing the reader into active thought, Part 1 contains seven expositions of various narratives without any full presentation of the overarching method. As throughout the volume, while Schottroff is aware of a broad spectrum of interpretive systems, she presents a very limited selection of them and interacts with even fewer. More characteristic is language such as, "I consider," "this is not to be regarded as," or "I read the parable to say," without any argument—just mere affirmation.

As the reader therefore tries inductively to piece her method together, various patterns emerge. (1) There is no room for allegory of any kind in Jesus' parables. Though she never defines just what it is she is rejecting, it would appear that any character or element in a narrative, especially a king or master figure representing any form of patriarchy, that does not correspond *in every aspect* to a spiritual counterpart (on traditional readings of the parable), disqualifies the text from being labeled allegorical. (2) Jesus is commenting not just on God's ways with humanity, often in contrast with the behavior of the authority figures in the parables (here Schottroff often consciously follows the approach of William Herzog), but also on real life in first-century Palestine. His followers, for example, should forgive *financial* as well as spiritual debts and provide real *bread* and not just spiritual sustenance for the needy, both systemically and individually. (3) As regularly in rabbinic parables, the applications the evangelists append to the parables should be accepted, not because they necessarily correspond to what the historical Jesus meant, but because they are all we have left to interpret and they clearly made sense to the Gospel writers who included them in the forms that they did. Tensions with the story lines of the parables themselves do not necessarily disclose sequential layers of composition but may be clues to understanding that we are to see the narrative's plot as *contrasting* with exemplary Christian behavior, not always analogous

to it. (4) Finally, any interpretation that even opens the door to an anti-Semitic interpretation must be roundly rejected. Whatever else Jesus was, he was Jewish and Torah-observant. Living in post-Shoah Germany, Schottroff commendably resists what she often calls the "Ecclesiological Interpretation" (though in reality it is never more than one of several that the church has traditionally held) in which the parables' good characters stand for Gentile Christians with the bad ones representing all Jews. For the same reason, however, she dismisses all supersessionist interpretations *and* any approaches that might suggest that Jews today need to accept Jesus as their Messiah. Yet her contrasting "Eschatological Interpretations" are far less predictable, seemingly unified only by the kind of new society she thinks would bring the most justice to our world today.

Part 2 is entitled "In Search of a Non-Dualistic Parable Theory" with eight chapters, several of them only a couple of pages each, which confirm the readers' induction on the points enumerated above. Part 3 returns to exposition, with fourteen additional chapters, some of them treating two or three related passages, now following the sequence of the parables' appearance in Mark, Luke, and Matthew, in that order, and highlighting texts not already considered in Part 1. Brief chapters summarize insights from parables in Mark and Luke, and though curiously the volume ends without a comparable summary for Matthew, passing instead to an itemized list of principles for interpreting parables, followed by fulsome endnotes, bibliography, and indices.

Overall Schottroff's method borders on incoherence. Because a liberating hermeneutic cannot accept a God who can be as harsh as the king ultimately is to the unforgiving servant, "nothing [here] is said explicitly about God, not even in analogies." However, the story's point, captured in Matt 18:35, "says: God will call you to account at the judgment if you have not forgiven each other" (p. 203). Excuse me? Because the picture of the laborers in the vineyard is more realistic than most have imagined and does not depict that gracious and generous of a master as is usually claimed, the real point emerges from the closing line on reversal of first and last (Matt 20:16)—most suspect of all in standard tradition-critical dissection. We should *not* treat all equally as in the parable but seek to prioritize the poor and demote the powerful. Yet when the picture-part of the parable suggests positive behavior, as with a small village rallying to provide food for a hungry midnight visitor in Luke 11:5–8, then we may accept it as consistent with Christian behavior.

In Luke's parables of the lost sheep and coin, "the hearty stag party of the shepherds and the joyous neighbor women's social are made an image of God's joy (v. 7) and that of the angels (v. 10)" (p. 154). All three parables of Luke 15, including the prodigal, "end in a joyous feast that is transparent to the feast of *God's joy* when the *people of Israel* and *all nations* have found the way to life" (p. 156; italics mine). In other words, she all but declares that the father, shepherd, and woman all disclose something of God; the older brother, the ninety-nine sheep, and the nine coins something of Israel; and the prodigal, lost sheep, and lost coin something about all nations—precisely the limited allegory that derives main points from main characters that she otherwise decries! And it lumps all Jews together in an uncritically pro-Semitic portrait every bit as inappropriately generalizing as the anti-Semitic interpretations she eschews.

In short, as Schottroff stresses at one point about feminism and liberationism more generally, she has not provided us with a method among several from which to choose, but a *hermeneutic*. Certain *a priori* theological commitments, beginning especially with the physical liberation in this life of the poor and oppressed, including women and Jews, govern both how texts are to be interpreted and which portions of Scripture may be accepted as normative. If this leads to two otherwise identically structured passages being interpreted in wildly divergent fashion, that is no problem; ideological consistency

always takes priority over methodological coherence. What is sad is that there has been a growing body of conservative Christian literature on the parables in particular and on hermeneutics more generally that agrees with many (not all) of this book's ideological concerns and that proposes consistent methodologies by which they may be seen to derive from the texts themselves. Yet Schottroff makes no mention of these developments (e.g. biblical feminism, Messianic Judaism, or evangelical commitments to social justice), not to mention far more nuanced (and probably more accurate) understandings of allegory, patriarchy, and rabbinic usage of parables. One may glean many good insights from her volume on the sociology of the world in which the parables were composed, but little else emerges to guide one in discerning the most accurate interpretations of the parables themselves.

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Understanding Matthew: The Early Christian Worldview of the First Gospel. By Stephen Westerholm. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006, 160 pp., \$16.99 paper.

Having written my dissertation on Matthew, I am always looking for material that will increase my understanding and appreciation of the first Gospel. In light of my expectations, I consider my reading of Stephen Westerholm's book to be worthwhile. The book is not a commentary or an examination of Matthew's theology in the strict sense of the word. Instead, it is a straightforward presentation by Westerholm of what the first evangelist considered the ultimate worldview: God is redeeming creation for the sake of goodness. Within this presentation Westerholm intersperses selections from the life and thinking of Dietrich Bonhoeffer to aid in relating Matthew's worldview to our present day. The book contains an introduction, followed by eight chapters, including footnotes and a brief index.

As the title of this book indicates, the concept of worldview is the template through which Westerholm approaches Matthew. Early on, Westerholm discusses what one means by worldview. His thesis is that there are many different views of reality, but one must believe there is a God to appreciate what Matthew is saying. Everything that pertains to Matthew's story reflects a worldview that sees the world to be functioning not as it should but rather as one that either rejects or ignores its Creator; thus Matthew confronts his world with the program of God as revealed in the person and work of Jesus Christ. The coming of the Messiah indicates that a new age has dawned. The kingdom of God has begun the process of renewal, one that presents the believer with a clear-cut path to follow. Essentially, the ethical teachings of Christ present the way a world devoid of evil should function. In other words, Jesus' commands to refrain from insulting others (Matt 5:39) or having inappropriate thoughts about the other sex (Matt 5:28) are not simply warnings against doing wrong; they are ideals that represent a world where "slapping on the cheek" or "lust" are not even a consideration let alone a possibility. All of this is to say that a disciple of Christ must wholeheartedly accept and follow Jesus' agenda for reclaiming the world for goodness. In a very powerful sense, one needs to view the world as Jesus (and Matthew) in order to receive the secure life, the only one that leads to eternal joy. In no unmistakable terms, the cross of Christ both secures our forgiveness and salvation and offers proof that God's goodness—sooner or later—*must* prevail.

For Westerholm, God's reclamation of the world is progressing in stages. Despite the Fall (in Genesis 3), God was not willing to give up on his creation and as a result called Abraham. Beginning with this patriarch, God implemented a plan to redeem humanity, and this design was to take place through Israel. Matthew divides Israel's history into three well-defined periods: Abraham to David; David to the exile; and the exile to the Messiah (Matt 1:1–17). For the first evangelist this plan reaches its climax in Jesus. Matthew is intentional to show that Jesus' life and death are fulfillments of the OT (e.g. Matt 1:22–23; 26:56). Yet, as Westerholm discusses, evil and rejection are the reactions to Jesus' (and Matthew's) message of goodness, and thus they show that the final stage of God's redemption is yet to appear; the full and consummating appearance of the kingdom of God will appear soon—evil will not have the upper hand forever!

Matthew appears to have no seam between the time of Jesus and that of his own. That is, the first evangelist writes as if his readers experience Jesus first hand. Rather than simply commanding or dictating what his listeners should do, Matthew uses the stories or narratives about Jesus to make his point. As the rich young ruler is confronted with the demand to choose between riches and Jesus, so must Matthew's listeners (Matt 19:16–30); when the Lord calms the storm, so may Matthew's community take hope that the living Messiah will protect them (Matt 8:23–27). To read the Gospel of Matthew is to participate in the world of Christ.

And this *living story* is not to be lost on Matthew's readers of today. According to Westerholm we too can gain the same sense of purpose, call, and hope that the first evangelist wished for his intended listeners. We, as they, must trust God in all that we do; we must take hold of Christ and his call to discipleship. Westerholm makes this apparent by splicing in Bonhoeffer throughout his book. Bonhoeffer, who resisted Hitler and the Nazis, devoted much of his book *The Cost of Discipleship* to the Gospel of Matthew, especially the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7). This feature alone would make this Lutheran pastor a logical consultant on any look at Matthew. Yet what clearly is Westerholm's main purpose for including Bonhoeffer is the distinct picture of one who represents a life of goodness against evil. Westerholm inserts key biographical information, as well as insightful quotations from Bonhoeffer's works, to support the main point of the book: God will overcome evil, so that those who reap this victory will be those who doggedly hold on to doing God's will in this life. To this end Westerholm presents his book for consideration.

Overall, Westerholm has hit the mark. The concept of worldview is frequently discussed today. To use it as a means to examine a NT book is one strength of the book. What Westerholm has done is restate an important concept of the Christian life in contemporary language. Another strength is Westerholm's ability to concentrate on Matthew and resist consulting other scholars for their opinions. (While I value and support such efforts, interaction with other Matthean authorities would have detracted from what Westerholm desired to achieve in this book.) One other strength I want to mention is his down-to-earth discussion of worldview in chapter 1. In simple terms he helps readers to gain a preliminary grasp on a slippery topic.

Although I recognize that Westerholm hit the target most of the time, I came away with some frustration at the way the book ended. The last chapter was not a conclusion but simply a retelling of the story Matthew presents in his Gospel. This chapter would have been much more helpful if it had followed the chapter on Israel's history (chap. 3). Such a placement would have offered a nice flow for Westerholm's picture of Matthew's worldview, as well as early on provided a short but helpful summary of the material for readers unfamiliar with the content of the first Gospel. Moreover, a concluding chapter on how a Christian of today might relate to a society of various worldviews and

perspectives and still remain true to Matthew's vision would have capped off this book in a nice fashion.

However, these suggestions for improvement are by no means reason not to read Westerholm's book. This work is especially beneficial for those who desire to understand the overall thrust of following Christ. What better source is there for such an understanding than the book that introduces the NT, namely Matthew, the Gospel of discipleship?

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Johannine Sectarianism in Perspective: A Sociological, Historical, and Comparative Analysis of Temple and Social Relationships in the Gospel of John, Philo, and Qumran. By Kåre Sigvald Fuglseth. NovTSup 119. Leiden: Brill, 2005, xiv + 450 pp., \$139.00.

This monograph is a revision of a Dr.Art. thesis presented to the University of Trondheim in September 2002. Its stated purpose is to investigate the "community" behind the Gospel of John with methods primarily derived from sociology and with comparisons to texts from two contemporary Jewish milieus, the community in Alexandria as reflected in writings of Philo, and the community of Qumran as reflected in some of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Following the scholarly tradition that the Gospel originated in a local group of some kind and that the experiences of this group influenced the character and content of the text in a particular way, this study attempts to define more clearly the "sectarian" claim found in much of this scholarly tradition. It also seeks to provide focus to numerous terms (school, church, group, association, etc.) used to delineate this Johannine "community."

The first three chapters set the tone for remainder of the analysis. In chapter 1, "Problem and Method," Fuglseth locates the study in the history of discussion concerning the audience and origin of the Fourth Gospel. In this historical sketch of Johannine studies, Fuglseth reveals the difficulties in characterizing the Johannine community as a "sect." "The debate on 'sect' in studies of early Judaism and New Testament literature generally, as well as the criticism specifically concerned about the Gospel of John, presents a confusing and even contradictory picture" (p. 27). In chapter 2, "Models and Questions," Fuglseth examines the models frequently used to delineate the audience behind the Fourth Gospel. After noting the problems with the common categories used, especially with regard to communities from the distant past, Fuglseth explains that his heuristic method attempts to define the Johannine community's social tension by examining how the Gospel handles the replacement of the temple in the story of the temple cleansing (John 2) and the Samaritan encounter (John 4). In sum, Fuglseth's stated goal is to "study the question of recruitment and the maintenance of social cohesion, the introversionist withdrawal from society through an evaluation of the attitudes towards 'others' or 'outsiders'" (p. 63). Important here are the categories that Fuglseth will use: "church," "cult," and "sect." The differences in these categories are used to explain the different social tensions revealed in all three sets of documents. In chapter three, "From Text to Community," Fuglseth asks if the entire heuristic model should even begin with the assumption of a real "group" reflected behind the text. Was there a Johannine community, Philo community, and Qumran community? His answer is a carefully-stated "yes." Fuglseth explains that "there is not much evidence for the existence of a 'qualified group' [in contrast to a 'plain group' or general audience] participating in the production

of the Gospel in an interactive way, although there are some indications. . . . Therefore, the assumption of its existence cannot be based upon ‘empirical’ studies of the text only, but derives from a chosen perspective as well—our hermeneutic position or meta-reflection” (p. 114). Because of this admission, Fuglseth spends this entire third chapter (50 pages) to make his case—a case he will hereafter assume for his heuristic purposes.

In the next three chapters, Fuglseth examines the temple theme in John (chap. 4), the same theme in Philo and Qumran (chap. 5), and temple-related festivals in John (chap. 6). He establishes three different models for evaluative purposes: a rejection model; an acceptance model; and a conjunction model. The rejection model reflects a strongly anti-temple group that has protested and broken away from the temple institution in principle and practice. The acceptance model reflects a group that has not broken with the temple institution in principle or practice (only difference and disagreement). Finally, the conjunction model reflects a group with a “laissez-faire” attitude that has broken in some way theoretically (e.g. re-interpretation) from the temple institution, a fact that in principle makes the temple institution redundant, but has not made a break in practice in any significant way (p. 175). When these models are applied to John, Philo, and Qumran, especially in a correlated fashion, the results reveal that the conjunction model is the most appropriate. The documents reveal that “first century Judaism may operate with several different temple transferences and even a fundamental rejection of the temple that does not imply a neglect of the temple and its many functions” (p. 246). This implies that the social tensions of the Johannine group would not have been “high-tension” as is normally posited by the sectarian model (p. 284).

In the next two chapters Fuglseth examines the social relationships in John (chap. 7) and in Philo and Qumran (chap. 8). If the groups behind these documents are not high-tension, as their relationship to the temple theme has revealed, then an examination of their social relationships should have similar results. The analysis of social relationships in John is clear. As Fuglseth explains, “the initial model explained above, the conjunction model, concerning the attitudes of the Johannine community towards the temple, remains unchallenged” (p. 318).

Fuglseth concludes his study in chapter 9 by locating the three groups involved in the study, the communities of John, Philo, and Qumran, within appropriate categories of group definition. The Qumran community is clearly sectarian—a splinter from the indigenous religion. The Philo community is representative of the parent body, like the church—the mother religion in low tension with the social environment. The Johannine community appears to be cultic—the social group that *de facto* is the beginning of a new religion. As Fuglseth explains in chapter 2, “‘Cults’ claim to be different and justify the difference by a new revelation or new insight that changes the original tradition” (p. 55). This is where the conjunction model is most helpful: “The Johannine community is neither an exclusive ‘sect’ nor a mere inclusive group. In order to explain what looks like a confused nature of the group . . . the ‘cult’ model is ideal” (p. 372). The sectarian model commonly proposed for the Johannine group fails to handle the nuances reflected in the text and the innovative aspects of Christianity represented by John’s Gospel.

This volume provides a needed evaluation of the common category of sect so frequently applied to the groups standing behind the NT documents. The sociological exploration Fuglseth provides is superb. The study is helpful in its careful depiction of models and categories used to depict the groups behind documents. Yet this itself becomes a problem. The study is so careful to rest on appropriate evidence that its entire value becomes questionable. Not only is there a debate over the very existence of “qualified groups” standing behind the Gospels, in contrast to a more general audience, but the entire enterprise of finding these “groups” has been severely criticized. Fuglseth’s own language reveals as much on numerous occasions (cf. pp. 70, 73, 81, 82, 83). Such

a “hermeneutic position or meta-reflection” (p. 114), though useful, in the end raises even more questions. His critique of the sectarian model and his proposal of the cultic model, though a helpful heuristic device, is still unable to deal with the complexity of John, a complexity he himself admits the text will not allow him to ignore.

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The Conversion of the Imagination: Paul as Interpreter of Israel's Scripture. By Richard B. Hays. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005, xx + 213 pp., \$20.00 paper.

Richard Hays has written a very interesting book on the use of the OT in the NT, especially as he understands this through the methodological lens of “intertextuality.” This is a further development of his earlier *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989). All of the ten chapters of the book are minor revisions of previously published articles.

Hays lays out well the purpose and outline of the book in an introductory section (pp. viii–xvii). The book advocates three main proposals: (1) interpreting the OT was central to Paul's thinking; (2) Paul is an example of how to interpret Scripture for contemporary readers of the Bible; (3) if we follow Paul's lead in this enterprise, then we will have our “imagination converted” to view Scripture and, as a result, the world in a very new way. He says these claims are not unique but that they can be traced all the way back to Origen. However, such claims are important to elaborate now, since nineteenth-century and twentieth-century scholarship did not approach Pauline theology with these three perspectives. Hays rightly judges that the reason there was such a de-emphasis in reading Paul in this way was because, to whatever degree Paul's exegesis of the OT was acknowledged, it was considered to be bad “scientific” interpretation, not paying attention to the OT sense of the original context. On the other hand, there was the conservative extreme of “literal” interpreters, who did not pay sufficient attention to Paul's imaginative creativity because of an overemphasis on “factuality and authorial intention.”

In the same introductory section (pp. xv–xvi), Hays highlights the specific themes that emerge from the chapters as a whole. First, Paul's scriptural interpretation is always done for a pastoral purpose, especially with a view toward transforming the community's consciousness with respect to the new revelation in Christ. Second, Paul's interpretation of the OT is “poetic in character.” That is, he is not a systematic theologian nor a historian but a preacher who poetically draws metaphorical comparisons between the gospel he propounds and the story of OT Scripture. Third, the apostle understands Scripture *narratively*. The OT is the story of divine election, judgment, redemption, and promises of Israel's future final restoration, which the church has begun to inherit. Fourth, the fulfillment of Israel's promises has begun to be fulfilled unexpectedly in the light of the inbreaking eschatological apocalyptic events of the Messiah, Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. Lastly, Paul interprets the OT *trustingly*, since the OT reveals God as one who loves his people and one in whom they can trust to be faithful to his promises of redemption. The remainder of the book then fleshes out these basic notions.

My evaluation of Hays's book will focus on methodological and hermeneutical issues rather than on particular interpretive conclusions, some of which I agree with and some I do not. With respect to the former, for example, Hays's summary of the three functions of the Law appear generally helpful, though I would explain each of these somewhat

differently: (1) the Law as defining the identity of God's elect people; (2) the Law as pronouncing condemnation on the world; (3) the Law as foreshadowing the righteousness of God (pp. 85–100). With regard to interpretations by Hays with which I particularly disagree, for example, I have in mind the conclusions he reaches in his chapter on "Abraham as Father of Jews and Gentiles."

First, with respect to methodological or hermeneutical issues, Hays discusses "metalepsis" as a hermeneutical approach. He defines metalepsis as "a rhetorical and poetic device in which one text alludes to an earlier text in a way that evokes resonances of the earlier text *beyond those explicitly cited*" (p. 2, italics his). What this means for Hays is that "we must go back and examine the wider contexts in the scriptural precursors to understand the figurative effects produced by the intertextual connections" (pp. 2–3). It appears that what Hays is calling "metalepsis" is nothing more than an approach to interpreting OT texts by paying careful attention to their wider (especially immediate wider) contexts for ideas that Paul may also have had in mind in his own context, which were inspired by the precursor of the OT context (notice his similar uses of "metalepsis" elsewhere: pp. 17, 112). This is an approach that is not new to OT in the NT scholarship (e.g. the point was emphasized long ago by C. H. Dodd in his *According to the Scriptures*). It is not completely clear how calling this poetic "metalepsis" enhances the long-held approach of paying attention to the context of OT citations in order better to interpret them in the NT context. Of course, there are many in the guild, who do not think that NT writers worked that way, including some evangelicals, and so I am happy that Hays affirms this, albeit with new terminology. Later in the book, Hays repeatedly underscores how important the broad context is for understanding Paul's quotations and allusions (a good example of this is Hays's chapter on the use of Isaiah in Paul, though he appears to argue against contextual awareness of the OT on p. 112).

In the same chapter, Hays says that "in 1 Cor. 10:1–22 he [Paul] urges the Corinthians to understand themselves as standing in typological relationship to Israel" (p. 10). The Pentateuchal narrative that Paul has in mind prefigures the forming of the end-time church community, and Paul sees other OT passages elsewhere functioning in the same or a similar typological manner (pp. 10–11, 109–11). The Corinthians are imaginatively to project themselves into the Pentateuchal narrative in the sense that this narrative pointed to them all along in an even greater way than it did to Israel. Hays says that this amounts to Paul "calling for a *conversion of the imagination*" (p. 10, italics mine), the last phrase being the basis for the title of the book (he also speaks similarly of a "complex imaginative act"; he uses the phrase "conversion of the imagination" similarly elsewhere: pp. 15, 24, 150). This language of "imagination" is fine, but it is likely that Paul wants more than the imagination to be converted but their mindset itself. Perhaps this is what Hays means by "imagination," but the word evokes a fanciful creation of images that is more in the realm of artful possibilities than of absolute redemptive-historical realities that should shape people's thinking (e.g. we might say during winter months, "imagine being on a beach in the Caribbean," which is not a reality but a nice daydream). Similarly, the notion of fanciful imaginative creativity would appear to be evoked when he says that "Paul's rereading of Scripture in light of God's reconciling work in Christ produces fresh imaginative configurations" (p. 160) or when he asserts that the church should "respond in imaginative freedom" in understanding the OT in relation to ethical responsibility (pp. 161–62). By interpreting Hays by Hays, however, I think he leans more to the notion of a creative but contextual reading of the OT that results in the church understanding more deeply the realities of its place and role in redemptive history. For another example in this respect, Hays says that the command in 1 Cor 5:13, "drive out the evil person from among you," based on the same repeated command in Deuteronomy, "applies to them [the Corinthians] not just by analogy but directly, because they really have been grafted into the people of God" (p. 159; so also he

can speak of Paul calling “his churches to live within the world story told by Scripture” in order to “find their identity there,” p. 161). Thus, I think Hays should clarify and clearly define his language about “imagination” in the interpretative process, so that he does not leave the impression that he is speaking primarily about a kind of free and easy imaginative handling of Scripture.

Hays touches on the problematic issue about how much a NT author (in this case, Paul) can develop an OT text and whether or not such creative developments still remain within the original conceptual contours of the OT context. He speaks of his emphasis, recognized by others, “on the power of texts to engender unforeseen interpretations that may transcend the original authorial intention and historical setting” (p. 169). This could sound as if Hays is endorsing a more radical reader-response approach to the interpretation of the OT by apostolic writers, but only a few pages later he qualifies this:

In fact, one possible outcome of analyzing intertextual phenomena would be to demonstrate the persistence of certain semantic constraints imposed by precursor texts on their later interpreters; if so, the method could disclose not only “the fluidity of textual meaning” but also, if I might turn the trope again, its solidity. In fact, this is one of the findings of my analysis in *Echoes*: the scriptural texts keep imposing at least part of their original sense on Paul’s argument, even if only subliminally, even when Paul is trying to employ them for new purposes (p. 173; see likewise pp. 174, 176).

What this indicates, then, is that Hays’s earlier statement (above on p. 169) means that in whichever ways Paul creatively develops the OT, the essential conceptual links with the OT text are not forgotten. Thus, Paul builds on OT texts that he interprets and develops creatively, though the creativity is to be seen in Paul understanding such texts in the light of the new redemptive-historical events of Christ’s coming and work. In this respect, part of the creative development lies merely in the fact that fulfillment always fleshes out prior prophecy in a way that, to some degree, would have been unforeseen by OT prophets. Another way to say this is that progressive revelation always reveals things not as clearly seen earlier. Geerhardus Vos’s metaphor for this creative development between the testaments is that OT prophecies and texts are like “seeds” and the NT understanding of the same texts are like plants growing from the seeds and flowering; from one angle the full-bloomed plant may not look like the seed (as in botanical comparisons), but careful exegesis of both OT and NT contexts can show, at least, some of the organic connections. Well, this is how I understand Hays on this difficult point (I suspect, therefore, if I am correct in my assessment of Hays, that he might agree with my further extended elaboration of this difficult issue in “Questions of Authorial Intent, Epistemology, and Presuppositions and Their Bearing on the Study of the Old Testament in the New: A Rejoinder to Steve Moyise,” *Irish Biblical Studies* 21 [1999] 1–26).

One of the most helpful contributions Hays has made to OT in the NT studies is his formulation of “criteria for discerning echoes,” first formulated in his *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (pp. 29–33), upon which he elaborates further in this book (pp. 34–44). These criteria are as follows: (1) availability to the author; (2) volume (how clear is the reference verbally?); (3) recurrence or clustering (how often does Paul cite the OT reference or how often does he refer to the same OT context elsewhere?); (4) thematic coherence (how well does the OT reference fit into Paul’s overall line of argument?); (5) historical plausibility (does the historical situation allow for the possibility that Paul could have intended the OT reference and for the reader/hearers to have comprehended it?); (6) history of interpretation (have other interpreters discerned the same OT allusions or echoes in Paul?); and (7) satisfaction (does it make sense of Paul’s larger contextual

argument?—which appears redundant with “thematic coherence”). These criteria can have a cumulative effect in pointing to the probability of the presence of an OT allusion.

One of the ongoing debates about Paul’s use of the OT is whether or not his readers could have discerned his allusions, and even if so, whether or not they would have understood how he was employing them. In this respect, Hays says that we ought to grant that Paul and the recipients of his letters were at least as nuanced and sophisticated in their reading of the Bible as contemporary readers. “Everything about Paul’s use of OT texts suggests that his ‘implied reader’ not only knows Scripture but also appreciates allusive subtlety” (p. 49). Whether or not one acknowledges this, Hays contends one must at least admit that “the apostle still delights in intertextual play” (p. 49). Hays allows for the possibility that Paul may have presupposed too much knowledge of the OT on the part of his hearers (p. 179). At the least, for Hays Paul still must be seen as making these allusions, even if the hearers did not pick up on them. For myself, I would say that Paul did realize that on a first hearing many would not comprehend many of the allusions and even quotations, since the majority of the audiences would have been recently converted Gentiles.

On the other hand, though I cannot elaborate on this here, Paul was likely aware of levels in each audience, composed of Jewish Christians, Gentile God-fearers, and, the majority, converted pagans. Hence, on a first reading, the first two groups would have understood more of Paul’s OT references, but on subsequent readings of Paul’s letters and after discipleship based partly on their Bible (which would have been the LXX) the dominant Gentile audience would have increasingly understood more. Hays rightly expresses “astonishment” that anyone would question Paul’s aim at intertextual scriptural echoing in the letter to Romans (as does, e.g., J. C. Beker), since Paul himself begins that letter by saying “promised beforehand through (the) prophets in holy Scriptures” (Rom 1:2) and concludes with “whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope” (Rom 15:4); add to this that Romans contains fifty-one direct quotations and dozens more allusions in between these introductory and concluding statements (p. 182). Though it may not be as clearly signposted in Paul’s other letters, the pervasive influence of the OT can be discerned in most of them (cf. pp. 183–84).

Hays also comments on another thorny issue: the relationship of Jewish exegesis to that of Paul’s exegesis. Some contend that the way to understand how Paul interprets the OT is first to study the dominant patterns of biblical exegesis in Judaism, which is considered to be the socially constructed cultural situation into which Paul fits. Therefore, since Jewish exegesis was more typically uncontrolled—so the argument goes—we should not be surprised to find that Paul’s is the same (so, e.g., see P. Enns, *Inspiration and Incarnation* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005] 113–65). Hays joins other significant voices in saying that “Paul’s own hermeneutical practices are sufficiently different from theirs to demand independent investigation” (p. 180; in agreement also, e.g., with H. Hübner, *Biblische Theologie des Neuen Testaments*, Band 1: *Prolegomena* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990] 258–59).

Hays’s last chapter, a “Hermeneutic of Trust,” is excellent, and the best way to summarize it is to let Hays speak for himself. He defines this as:

a readiness to receive trustingly what a loving God desires to give us through the testimony of those [OT writers] who preceded us in faith [here he follows the approach of P. Stuhlmacher] (p. 197). . . . When we read Scripture through a hermeneutic of trust in God, we discover that we should indeed be suspicious: suspicious first of all of ourselves, because our own minds have been corrupted and shaped by the present evil age (Gal 1:4). Our minds must be transformed by grace, and that happens nowhere more powerfully than through reading

Scripture receptively and trustingly with the aid of the Holy Spirit (pp. 197–98). . . . At the same time, we should be suspicious of the institutions that govern and shape interpretation. That means not only ecclesiastical institutions but also academic institutions. If our critical readings lead us away from trusting the grace of God in Jesus Christ, then something is amiss, and we would do well to interrogate the methods and presuppositions that have taught us to distance ourselves arrogantly or fearfully from the text and to miss Scripture’s gracious word of promise (p. 198). . . . My concerns that distrust may impede our reading of the Bible leads me to my final point. The real work of interpretation is *tohear* the text (p. 198, italics his). . . . Precisely because there is filth in our own souls we come to the text of Scripture, expecting to find the hidden things of our hearts laid bare, and expecting to encounter there the God who loves us (p. 200).

The only caveat I have about this chapter is in regard to his statement that, even with a “hermeneutic of trust,” there may be times that “we must acknowledge internal tensions within Scripture that require us to choose guidance from one biblical witness and to reject another” (p. 198). If by this he is affirming that some portions of Scripture are less divinely inspired than others, then this is problematic; if, on the other hand, he means that some portions of the OT are no longer binding on God’s people as they were for theocratic Israel, then this is understandable; or, if he is suggesting that the clearer portions of Scripture interpret unclear portions, then, again, this is acceptable. I am left uncertain as to what precisely he means in this case.

All in all, I found Hays’s book stimulating with respect to the various methodological approaches to the study of the OT in the NT that he discussed. Accordingly, I recommend the book for those who want to reflect further on these issues.

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Pastoral Ministry according to Paul: A Biblical Vision. By James W. Thompson. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006, 174 pp., \$17.99 paper.

James Thompson believes that, although ministers’ roles are often defined pragmatically as being about the maintenance and growth of the institution, the vision for pastoral ministry is essentially a theological issue. As questions such as “What is a minister?,” “For what roles do we [seminary faculty] prepare future ministers?,” “What are the goals of ministry?” are discussed, Thompson believes that Paul’s pastoral vision should be central to the discussion. As to the role that this book is playing in facilitating that discussion, Thompson believes that “although numerous studies have explored the pastoral practices of Paul, the missing dimension in the study of Paul and ministry is the analysis of the ultimate goal of his pastoral work” (p. 19). To complete this task, Thompson analyzes the undisputed Pauline epistles seeking to uncover the goal of pastoral ministry according to Paul. He summarizes his findings in the first chapter, arguing that “ministry is participation in God’s work of transforming the community of faith until it is ‘blameless’ at the coming of Christ” (pp. 19–20).

Thompson proceeds through his analysis by beginning with Paul’s pastoral vision in Philippians and 1 Thessalonians. After analyzing these two letters, he concludes that “Paul’s goal is the transformation of the community that will turn from self-centeredness to a corporate existence shaped primarily by the love exhibited by the self-denial of Jesus” (p. 59). He then moves to Galatians where he examines Paul’s goal, with specific

attention to the fact that the people Paul was called to minister to “existed between the ages.” As a result of this existence between the ages, Paul was participating in a work that was continually threatened. In chapter 4, Thompson investigates Romans as pastoral theology, proposing that the entire argument of Romans is pastoral in nature. He focuses on the motif of believers being conformed to the image of Christ in Romans and argues that Paul understood his mission as guiding the community toward this transformation. The fifth chapter is an analysis of the Corinthian letters, with an emphasis on the idea of unity and community formation. Thompson deduces from 1 and 2 Corinthians that “Paul’s primary task is to ensure that a community composed of individuals from a variety of backgrounds overcomes the barriers of ethnicity and social class to become a demonstration of the unifying power of the cross” (p. 148). The final chapter is a brief look at some of the implications of this study for doing ministry: namely that ministry is not about clarifying a congregation’s own values but about transforming those values to align with the values of Christ; that ministry should emphasize community formation and not individual development; and that ministry should not only be about communicating God’s grace in justifying sinners but also about challenging believers toward being conformed to the image of Christ. Thompson concludes with a few paragraphs addressing the “how” of ministry and states that preaching, other parts of the liturgy, models of transformation, and the participation of the entire congregation are all necessary for doing this type of ministry.

Thompson recognizes the historical distance between Paul’s situation and the contemporary church (although we are most likely to assume that we are only talking about the church in North America) but asserts that in spite of the differences Paul can still function as a model for ministry today, because our different situations are still analogous enough.

How refreshing it is to see an argument that Paul’s goal in pastoral ministry was not simply evangelism, maintaining the institution, and administration, but was holistically incorporated under the idea of transformation. Thompson’s study does indeed convincingly demonstrate that for Paul transformation is the ultimate goal. His reading of the Pauline letters is thorough and sound, and the exegetical evidence that he marshals in favor of his thesis is impressive. It is difficult to imagine that someone could come away from this book not thinking that transformation is the ultimate aim of the minister.

There are a couple of issues that I had with the book, however. The first is that the title does not appear to be an accurate description of the contents of the book. While the book is entitled “Pastoral Ministry according to Paul,” it seems that a more appropriate title might have been “The Goal of Pastoral Ministry according to Paul.” My expectation from the title was that there would be a variety of issues related to pastoral ministry addressed in this work, but the book is only dedicated toward investigating the goal of pastoral ministry. The few additional comments about pastoral ministry that do not specifically deal with the goal of pastoral ministry are simply appended at the end of the book and cover roughly four pages. In addition, the book is actually about the goal of pastoral ministry according to the *undisputed Pauline epistles*. Thompson addresses the issue of the disputed Pauline epistles in one paragraph on page 28, without ever giving the reasons for why he has limited his study in this way. Even if one did not think that Paul wrote the Pastoral Epistles, Ephesians, and Colossians, one would have thought that looking at how the authors of these letters (who most likely were the first interpreters of Paul if the books were not written by Paul) understood the goal of pastoral ministry would be a necessary part of any work on pastoral ministry *according to Paul*. Furthermore, in the one paragraph where Thompson does mention the undisputed epistles, he inexplicably lists Philemon as disputed and fails to acknowledge 2 Thessalonians, with the implication that it is undisputed, even though the latter is completely ignored throughout the entire book.

Second, the book appears to be intended to span the academic disciplines of NT studies and pastoral ministries. Yet in the section where Thompson addresses “Pauline Pastoral Theology in Previous Study,” there is no real mention of, nor interaction with, Pauline scholars on the various views related to the goal of Paul’s ministry (a topic that could use more extensive research but that has at least been addressed by many Pauline scholars). Along these same lines, there is no discussion of the concept of apostleship and how this might have had some bearing on how Paul viewed the goal of his ministry. After all, Paul’s most frequent self-designation was that of apostle.

The book, however, is clearly important to anyone who is thinking about what Paul envisioned the goal of his ministry to be, whether NT scholars, pastoral ministry scholars, or pastors. Those who do not believe that transformation is the goal of pastoral ministry or those seeking to explore this issue should read this book.

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A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Colossians and Philemon. By R. McL. Wilson. ICC. London: T & T Clark, 2005, xxxvi + 380 pp., \$100.00.

This volume takes its place as a worthy (but expensive!) replacement in the venerable International Critical Commentary series. Here is critical but reverent scholarship at its best, distilling many years of research and reflection. In a day when the length of critical commentaries is expanding exponentially, Wilson serves up a concise, erudite treatment, a model of lucid scholarship.

The format is straightforward: introductory matters are discussed, followed by a section analysis of the respective letters. In each section (14 for Colossians and 4 for Philemon), Wilson first gives his own translation and then analyzes the individual Greek sentences, phrases, and words making up the unit. At the end of each section, he offers a synthesis, and occasionally hermeneutical suggestions (i.e. the significance). Theological reflection, while not the primary focus of the commentary, is not ignored. Sprinkled throughout are probing and pithy observations that lighten a mostly technical, exegetical work (see, e.g., pp. 228, 287–88, 293–94, 297, 327–30, 368–69).

Reflecting the scholarly debates swirling around Colossians, Wilson devotes nearly 33 pages in his introduction to the questions of authenticity, place of writing, and relationship to Ephesians and other NT letters (pp. 8–35, 58–63). These issues also resurface throughout the commentary proper. The even more controversial question of the nature of the Colossian heresy takes up 23 pages in the introduction (pp. 35–58) and occupies another 50 pages (pp. 191–241) in the commentary on Col 2:6–3:4. The real centerpiece of the letter, the Colossian “hymn” (Col 1:15–20), elicits 36 meaty pages of exposition (pp. 123–59).

Wilson holds that Colossians was written by a Pauline disciple not long after Paul’s death, between AD 70–75 (pp. 34–35, 58–60). He does, however, give a fair hearing to the traditional view (see, e.g., p. 190) and occasionally shows how one might read a particular passage assuming that view (e.g. p. 291).

As to the nature of the “heresy,” Wilson is guarded. He sides with the majority view that there was some form of false teaching that threatened the place of Christ in the grand scheme of things. Its precise contours, however, simply cannot be determined with any certainty (p. 61). It certainly had Jewish elements but was not the same as the Galatian controversy. It definitely was not Gnosticism of the second century (Wilson is a leading expert on this movement). The most we can say is that it was a form of

gnosis (i.e. it had elements that would later be incorporated into the full-blown systems of Gnosticism [pp. 158–59]), and it may well have incorporated elements of Jewish, mystical ascent traditions and local folk religion, broadly conceived as magic. Wilson appreciates the work of Clinton Arnold (*The Colossian Syncretism* [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995]), even if he is not in complete agreement with it (pp. 54–55, 62, n. 121, 232–33).

As to whether Col 1:15–20 should be denominated a pre-Pauline hymn, Wilson cautiously concedes it is “certainly a possibility . . . but should not be taken as firmly established. It is also possible that our author was himself responsible for its composition” (p. 156). Wilson tentatively locates the place of writing for both Philemon and Colossians in Ephesus (pp. 20–23, 35, 62).

As to Philemon, Wilson admits “there is much that we can never know about the background to this letter. . . . But from the letter itself one thing is crystal clear; it is a plea on behalf of Onesimus, a slave who has in some way wronged his master, but has now become a Christian and is seeking forgiveness and reconciliation” (p. 360).

The strength of the commentary is the insistence that we interpret the text in front of us rather than read “behind the text.” Mirror reading is an art not a science: caution is the watchword. Many hypotheses are aired in the commentary, but Wilson doggedly reminds the reader that these are conjectures, not demonstrable fact (see, e.g., pp. 308–9).

What are some of the shortcomings of this commentary? Some might fault him for a somewhat “dated” use of secondary sources. That is, he typically uses as his primary lexical tool the second edition of Bauer’s lexicon (BAGD, 1979) rather than the third (BDAG, 1999), makes no use of *NIDNTT* (1975–85) and *EDNT* (1990–93), and does not evidence awareness of the more recent discussion of the Greek verbal system (e.g. Stanley Porter’s work). There are numerous references to Hastings’s *Dictionary of the Bible* (1900–1904) and *Dictionary of the Apostolic Church* (1915, 1918) as well as frequent footnotes to Lightfoot’s (1892) and Peake’s (1903–10) commentaries on Colossians. Curiously, however, he does not even mention the predecessor volumes in ICC (T. K. Abbot on Colossians [1909] and M. R. Vincent on Philemon [1897]). Yet in defense of Wilson, I doubt very much that anything substantial was missed. As he says in the preface, “One can still learn much from Lightfoot—or from Calvin, to name but two” (p. x). What Wilson provides is a selection of the best scholarship from the patristic to the current period. Newest is not necessarily best.

The major problem many will have with Wilson’s commentary is his view on authorship. He anticipates this at the conclusion of his commentary when he notes, “the question of authenticity probably does not merit the attention often devoted to it; . . . It is the letter itself that is important, as coming from the earliest days of Christianity, and from an author who, if he was not Paul himself, was endeavouring to present Paul’s theology in response to a new situation” (p. 311). I will grant him the point that the letter itself takes priority, but does the evidence really point to a post-Pauline composition for the letter? As Wilson himself concludes, none of the individual arguments against Pauline authorship, whether linguistic, stylistic, conceptual, or historical location in Paul’s career are conclusive (p. 33). Yet he then advances the following argument: “it is the cumulative result of all these factors taken together that gives rise to suspicion” (p. 33). Thus, according to Wilson, the probability tips in favor of a post-Pauline composition.

How does one assess this? How can one quantify the individual arguments and weigh them in such a way that one arrives at an empirical solution? I am not sure this is possible. In the end, one just “feels” the evidence leans one way or the other. For me, a crucial issue continues to be that of pseudonymity. Wilson argues that we have not fully appreciated this issue; this was not seen as an ethical problem as it is in our copyright society (pp. 10–11). Perhaps, but as I read the letter of Colossians, with its very

personal references and allusions, I cannot rid myself of the “feeling” that if this really was not Paul writing, something is just not right. I feel tricked. Can things really be that much different in our day than they were back then? Did not the Church fathers exclude pseudonymous works from the canon for that very reason? Wilson agrees that they did (p. 11). Is it then the case that our sophisticated computer-generated word and syntactical searches have demonstrated what native speakers much closer to the time in question and in touch with the remembered traditions could not, namely that Paul really was not the author? Are all the supposed differences and developments in Paul’s diction and thought incompatible with Pauline authorship? I remain unconvinced, not on the basis of dogmatic concerns to protect a doctrine of inerrancy but on the one thing to which Wilson repeatedly draws our attention: the evidence in the text before us.

For pastors who can work with their Greek NT and for teachers in colleges, universities, and seminaries, this commentary will prove to be a goldmine of information. The proofreading for this highly technical volume is first rate.

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1 Peter. By Karen H. Jobes. BECNT. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005, xvii + 364 pp., \$39.99.

In an era when so many biblical commentaries are being published, it is difficult for any new work to stand out as noteworthy. However, this recent commentary on 1 Peter by Karen Jobes distinguishes itself in the midst of the crowd, primarily through careful interpretation and a consistent effort to make a unique contribution. Jobes adds to our understanding of this letter not so much by following the latest methodological trends but rather by pursuing solid historical and grammatical research.

The introductory section of the commentary (pp. 1–57) offers detailed and helpful discussions on the significance of the letter, the historical circumstances surrounding the author and recipients, the purpose and theology of the book, and its literary unity and genre. Jobes’s discussion on the authorship of 1 Peter clearly moves the conversation forward. Both those who argue for 1 Peter as a genuine letter of the apostle Peter and those who consider it to be a pseudonymous work hold to a similar view concerning the level of Greek in the epistle. The general opinion has been that the Greek is too good to have come from a Galilean fisherman like Peter. So how is it possible to account for the language of 1 Peter? Some have insisted that someone other than Peter must have written the letter, while others have proposed that Peter used an amanuensis. In both the introduction and a final excursus (pp. 6–8, 325–38), Jobes challenges the common assumption about the quality of the Greek in 1 Peter. With considerable detail, she demonstrates that 1 Peter exhibits bilingual interference, in particular, the type of syntactical interference to be expected from a Semitic author for whom Greek was a second language. An analysis of the extent of Semitic interference in the Greek of 1 Peter, of course, does not establish that the letter was written by the apostle Peter, but it undercuts one important argument used to support the claim that 1 Peter must be a pseudonymous work.

In the introduction, Jobes spends a considerable amount of time uncovering the historical circumstances of the recipients of 1 Peter (pp. 19–41). For Jobes, the recipients were Christians who had originally lived in Rome but who moved to Roman colonies in Asia Minor. In their actual, historical situation these believers were living as foreigners, which Peter then used as a basis for explaining their spiritual situation. They needed to understand that the deeper, underlying reason for their alienation from society was

because of their commitment to Christ. They were citizens of the kingdom of God living within the present world as resident aliens. One of the strengths of Jobes's commentary is in how she consistently explains the importance of Peter's message for the original recipients of the letter in light of their historical circumstances. At the same time, Jobes sprinkles throughout her commentary applications for present-day readers (e.g. pp. 154, 162, 196, 206, 230–31, 263, 267, 294). One notable example involves her explanation of the relevance of Peter's household code for husbands and wives today in which she seeks to balance theological foundations and cultural factors (pp. 209–12).

Throughout the commentary, Jobes explains various viewpoints on interpretive problems in the letter, and yet she also clearly states her own position and the supporting evidence for it. Sometimes the evidence moves her toward a minority position. For example, she carefully defends her view that the pure spiritual milk of 1 Pet 2:2 is not a metaphor for the Word of God but rather is a metaphor for the believer's experience of the Lord himself (pp. 132–41). Jobes argues her case in part on the basis of the use of Psalm 33 LXX in 1 Pet 2:1–3, which highlights another strength of the commentary—Jobes's analysis of the use of the OT in 1 Peter. I found her section on the use of Isaiah 53 in 1 Pet 2:21–25 to be particularly helpful (pp. 191–200). At other times, Jobes feels that the evidence leads her to adopt majority positions. Along with a majority of recent commentators, she argues that Christ's message to the spirits in prison in 1 Pet 3:19 was Christ's victory proclamation after his resurrection and during his ascension in which he expressed his authority over all creation, including the demonic spirits who had been held under the restraint of God because of their exceptional wickedness before the time of the flood (pp. 237, 242–45).

Jobes deals with the exegetical details of the Greek text but does not get lost in them, since she maintains a focus on the overall message of the book and its relationship to the historical circumstances of the original recipients. The flow of thought in the book is traced through summary statements found at the beginning of every section and also at the end of many of them. Perhaps one weakness of the commentary is that Jobes never really explains the underlying methodological basis for her outline of the book. She divides the letter into three major sections (1:3–2:10; 2:11–4:11; 4:12–5:11), but she offers little by way of explanation as to how she arrived at this outline or why it might be superior to other possibilities. In addition, her outlines of individual passages can be confusing at times. For example, Jobes claims that in 1:13–2:3 Peter prescribes four actions, each expressed through an aorist imperative (although by my count the passage actually contains five aorist imperatives), but then without explanation she divides the passage into two main parts (1:13–21; 1:22–2:3) rather than four (pp. 107–8, 122).

One of the more innovative aspects of Jobes's commentary is her proposal concerning the recipients of the letter. Peter refers to his readers as foreigners (1:1) and resident aliens (2:11). While such terms take on a metaphorical sense in the letter, Jobes does not want to exclude the possibility that they also carried a literal sense for the original readers. Most studies assume—without argument—that the Christians addressed in 1 Peter were native to the provinces mentioned in the letter opening (Pontus, Cappadocia, Galatia, Asia, and Bithynia) and that they accepted their Christian faith while living in their native residence. However, no reasonable explanation is given for how converts to Christianity came to be spread over this vast and sparsely populated region of Asia Minor, especially since no historical evidence exists to support the notion that traveling Christian missionaries targeted the northern part of Asia Minor in the first century. That early missionary activity took place in most of the provinces mentioned in the opening verse of 1 Peter is sheer speculation, as is the contention that Peter himself may have traveled in these areas.

Jobes suggests an alternative possibility: that the believers to whom Peter wrote became Christians elsewhere, at a place that brought them into association with Peter,

and then subsequently found themselves scattered throughout Asia Minor, living as foreigners in a new residence. In his letter, Peter took their literal status as foreigners and resident aliens and transformed it into a spiritual metaphor. Peter wrote to encourage them in light of their present suffering and their alienation from society due to their commitment to Christ. Jobes suggests that the process of Roman colonization in the first century helps to solve the puzzle concerning the recipients of 1 Peter. She points out that the emperor Claudius (reigning AD 41–54) was aggressive about colonizing Asia Minor and that he established Roman colonies in each of the provinces mentioned in 1 Pet 1:1. Christians could have been among the people sent from Rome to colonize cities in Asia Minor. Jobes argues that Peter's presence in Rome would have brought him in contact with these believers or at least made him aware of their circumstances and need for encouragement. Therefore, Peter wrote his letter from Rome to Roman believers who had come to live in colonies in Asia Minor. Peter's "foreigner" metaphor "was triggered by a real event or experience instead of just being pulled out of thin air" (p. 39).

Jobes defends her proposal with a number of arguments, two of which seem to me to be not sufficiently supported or even necessary. First, she argues that the expulsion of the Jews from Rome under Claudius—a decision that may have been precipitated by disturbances within the Jewish community over the arrival of Christianity—could have led to Christians being deported to Roman colonies. However, Jobes provides inadequate evidence for the idea that exiles from Rome typically became Roman colonists. Second, she argues that Peter arrived in Rome for the first time early in the reign of Claudius. However, as Jobes admits, there is no early historical evidence for Peter's presence in Rome in the 40s. It is insufficient for Jobes to respond by arguing that Peter could have been in Rome during that time because he had to be somewhere. In addition, the whole point seems unnecessary because news about the significant difficulties of Roman Christians scattered in colonies in Asia Minor could have come to Peter's attention while he was in Rome in the 60s. Then, in light of such news, Peter could have felt compelled to write a letter of encouragement and instruction. Jobes herself seems open to this possibility on p. 39.

Overall, I found Jobes's discussion of the historical background to 1 Peter to be convincing, especially when compared to other proposals. Her approach has the benefit of helping us to recognize the extent to which the original recipients would have felt their status as foreigners, a feeling greatly increased by their commitment to Christ. Of course, the message of 1 Peter is relevant beyond the audience of its first readers, since faithfulness to Christ inevitably leads believers into conflict with some aspects of the prevailing culture. As Jobes states, "First Peter challenges Christians to reexamine our acceptance of society's norms and to be willing to suffer the alienation of being a visiting foreigner in our own culture wherever its values conflict with those of Christ" (p. 5).

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The Child-Parent Relationship in the New Testament and Its Environment. By Peter Balla. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2005, xii + 279 pp., \$29.95 paper.

This book is an in-depth investigation into the child-parent relationship from the point of view of the child. It was originally accepted as a *Habilitationschrift* at the Evangelical-Lutheran Theological University in Budapest in 2001. Dr. Balla, Professor of NT at the Karoli Gaspár Reformed University in Budapest, asks the funda-

mental question in this book: "How did [children] experience and fulfill the duties towards their parents? Or, to put it another way, How did children honour their parents?" (p. 1).

After a brief, but helpful introduction, the remainder of the book is an investigation into the ethics associated with children's responsibility to honor their parents. It also represents an exploration into how early Christianity fit into the socio-economic and socio-cultural patterns related to family structure and relationships. Throughout the book, the author uses the term "children" to refer to an established relationship without regard to age, since many of the NT texts examined refer to adult children.

The book is divided into two main parts. In the first three chapters, non-Christian material, or the "environment" of the NT, is examined, the purpose of which is to identify ideas that remained influential around the time of the NT. In chapter 1, Balla conducts a "brief survey" of the literature from Homer to the end of the Greek Classical period, including Plato, Aristotle, the tragedies, laws, and inscriptions. Chapter 2 surveys Greek and Latin sources from the Hellenistic period to the third century AD. Chapter 3 surveys Jewish literature from Hellenistic and early Roman times, including the apocrypha and the pseudepigrapha, Philo, Josephus, and the Qumran texts. Following this, the relevant NT texts are examined in chapters 4 through 6, including the Gospels, the Pauline corpus, and the rest of the NT.

In the first three chapters, Balla follows a similar procedure. He first explores pertinent factors that influenced the child-parent relationship: patriarchy, expectations involving honor, the duty associated with caring for one's parents, the dynamics related to *paterfamilias*, gender differences, social structures, and inheritance expectations. He then explores the expectations placed on the children: they should honor and obey their parents; learn and follow the trade of their parents; care for them as they grow old; provide for their funeral; and honor their reputation after they have died. He then identifies the primary motivations for children to fulfill their expectations: religious motivation (it is the will of the gods); legal motivation (threat of punishment in the courts); material motivation (receipt of inheritance upon the death of the parents); and natural motivation (nature calls for a repayment of the debt owed to parents).

Of particular significance in the first three chapters is Balla's analysis of the limits of children's responsibilities toward their parents. While these limits were not as widespread as the expectations and motivations discussed earlier, their existence demonstrates a general understanding of the child-parent relationship as in some way reciprocal. During the Greek Classical period, parents were expected to teach their children a trade, and failure to do so was considered negligence at some level, thus exempting the child from supporting the parents. Children were also exempt if they were illegitimate or had been hired out for prostitution; this was considered unworthy behavior by the parents. During the Hellenist period, limitations were expressed more in terms of religion (the will of the gods ranked above the will of the parents), philosophy (the gods expected people to become "good" by becoming philosophers), and finally ethics (inappropriate commands by parents were exempt). Jewish family expectations followed these trends with the additional aspect of the importance of following the Torah where there was conflict.

In chapter 4, Balla examines the primary parent-child passages found in the Gospels. While he does not base his analysis on any particular interrelationships or dependencies between the Synoptics, he notes that the order in which he reviews the texts is "compatible with the Two-Document Hypothesis" (p. 114). His methodology is first to review parent-child passages with multi-Gospel attestation within the Synoptics, then to move to single Gospel attestation, and finally to examine the Gospel of John. Following Gerd Theissen's view that there were two major types of early Christian life—wandering charismatics and settled congregations—Balla concludes that both shared the ideals of

honoring one's parents, and early Christian families followed this ideal except in extreme situations where this conflicted with following Jesus.

Within chapter 4, Balla analyzes the Gospel material under two main categories: passages that deal with the command to honor one's parents and passages that deal with tensions within the family. Balla concludes that the child-parent texts reflect a commitment and teaching that supports the honor command. Regarding the specific tensions that are present—the hard sayings of discipleship—Balla concludes that the challenges were the result of how Jesus' followers were met by others rather than a product of Jesus' message. They were challenges by those demonstrating unbelief, exceptional cases, or apocalyptic in that they were expressing the urgency of deciding upon priorities.

In chapter 5, Balla examines the primary parent-child passages found in the Pauline corpus. Here he analyzes the texts under the two main categories of actual child-parent relationships and figurative uses of family imagery. He notes that there is very little family tension discussed, which indicates the presence of settled communities. Within the undisputed Pauline Epistles, he finds that priority is given to the congregation as a family, including all of the expectations around the concepts of honor and obedience discussed earlier. In contrast, the household codes of Colossians and Ephesians reveal a focus on actual family relations and the commandment to honor one's parents. However, in these epistles, the term "father" is used figuratively of God. For Balla, the absence of "limits" in the Pauline corpus indirectly confirms that early Christians did not view the radical sayings of Jesus as contradicting the command to honor one's parents.

In chapter 6, Balla surveys the rest of the NT. Following the pattern established in his study of the Pauline corpus, he analyzes the texts under the two main categories of actual child-parent relationships and figurative uses of family imagery. He finds in these texts that the majority use of the child-parent language is figurative, expressly for the purpose of implying a strong bond of intimacy within the church. Similar to the Pauline corpus, the absence of family tensions reveals that early Christian teachings reflected no contradiction between the teachings of Jesus and the command to honor one's parents.

Without question, Balla has provided a valuable contribution to child-parent studies. Yet there are some problems with Balla's method. His lack of critical reflection on the Gospel tradition ensures a general understanding of the child-parent passages rather than an analysis of the differences and any unique nuances that might be present. Additionally, Balla's consistent treatment of text-critical issues without explanation as to the benefit and his consistent use of non-English quotations without translation limit the maximum benefit of the project to those with more highly developed academic skills. Finally, Balla does not attempt to analyze the child-parent texts within the broader context of the redemptive movement of God through Scripture. The study would be strengthened with a contrast and comparison with both culture and the redemptive plan of God.

Yet even in spite of these weaknesses, the contribution of the study is unquestioned. Balla has done great work in isolating the child-parent texts throughout a significant part of history. He has succeeded in providing some balance in how the hard sayings of Jesus are to be understood within the Christian theological framework. This work provides some unique and challenging insights into the child-parent relationships within the NT and its environment and should be considered by scholars and students alike who are interested in this area of study.

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Covenant of Peace: The Missing Peace in New Testament Theology and Ethics. By Willard M. Swartley. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006, xviii + 542 pp., \$34.00 paper.

Who would have the audacity to suggest that a theme almost entirely ignored in virtually every NT theology book ever written is in fact the central theme of the NT? Who would dare to go even further, not silently highlighting what others have silently ignored but thoroughly *documenting* the pervasive neglect of that theme by others and then writing over 500 pages *arguing* that this theme is “The Missing Peace/Piece”?

Peace, peacemaking, even pacifism, constitute the central concern of Jesus, the apostles, the early church, and the NT canon. That is the claim of Willard Swartley in *Covenant of Peace*. It is an audacious claim, but it is made by one with the credentials to make and defend it. Willard Swartley has devoted his lifetime to studying, writing about, and teaching the NT. He has devoted himself to studying (and practicing) peace and peacemaking. He also speaks from within a denomination and an academic context that make peace and peacemaking central to their self-identity and daily practice. Perhaps he has seen clearly what others have clearly overlooked.

Some of the statistics Swartley presents are astonishing. For example, Paul refers to God as the “God of Peace” seven times, compared to “God of Love” and “God of Hope” only once each. Another example is that there are about 100 explicit references to “peace” in the NT, and precisely four to “reconciliation.” Is that the balance one finds in NT theologies? If one should counter that “reconciliation” is alluded to with verbs and images and events, even when the noun does not appear, Swartley responds that the same is true, and in far greater measure, with “peace.” Swartley’s book, in addition to examining all the “peace” texts of the NT, pays attention to themes such as non-retaliation, love of enemies, overcoming evil with good, blessing those who curse, reconciliation (a subcategory under peace/peacemaking), etc.

Swartley’s book includes fifteen carefully argued chapters. The first two and the final three address themes crucial to understanding Swartley’s (and Jesus’) peace project and the implications of it. The ten central chapters examine the NT literature for its contribution to the “missing peace in New Testament theology.”

Chapter 1 argues that the two Testaments of our Bible are bridged precisely by Jesus’ coming to fulfill and further God’s *shalom*-project. That is what the good news of God’s kingdom is all about. Chapter 2 studies “peace” in the Hebrew Bible and Greco-Roman literature in order to establish the context for Jesus’ life and teaching. It also addresses texts frequently cited as evidence against the view that Jesus consistently taught and modeled peacemaking. Chapters 3 through 12 study the NT literature in this order: Matthew; Mark; Luke; Acts; Paul (two chapters covering Paul’s peace interpretation of Jesus and Paul’s teaching about victory over evil); the Johannine corpus (three chapters including analyses of John’s “conflict ethos,” peace and mission in John, and Revelation’s depiction of God’s “nonviolent victory”). These ten central chapters do far more than analyze “peace texts.” They study Christology, salvation, ethics, patterns in the biblical narratives, and far more.

The final three chapters are extended essays on themes central to Swartley’s theological work. Chapter 13 studies discipleship and imitation (*mimesis*), drawing heavily on the work of René Girard and on biblical scholars’ reactions to and developments of that work. Chapter 14 argues that God is presented in Scripture as our model for ethical living not only in Matthew 5, where that point is quite explicit, but in many other places as well. This chapter also addresses issues of divine wrath and the (non)violence of God. The final chapter concerns ethical praxis, centralizing Swartley’s conviction that theology and ethics cannot be separated. Perhaps the strict separation between these throughout Christian history has been the reason that radical peacemaking has rarely

played a significant role in either field. Additional components are a “Retrospect and Prospect” after chapter 6, where Swartley studies Jesus’ “Covenant of Peace” especially in relation to the Eucharist, and then later two appendices, including documented evidence that virtually all NT theologies have ignored peace as a significant NT theme.

Readers who may wish to read the opening and closing chapters to get “the gist of it” will quickly discover that this book deserves and requires a much more careful reading than that. I discovered that even skipping footnotes (which I was tempted to do when the reading became tedious) was ill advised. Valuable nuggets, or even key links in a chain of reasoning, sometimes required attention to the footnotes. Still, Swartley himself points to the kernel of his book when he outlines the “top five” symbolic world peace perspectives: “‘Blessed are the peacemakers’; Paul’s unique title for God ‘God of Peace’; NT imitation and discipleship texts; Paul’s bold claim that ‘Christ is our peace’; and the Lamb’s War in Revelation” (pp. 400–401).

A few special highlights for me were: (1) those places where Swartley provides his own extended textual readings, often more enlightening than when the views of other scholars were catalogued and assessed; (2) Swartley’s persuasive argument that in his “temple demonstration” Jesus used a whip only on the animals, an argument unfortunately hidden in a footnote (cf. p. 112, n. 44); (3) passages in which Swartley anticipates and responds to precisely those objections that I was beginning to formulate or that I knew other readers would be formulating; (4) the clarity with which Swartley demonstrates how the *Pax Christi* is God’s intended subversive alternative to the *Pax Romana*; (5) Swartley’s well-defended claim that the primary concerns of peacemaking (pacifism) are active not passive (cf. p. 131: “to do good, bless, pray, offer, give, and lend”), including active (though non-violent) resistance to evil, forgiving and loving the enemy, planting seeds of shalom, and so on; (6) the recurring phenomenon that Swartley could build squarely upon the exegetical findings of numerous respected scholars, agreeing with many of their textual readings but then rearranging the pieces around the missing “peace” and discovering radically different implications than others have promoted (at times it felt as though generations of scholars have been trying desperately *not* to see the peace implications of the gospel); (7) the tremendous breadth of scholarly literature that Swartley analyzes and draws upon, spanning a wide range of disciplines and the entire NT canon.

Were there also lowlights? A few. For example, I am simply not convinced that one third of Mark’s Gospel reflects an “exorcistic emphasis” (p. 99). As I see it, even the four texts in Mark where demon expulsions are narrated seem to focus mostly on other themes: Jesus’ authority (Mark 1:23–27); the power of Jesus to restore holistically (Mark 5:1–20); the breaking down of barriers between Jew and Gentile (Mark 7:24–30); the necessity of faith/prayer (Mark 9:14–29).

Readers will no doubt find plenty to quibble about, and they should, because Swartley’s thesis is provocative and deserves both a fair hearing and a careful critique. I suspect readers will critique or challenge the book on some or all of the following. (1) Do “peace” and “peacemaking” necessarily imply “pacifism” (either as that term is usually understood or in the way Swartley redefines it; see esp. pp. 420–21)? (2) Are the three “tests” Swartley uses adequate to judge whether a NT theology does or does not highlight “peace” (cf. p. 417)? (3) Can we build as directly on the work of René Gerard (not necessarily as a biblical scholar but as a “universal cultural analyst”) as Swartley seems to suggest? (4) Notwithstanding Swartley’s clarity about what peacemakers are *for*, do we not need more clarity on what they are *against*? What are Jesus’ followers called to reject? Should they reject war, the existence of a military; the participation of *Christians* in war or in the military (at all levels); or the participation of Christians in all roles requiring violence (e.g. in an armed police force)? Are Christians to advocate

that *nations* dismantle their militaries and their police forces? I sympathize with Swartley's hesitancy to get bogged down in the pros and cons of the many varieties of pacifism, but how will his thesis persuade if it is not specific?

Swartley's book is irenic (appropriately so!). He is gracious with every scholar with whom he disagrees. He is a model of scholarly interaction around important topics. As Swartley emphasizes, the community of Jesus is to be the city on the hill; an alternative society; a contrasting community that worships God alone (not the gods of materialism, security, and comfort); and a community that practices non-violent peacemaking as taught and modeled by Jesus. If the powers in rebellion against God are to be defeated, it will be by God's action in and with such peacemakers. It will not happen by Christians grabbing the reins of political power and the weapons of military might. Swartley is convinced that if we will rediscover and centralize the missing piece/peace, then the church will again be able to confess with Paul: "The God of peace will shortly crush Satan under [our] feet."

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Church History Volume One: From Christ to Pre-Reformation. By Everett Ferguson. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005, 544 pp., \$29.99.

Everett Ferguson, an experienced scholar of the early church, provides a generally concise and thorough summary of the first thirteen centuries of church history in his book *Church History Volume One: From Christ to Pre-Reformation*. Ferguson, professor emeritus of Bible and distinguished scholar-in-residence at Abilene Christian University, earned his Ph.D. from Harvard in 1960 and established himself in the decades to follow with numerous scholarly publications in the area of patristic studies. His publications include *Backgrounds of Early Christianity* (2d ed.; Eerdmans, 1993), *Recent Studies in Early Christianity*, ed. (Garland, 1999), and *A Biblical Ecclesiology for Today* (Eerdmans, 1996). Ferguson is past president of the North American Patristics Society, served as general editor of the two-volume *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity* (Garland, 1990), and has been co-editor of the *Journal of Early Christian Studies*. *Church History Volume Two: Reformation to the Present* (John D. Woodbridge and Frank James III) is forthcoming from Zondervan. In *Church History Volume One*, Ferguson uses his patristics expertise to relate the main narrative of early Christianity and introduce readers to scholarly debates in the field. Though as an introductory text the book does not argue one central thesis, some recurring themes are that church history is a history of people, a theological history, and a morally mixed history.

The preface outlines some of Ferguson's presuppositions and methodologies as a historian. First, Ferguson relates the narrative of church history as one who is friendly to the church. He "writes from the perspective that church history is the story of the greatest community the world has known and the greatest movement in world history" (p. 25). Second, he regards the telling of church history as a theological enterprise. Without explicitly stating that the book engages in historical theologizing, Ferguson speaks in categories that show readers he is not afraid to speak in theological categories and at times make theological judgments regarding the characters of church history. For Ferguson, church history is a narrative with "great acts of faith and great failures in sin and unfaithfulness," as well as a story about people who made "the theological affirmation of being a redeemed people" (p. 25). Third, he gives greatest attention to

Western church history because of his own heritage as a participant in the Western church. Methodologically, Ferguson's emphasis on the West may cause readers to underestimate the importance of certain movements and controversies in the East. But keeping in mind Ferguson's admitted focus on the West should prevent misunderstandings.

The book's twenty-four chapters are not divided into parts or sections, which may present difficulty for readers seeking to categorize church history in periods or eras. Yet the text presents substantive treatment of each major period during the church's first thirteen centuries. The narrative focuses on important ideas and movements rather than a collection of dates. The story proceeds generally along chronological lines, with some jumps back and forth in order to present the histories of movements and geographic regions with continuity. Summaries at the end of each chapter helpfully synthesize major historical trends for any readers who find chronological discontinuities confusing. In-depth profiles of important figures add substance to the narrative, and frequent discussions of art and architecture supplement the standard sources utilized by church history texts. Maps, charts, and illustrations are peppered throughout the book.

On the early church up to Constantine, Ferguson includes nine chapters covering the beginnings of the church in the NT, the generation immediately following the apostles, and Christianity's expansion through the Roman Empire. This section of the book includes substantive, but at times confusing, discussion about major heresies of the period including Marcionism, Gnosticism, and Montanism. Irenaeus, Tertullian, Origen, and Clement of Alexandria are featured prominently in these chapters as Ferguson introduces key figures in the Christian response to persecution and paints a picture of church life in the second and third centuries.

For the period between Constantine's establishment of an imperial church and the dawn of the Middle Ages, the book contains several helpful chapters on major theological controversies, important figures, and church life. Following a chapter on Constantine's rise to power, a chapter on the Arian controversy introduces readers to figures such as Athanasius, the Cappadocians, John Chrysostom, Ambrose, and Jerome. A chapter on Christological controversies leading up to Chalcedon is followed by a chapter on Augustine, Pelagius, and semipelagianism—the only chapter in the book focusing on a single person.

Medieval Christianity comprises roughly the final 250 pages, though Ferguson admits that it is difficult to date precisely the beginning of the Middle Ages. This section switches back and forth between chapters on the Western church and chapters on the Eastern church, although it gives more attention to the West. A chapter on the transition to the Middle Ages describes the movements of specific peoples in Europe leading up to the Barbarian invasions of the Roman Empire and ends with a discussion of the papacy's development in the fourth and fifth centuries. Subsequent chapters trace the rise of monasticism, political developments in Europe, the history of missions, the contrast between East and West, and the course of the papacy. In a helpful chapter on the Western church from the seventh to ninth centuries, Ferguson shows how, under Charlemagne, the papacy converged with the history of the Western empire. The Crusades are an important component of medieval Christianity for Ferguson while discussions of Scholasticism and the East-West schism round out this section. A two-page general bibliography at the end of the book presents important reference works on the early church and a list of other books on pre-Reformation church history. Ferguson makes up for the brevity of the bibliography by including at the end of each chapter a list of secondary sources for further study. The book concludes with an index of important people, themes, and events.

The book has numerous strengths, several of which readers should note. First, evangelical readers will likely appreciate that Ferguson takes seriously the Bible as a historical source and as an influence in the church. In the chapter on "Jesus and the

Beginnings of the Church,” Ferguson presents as historical the biblical accounts of the Jerusalem church, the church in Rome, the church in Antioch, and even the resurrection of Jesus. Discussing the date of Peter’s arrival in Rome, Ferguson appears to assign greater historical accuracy to the Bible than to Eusebius. Though Eusebius dated Peter’s arrival in Rome in the early thirties, Ferguson maintains that “the silence of both Acts and Romans argues that Peter’s arrival in Rome must be placed later than that” (p. 38). Not only does Ferguson acknowledge the Bible’s reliability as a historical source, but he also highlights the Bible’s influence in the church. Discussing heresy in the early church, Ferguson argues that Christians always followed the NT’s teaching and “did not create the canon, but recognized it” (p. 121). Regarding the fourth-century church, Ferguson notes that the influence of important figures “should not blind the student to the centrality of the Bible in all aspects of the early church and in the theology and spirituality of these men” (p. 225). For Scholasticism, he notes similarly, “it is well to be reminded of the importance scholastic theologians gave to the study of the Bible” (p. 423).

Second, the book acquaints readers with key primary sources. For each period covered in the book, Ferguson summarizes the arguments in key documents written by important figures. The works surveyed include books by Augustine, Anselm, Aquinas, and many others. Interaction with primary sources exposes readers to such famous quotations as Cyprian’s, “a person cannot have God as his Father who does not have the church as his mother” (p. 167), and Arius’s, “There was (once) when Christ was not” (p. 193). Ferguson’s discussion of the arguments and content of primary sources is more extensive than the discussion of the same sources in standard church history texts such as Justo Gonzalez’s *The Story of Christianity Volume 1: The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation* (HarperCollins, 1984) and Robert Baker’s *A Summary of Christian History* (3d ed.; Broadman & Holman, 2005).

Third, Ferguson discusses historiographical method and informs readers of scholarly debates surrounding key issues. Discussion of methodology generally centers on how to interpret primary sources. For example, the chapter on heresies in the second century explains that Gnostic writings should be interpreted in light of the Nag Hammadi codices. Similarly, the chapter on combating rival interpretations of Christianity discusses how historians interpret liturgical documents in light of Hippolytus’s *Apostolic Tradition*, and the chapter on the church’s development in the third century discusses the major sources for knowledge of Cyprian’s life. Closely related to historiographical method, Ferguson informs readers of scholarly debates over the interpretation of sources. For example, he discusses competing theories about the identity and work of Hippolytus and recent attempts to rehabilitate Nestorius’s reputation. Discussions of method are not intended to be thorough or complete, but they serve the valuable purpose of introducing church history students to methodological concerns.

Fourth, Ferguson does not shy away from making judgments regarding the theology and morality of persons in church history, although he maintains objectivity in recounting the narrative. Evangelical readers will likely appreciate the way the book compares the beliefs and actions of church figures with those prescribed by orthodox Christian teaching. Discussing the heresy of Gnosticism, for example, Ferguson remarks, “One may have the right words but the wrong ideas” (p. 100). Another example of Ferguson’s willingness to make moral judgments occurs in his treatment of the crusaders, whom he is not afraid to criticize for their brutality. Roman Catholic readers may not appreciate the manner in which the book seems quick at times to use language that casts the Roman Catholic Church in a negative light. Examples of such language include comparing pagan practices to Roman Catholic ones and asserting that the pope “put himself on the wrong side of history” in his actions surrounding the writing of the *Magna Carta* (p. 472). Another example of language Roman Catholic readers may find troubling

occurs when Ferguson appears to contrast “distinctively Roman Catholic” spirituality with “the highest in Christian devotion.” Discussing Bernard of Clairvaux, Ferguson writes, “Aside from the Marian piety, Bernard’s spirituality is not distinctively Roman Catholic and belongs to the highest in Christian devotion” (pp. 447–48).

Fifth, frequent lists highlight important points and personalities. These lists appear in nearly every chapter and are set apart from the rest of the text in a manner that makes them quickly recognizable. Lists discuss factors that led to historical movements, possible explanations for events, and characteristics of people and events. Though the lists are helpful, readers should be careful not to assume that all items in a list are equally important. Regarding all items in a list as equally important could, for example, lead a reader to wrongly assume that at the Council of Chalcedon discussion about monks was equally important as the two natures-one person description of the incarnate Christ. Similar errors could occur in the interpretation of other lists.

Though the book’s strengths are numerous, it has several limitations. Stylistically, Ferguson frequently places background information for earlier chapters in later chapters. This awkward placement of background information will not be as problematic for experienced historians but could prove confusing for students—the book’s primary audience. As far into the book as chapter twenty-three, parenthetical notes tell the reader to consult later chapters for further explanation and information. The necessity of placing background information in later chapters may result from Ferguson organizing the book in a manner that is not strictly chronological. But with some additional editing, Ferguson could have eliminated most calls for readers to consult later chapters.

Theologically, Ferguson does a generally good job of preventing his theological presuppositions from distorting his recounting of history. Though some readers may wonder whether his affiliation with the Churches of Christ colors discussions of baptism, the book gives no indications that the author holds a belief in baptismal regeneration. The one area in which it appears that Ferguson recounts theological developments incorrectly is soteriology—specifically Augustine’s theology of grace and predestination. In the chapter on Augustine, Ferguson refers to Augustine’s position on individual election as a “novelty” (p. 283) and “extreme” (p. 277). However, predestination appears prior to Augustine in Clement of Rome, and emphases on salvation by grace alone appear in both Basil of Caesarea and Macarius Symeon. Thomas Oden’s *The Justification Reader* (Eerdmans, 2002) ably demonstrates as well that justification by grace alone permeates patristic writings. For the years following Augustine, Ferguson argues, “‘Semipelagianism’ was a Western formulation of the general Christian orthodoxy on human nature” (p. 282). Such a classification, while accurately reflecting a prevailing semipelagianism in some periods, seems to downplay the Augustinian position of historical giants like Aquinas and the Reformers.

Compared with other texts surveying the history of the early church, Ferguson has a very small amount of material explaining how the Middle Ages led up to the Reformation. Gonzalez includes an entire chapter entitled “In Quest of Reformation,” in which he discusses the Conciliar Movement, Wycliffe, Huss, and other reform movements prior to the Reformation. Baker explains the Conciliar Movement in a chapter on “Renaissance Church Councils” and explains factors that eventuated in the Reformation in another chapter on “Ecclesiastical Dissent.” In contrast, Ferguson contains minimal mention of the Reformation and discusses pre-Reformation developments only generally in a chapter entitled “Portents of Decline.” Instructors wishing to use this book in courses that explain developments leading up to the Reformation may need to use supplemental texts such as chapters from Gonzalez or Baker or Heiko Oberman’s *Forerunners of the Reformation: The Shape of Late Medieval Thought* (James Clarke, 2002). Ferguson discusses important figures in the Eastern church, but the book’s Western focus may cause some readers to desire supplemental information regarding key figures in the east—such

as Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, and Gregory of Nazianzus—and key events in the east—such as the Iconoclastic Controversy and the Schism of 1054. Ferguson's treatments of the beginnings of the church and the Crusades compare favorably with other introductory texts. Additionally Ferguson provides unique insight into the interaction between church history and political history, the day-to-day life of average church people in various eras, and the importance of art and architecture in the life of the church.

Overall, *Church History Volume 1* is a helpful introduction to the early church because of its concise summary of major ideas and themes, emphasis on the Bible, and discussion of historiographical issues. The weaknesses mentioned above do not cancel out the book's great strengths and present only minimal difficulties for students and professors using this book. *Church History Volume 1* would make an excellent textbook for undergraduate church history surveys because of its readability and helpful graphics. The book could be utilized in seminary courses as well but will not likely replace standard textbooks such as Gonzalez. Supplemental texts would be especially necessary in a seminary or graduate setting. Lay people in churches with unusual interests in early church history would also glean great benefit from this volume. With this work, Ferguson accomplishes the goal he states in the dedication: to help students enter into "the life of the church."

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