

BOOK REVIEWS

Nuzi Texts and Their Uses as Historical Evidence. By Maynard Paul Maidman. Writings from the Ancient World, 18. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2010, xxvi + 296 pp., \$34.95 paper.

The Society of Biblical Literature series “Writings from the Ancient World” offers students, teachers, and general readers the opportunity to compare ancient Near Eastern texts with written materials from other parts of the world. The overall series goal is to provide up-to-date, readable English translations of a wide range of genres attested throughout the various cultures and periods of the ancient Near East (letters, myths, hymns, economic documents, administrative records, and more). Reliable and clear translations should naturally prove to be “valuable sources of information on daily life, history, religion, and the like in the preclassical world” (p. ix). Previous installments in the series include works on textual materials from Sumer, Mesopotamia, Ugarit, and Egypt.

Maidman correctly argues that the Nuzi texts deserve a volume in the series for several reasons. The nearly 7,000 tablets cover a chronological period of approximately 150 years within the Late Bronze Age and come from a variety of more than three dozen archaeologically attested archival contexts, both public and private. They are unique in the ancient world in detailing the social, economic, and political life of one particular urban community (p. 5). In addition, the Nuzi documents stand as important historical sources for the complex relationships between the Late Bronze Age states of Arrapha and Assyria (p. 1). Finally, despite its isolation and laconic contacts with more well-known cities and countries of the ancient Near East, the tablets do demonstrate that Nuzi not only participated in, but also contributed to the larger contextual socio-legal and political milieu of Mesopotamian society (p. 12). Therefore, the Nuzi tablets are not irrelevant or inconsequential resources for the historian of the ancient Near East. Rather, they are significant writings from the ancient world.

The primary aim for this particular volume is twofold. First, Maidman intended the work to function as a chrestomathy—“a sampler of different text genres found in the Nuzi corpus” (p. 5). However, Maidman did not organize the chrestomathy according to text type or find spot. Instead, his second aim was to present the texts as “evidentiary material” in five case studies. Consequently, the case studies determined the selection of the ninety-six Nuzi texts included in this volume. Understandably, then, some genres are not included here, but in general, the overall taxonomy of Nuzi text types is broadly represented (see the catalog of genres on p. 296).

Since each chapter covers one case, this second aim also provides the structural outline for the book. The first and last cases focus on the broader issues of politics and economics respectively. Hence, chapter 1 addresses the knotty problem of the political relationship between the kingdoms of Assyria and Arrapha prior to the destruction of Nuzi, an important city in the latter empire. Maidman argues convincingly that the tablets point to Assyria as the destroyer of Nuzi. Chapter 5 investigates the nature of the ubiquitous *ilku*, a real estate tax that has remained a thorny crux in the issue of land tenure at Nuzi. Maidman maintains the epigraphic evidence proves that Nuzi land was alienable and that the *ilku* eventually transferred along with the title to the land. Since earlier scholarly consensus held that the *ilku* proved Nuzi land inalienable,

Maidman's resolution of this issue is fundamental to understanding (and rewriting) the social and economic history of this ancient culture.

The remaining three case studies involve parochial internal affairs. Chapter 2 documents the political corruption (bribery, extortion, misuse of public funds) and criminal acts (burglary, kidnapping, rape) of a former mayor of Nuzi, Kušši-ḫarpe, and his cronies. Chapter 3 examines a complex dispute over the legal title of a large tract of real estate. The tablets of the Kizzuk dossier pit opposing families from the same clan and demonstrate a well-developed legal system encompassing class action litigation, trial records, appeals, and affidavits. Finally, the tablets studied in chapter 4 follow the sad economic and social decline of a Nuzi landowning peasant family. Through an exchange of slaves, a loan of seed barley, and several successive adoption-land sales, Enna-mati, a scion of one of the powerful Nuzi families, systematically exploits a widow and her three sons.

Maidman begins each chapter with an introduction summarizing the evidence provided by the relevant Nuzi texts for the case study under consideration. Next, every tablet is transliterated and translated. Hand copies are not provided, but Maidman does include data on the find spot (if known), initial publication, and other published treatments. In the majority of cases, Maidman offers a brief introduction to each individual text prior to its transliteration and translation.

An adequate number of helpful endnotes examine the finer issues of argumentation, transliteration, and translation. In addition, the book includes a valuable bibliography and a number of indices listing personal and geographical names, occupations, and a catalog of selected text genres. At the beginning of the work, Maidman also provides useful maps, chronological and genealogical charts, and two appendices on find spots and seal impressions.

There is no doubt that Maidman, a well-respected Nuzi scholar, has produced an excellent and useful volume for this series. The last chapter on the *ilku* is able by itself to guarantee the work's lasting value in Nuzi and comparative studies. Moreover, through developing the case studies, he has succeeded in restoring the reputation of the Nuzi texts as valuable socio-economic, legal, and historical ancient Near Eastern documents.

Nevertheless, the average *JETS* reader will be somewhat disappointed. In the past, the Nuzi tablets have played a central role in a number of now discredited scholarly reconstructions of the social and legal world of the patriarchs. Unfortunately, Maidman devotes only a half paragraph and one brief endnote to this issue (pp. 11–12) and abandons the reader to wish for more explanation.

In addition, biblical references, either comparative or contrastive, are entirely missing from the case studies. Now this most likely was an unstated restriction imposed by the nature of the series (p. ix). But if the Nuzi tablets share an authentic historical, legal, and cultural milieu with the rest of the ancient Near East, then properly investigating comparisons of the Nuzi documents with different kinds and types of literature, including biblical, is appropriate and legitimate. In this case, Maidman's work provides an excellent beginning, but more work remains.

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Is God a Moral Monster? Making Sense of the Old Testament God. By Paul Copan. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011, 252 pp., \$14.99.

Paul Copan holds the Pledger Family Chair of Philosophy and Ethics at Palm Beach Atlantic University in West Palm Beach, Florida. He has produced a number of works

in the area of apologetics, and this book fits quite well into the apologetics arena on two counts: (1) he already has addressed a number of OT issues separately in his work to this point; and (2) this book is aimed at the New Atheism movement, as reflected in the titles throughout, and so is written very much in an apologetic vein.

The book has an introduction, four parts, a section with discussion/study questions for each chapter, and a notes section. Part 1, "Neo-Atheism," is a very brief section (8 pages) in which Copan identifies and characterizes the New Atheists. They have "capitalized on evil done 'in the name of religion' to tar all things religious with the same brush" and have capitalized on the "West's increasingly 'post-Christian' status" to provide the "new public, popular face" to an old movement (p. 16). Copan's critique begins by noting that, for all the bluster they have created and the following some of their representatives seem to have gained, their numbers have been stagnant for decades (p. 16). In addition, their arguments and/or positions are weak, less than intellectually rigorous (p. 17), and less than intellectually honest when it comes to the facts of history (p. 18). Some believers have offered a strong intellectual response to the New Atheism; however, Copan felt that the area of OT ethics had not been addressed adequately (p. 19), hence this book.

Part 2, "God: Gracious Master or Moral Monster?," has three chapters. Here Copan addresses the New Atheists' claim that God, in expecting exclusive devotion, is essentially narcissistic, vain, and prone to fits of jealous rage, all qualities any decent human being should reject. His answer is that God is not proud, but realistic, since by definition, God is "the greatest conceivable being, which makes him worthy of worship" (p. 28). To expect people to acknowledge and follow him is an expression of kindness and favor, allowing them access to a life of privilege and blessing, not a life of demeaning, oppressive subjugation (p. 29). In addition, to acknowledge God as jealous is to affirm God's great love for people and his deep concern for their best interests (pp. 34–35). Cast in terms of love, the subject also points to the concept of divine vulnerability. The idea is that God's great passion for his people leads him, as a "wounded lover," to suffer when seeing them live in ways that are dangerous and destructive (p. 37).

Part 3, "Life in the Ancient Near East and in Israel," the largest by far (13 chapters, 149 pages), addresses a wide range of issues including food regulations (chaps. 7–8), odd and apparently unusually severe laws (chap. 9), the status and role of women (chaps. 10–11), slavery (chaps. 12–14), and the military conquest of Canaan (chaps. 15–17). The foundational concept in the section is that God's ideals are set forth in creation intentions (Genesis 1–2) but reflected imperfectly in the law of Moses, "a gracious gift temporarily given to national Israel that bridged God's ideals and the realities of ancient Near Eastern life and human hard-heartedness" (pp. 59, 68). This affirmation allows for seeing incremental, forward progress in God's dealing with the Hebrews, a redemptive movement through differing stages of history to a clearer reflection of God's original intentions, providing the basis for nuanced understanding and application of problematic commands (pp. 60, 62, 65).

Part 4, "Sharpening the Moral Focus," includes two chapters and functions as the conclusion to the study. In this section, Copan returns to some standard philosophical questions such as the origin and nature of morals and "oughtness" and asserts that a theistic faith perspective offers a more sensible explanation for both than an atheistic perspective (pp. 209–14). He then includes documentation of the positive value of "religion" in history (obviously, specifically Christianity), then concludes by pointing to Jesus as the key to ultimate answers on all these hard questions: "The ultimate resolution is found in God's clarifying Word to us and the One who became flesh and lived among us, who died and rose again on our behalf. The God whom the New Atheists consider a monster is not just a holy God to be reckoned with but a loving, self-sacrificing God who invites us to be reconciled to him" (p. 222).

We will all probably admit that we live in a time when opponents to Christians and Christianity have become increasingly strident and vocal. Even if their numbers have not increased dramatically, their boldness and volume have. In such a context, Copan's book is a welcome contribution. Written at a reasonably popular level, it will be a great encouragement and help to many faithful believers, often mystified and overwhelmed at emotional, and sometimes caustic, responses they get to their life of faith and their witness to Christ.

In terms of critique, I offer a few observations. First, on the one hand, Copan is typically circumspect in statements about law, and his treatment of the purity laws is one of the best popular treatments now available (although I would suggest more of a God/holiness-focus than a people-focus in its explanation; see chap. 7). On the other hand, he followed Sailhamer's idiosyncratic view that in the Pentateuch, Moses is intended as a negative example of legalistic law-keeping to be contrasted with Abraham who was a person of faith. The perspective implies that the law was given as an avenue for becoming right with God, when, in fact, the law was given to the people of God as guidance for living out the covenant relationship they had been given as gift.

Second, on the one hand, Copan provides a strong and thorough treatment of the problem of the proposed destruction of the Canaanites, but, on the other hand, he sometimes overreaches the evidence in trying to solidify his position. For example, he follows Millard in suggesting that the goal of the Hebrew campaign in Canaan was not so much to remove the people as to remove the Canaanite religion, specifically their idols and all their accoutrements (p. 173). But the idea that they could actually eliminate Canaanite religious influence without removing the people is far-fetched. To bolster the idea, Copan, apparently following Hess, also suggests that the goal of the approach to Jericho was not to destroy but to inspect the city and to see if the residents would open their gates and evade the ban (p. 178), but again, the evidence offered is weak. Copan also added that despite language suggesting obliteration of the Canaanites, they continued to live where Israel lived, but he failed to note that their presence was considered a result of the sin of the people in failing to rid the land of them (p. 182). Similar observations, both positive and negative, could be made regarding Copan's treatment of the status and role of women in ancient Israel.

Last, the use of endnotes instead of footnotes, especially when numerous content notes are included, continues to irritate many readers.

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The Whole Counsel of God, Volume 1: God's Mighty Acts in the Old Testament. By Richard C. Gamble. Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2009, xxxiii + 718 pp., \$49.99.

The Whole Counsel of God, as the title implies, is an ambitious work planned as three volumes covering respectively the areas of OT theology, NT theology, and systematic, or historical, theology. Gamble writes in the introduction, "*The Whole Counsel of God* is written to continue discussions of the relationship between exegesis and hermeneutics, and the interrelationships of biblical, systematic, and historical theology. [It] will attempt to meet the need for a comprehensive theology that is attuned to the methodological advantages of biblical theology, but will also combine that advantage with the strengths of historical and systematic theology" [p. xxxiii].

Volume one is divided into five parts. In part one, Gamble provides a methodology not only for this first volume, but for the whole series. As such, the first volume will be vital

for understanding the methodological underpinnings of the remaining two volumes. Gamble develops a working definition of theology in general and then seeks to define more carefully the meaning and proper structure of systematic theology. Gamble answers the question concerning the structure of systematic theology by referring to three other models—biblical theology, practical theology, and missiological theology—to show how each, despite their discrete contributions, is different than systematic theology. The final chapter in part one is devoted particularly to the field of OT theology. Parts two through four trace God's revelation through three historical periods: from Adam to the flood, from Abraham to Moses, and the prophetic and wisdom-poetic era. The final part offers a brief conclusion titled "God's People Respond to the *Magnalia Dei*."

Let me begin with some of the book's positive aspects. The book's best part is its introduction and opening chapters on methodology. Gamble is most at home here and is qualified to cover his subject well. The book's first part is really an introduction to the entire trilogy, and thus sets out a definition for how to do biblical theology and the relationship between biblical and systematic theology. Gamble concludes that we should reject any theological system that follows what Charles Hodge labeled speculative, mystical, or inductive methods in favor of a method which recognizes the fallen nature of man and seeks to be "receptive to God's revelation and reconstructive of it" (p. 98). Gamble speaks with authority in his introduction and is obviously a master of his subject here.

Since Gamble is not an OT scholar, he offers insights into issues that are not often encountered in OT theology. His "outsider" status allows him to divert from traditional streams of thought and offer excurses on various subjects. These arise often in the section entitled "Revelation from Adam through the Flood" in which Gamble strings together several chapters that have little or no involvement with the OT *per se*, but which deal with such issues as the imputation of Adam's sin on mankind or the supposed trichotomy of human nature—which Gamble argues against.

Gamble can be an engaging writer. Although the book's style and content is uneven, Gamble is not a boring author and he keeps his reader engaged throughout.

As with all books, *The Whole Counsel of God* sometimes disappoints the reader's expectations. At times these disappointments are significant. First, although recognizing that the book is written by an outsider, this reviewer was surprised by the extremely limited range of sources Gamble used in the book, not in his introduction, but in the body of the book when he deals specifically with the OT. The dust jacket claims that Gamble draws "on the best work . . . throughout church history." Outside of an immense number of references to Calvin and Gerhardus Vos, Gamble largely limits his footnotes to a few recent introductions (the older introduction by E. J. Young and the more recent one by Dillard and Longman) and theologies (mainly Walter Kaiser and Paul House). One result of the narrow range of source material is that Gamble rarely interacts with opinions with which he disagrees, except in cursory fashion.

Second, Gamble treats the content of the OT unevenly. To a certain point this is understandable and perhaps unavoidable. Even the recent theology by Bruce Waltke devotes a twenty-page chapter to the book of Ruth, while Jeremiah received a page and a half. But with Gamble, the gaps come in places one would not expect. For instance, when running through the patriarchal narratives in Genesis, Gamble, the Reformed Calvin scholar, skips the whole narrative of the birth of Jacob and Esau and the stealing of Esau's birthright. It seems at this point that Gamble may have inadvertently left this section out. After writing a very brief section about Isaac, he jumps into the middle of Jacob's story with his dream at Bethel. He writes as if we have already been introduced to Jacob. Perhaps this was an oversight, but if so, it is a very unfortunate one. Along the same lines, one would expect that in a treatment of the OT by a Reformation scholar, there would be a significant treatment of the hardening of Pharaoh's heart. In a brief

paragraph on the subject (p. 386), all we get is the conclusion that "Pharaoh was not simply a man who did bad things. He was a bad man who did bad things." But what is Gamble saying here? Is there a difference between Pharaoh and the rest of humanity in this regard? This passage would have provided a perfect forum for Gamble to treat us to the fruits of Reformation scholarship and the rest of church history, but he passed on it.

The book's third difficulty is Gamble's lack of consistency in both style and content. It is really unclear throughout what kind of book he is writing and to whom he is writing. In terms of the book's genre, Gamble seems to waver between writing a survey of the OT, devoting large amounts of space to essentially retelling the biblical narrative, writing an OT introduction, dealing with issues of authorship and date, and writing an OT theology. One might argue that he has combined the elements of all three, but on the other hand, Gamble is not an OT scholar, so his introductory material is really just a shallow rehashing of a few, sometimes dated, evangelical introductions. At times his retelling of the biblical narrative is engaging, but Gamble devotes far too much space to issues which he is not equipped to handle, and he sacrifices the space he could have been using to write concerning his area of expertise—a Reformation interpretation of OT theology.

In terms of the inconsistency of style, again it is unclear to whom he is writing. His introduction is scholarly, at times difficult to follow if one is new to the discussion, and formal throughout. The same could be said of his excursions on the imputation of Adam's sin or on reason in theology after the fall. But when the topic turns to the patriarchal narrative, suddenly Gamble has become a preacher telling stories about his move to Florida (p. 316) or resorting to slang ("[We] are about to nuke this place"; p. 336). His popular tone is at times grating.

The result of these inconsistencies in style and content make it difficult to determine a good audience for this book. OT scholars will appreciate some parts of it, but they will not want to wade through all 700 pages to find the 50 or so pages of good fruit. Students will want to read it, but I cannot imagine a class for which this book would be useful enough to assign. It will at best be included on a suggested reading list.

Having made these negative assessments about the book, I am very interested to see what develops in volumes two and three. I fully anticipate that the volume covering the NT will far outshine this initial volume and that the final volume on historical theology, being in Gamble's backyard as it were, will be the best of the three volumes.

In conclusion, Gamble has embarked on an interesting adventure and one that is needed in our discipline. He crosses boundaries that in previous decades were seen as impassable. He draws together biblical, systematic, and historical theology into a unified whole. In the end, however, although there are some excellent parts to this book, Gamble's attempt to cover the entire field keeps his book as a whole from being excellent.

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Key Questions about Christian Faith: Old Testament Answers. By John Goldingay. Grand Rapids, Baker: 2010, ix + 345 pp., \$24.99 paper.

Key Questions is a collection of some of John Goldingay's voluminous writings through the years. Most of the articles in the book have been published elsewhere, and their original publication data is included in the footnotes. Anthologies can be notoriously difficult to review, especially in a volume such as this that covers such a wide variety of material. For example, the first article in the volume is entitled "Who is God?"

and the last "How Should We Think about Same-Sex Relationships?" There is no stated method for the ordering of the essays, which frees up the reader to pick and choose chapters according to personal interest. However, this could also lead one to wonder if any overarching message was missed.

The very title of the book, *Key Questions about the Christian Faith*, raises some questions. Several of the articles fit the title nicely, e.g. "Who is God?," "What is Sin?," "What is the People of God?," and "How Does Prayer Work?" Others leave me thinking that the definition of *Key Questions* is indeed very subjective, e.g. "Should I Tithe Net or Gross?" or "Does God Care About Animals?" to name but two. This is not to say that the articles are not interesting or thought-provoking. Rather, I find myself wondering how some are raised to the level of "key questions." There is a much better explanation of the thinking behind the book in the preface, where the author states, "Sometimes I write because there is a question that nags at me, sometimes because there is a question that nags at other people. This book is a collection of answers to questions of both kinds about the Old Testament and the way it interacts with Christian faith and life."

Constraints of space do not permit sustained interaction with each of the chapters of the book. Those who are theologically inclined will appreciate the chapters on covenant, circumcision, or how the OT looks at other religions. Others, who would classify themselves as more practical in focus, might find the chapters on prayer, animals, or the Song of Songs more appealing. The common denominator throughout is Goldingay's concern to show the relationship between the OT and Christian faith and life.

Goldingay challenges Christians to rethink their starting point when relating Scriptures to contemporary issues. In addressing the issue of same-sex relationships, Goldingay relates an interesting perspective: "New insight on Scripture often comes through people starting from secular premises rather than from the traditional Christian ones that have made Christians read Scripture according to a certain slant" (p. 287). Also, in explaining the place of tithing for the believers of today, he writes, "I suggest that Christians are now called to tithe their income and to direct their tithes to causes that will thus provide nourishment, education, basic health care, and health education for people in the two-thirds world" (p. 169). In addition, while exploring the idea of leadership, he alertly shares the results of searching the terms "leadership" and "servant" on his school's website, noting that instances of the former expression far outnumber the latter, even though leaders in Scripture are more often called "servants" than "leaders." While it is quite possible that the reader might disagree with Goldingay's conclusions on these or other subjects, his conclusions do reflect a level of thoughtfulness that is worthy of attention.

The reader will also find a very human element from the author throughout the book. In explaining what it means to be human, Goldingay brings his own painful experience to light: "I write in the context of being married to someone who has been physically disabled, who in her own being is a different person from the one I married, and who as I write has just asked me what day it is" (p. 42). Thus, instead of unpacking "being human" only in theoretical terms, he is able to bring to bear some new insights to his understanding of the text. For example, Goldingay addresses the idea that "task" is part of the human identity. But how might this relate to the disabled? As Goldingay observes, "They invite us to a patient, listening attentiveness that replaces decisiveness and competitiveness and offers us transformation. They invite us to the play, spontaneity, and impulse that are part of being human" (pp. 45–46).

His relationship with his ill wife reappears in his discussion on the Song of Songs, where he sorrowfully notes, "Thinking about the Song makes me reflect on the way over the past year or two I have been trying to let myself feel the warmth of feelings for Ann that I used to have, which is a painful business because it reminds me of happier times . . . but it still feels also a good thing" (p. 317). These thoughts strike me as

powerful especially because they are real. They are a good example of what it means to engage the text personally.

This book serves as a fitting illustration of Goldingay's abilities as both a scholar and Christian, and as an invitation for the student to pursue these matters even more. It is not difficult to see how he has influenced a generation of students to bring rigorous theological thinking to the life of the Church, encouraging them to take the risk of living as a counter-cultural community.

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Ezra and Nehemiah. By Andrew E. Steinmann. Concordia Commentary. St. Louis, MO: Concordia, 2010, liii + 673 pp., \$42.99.

The editor's preface indicates that the Concordia Commentary is designed "to assist pastors, missionaries, and teachers of Scripture to convey God's Word with greater clarity, understanding, and faithfulness to the divine intent of the text." It is conservative in its convictions, accepts the Lutheran emphasis on law and gospel as key overarching doctrines of Scripture, and is a Christological commentary that has icons placed in the margins.

After an extensive 28-page bibliography comes a thorough 125-page introduction that weighs different theories about several controversial issues. After reviewing four different authorship theories, Steinmann concludes that an unknown editor (not the Chronicler) compiled both Ezra and Nehemiah (though not as one book), but this editor added only 59 verses in Ezra and 29 verses in Nehemiah. He dates the editing of Nehemiah to sometime after the high priesthood of Jaddua in the reign of Darius III (c. 335 BC), while Ezra was written sometime after 457 BC (Ezra 10:17).

After reviewing the historical era of the Achaemenid Persian era from the rise of Cyrus the great (559–530 BC) as king of Media to the fall of Darius III (335–331 BC) to the Greeks, he deals with a series of chronological issues. Giving due consideration to several possibilities, he concludes the following: (1) Zerubbabel is not the same person as Sheshbazzar, but a leader of the construction of the temple during Sheshbazzar's governorship; (2) the year of return to Jerusalem was 533 BC based on an examination of the sabbatical years; (3) Ezra returned in 458 BC in the reign of Artaxerxes I (not 398 BC in the reign of Artaxerxes II); (4) Nehemiah served in Jerusalem as governor under Artaxerxes I (not Artaxerxes II) based on two papyri from Egypt; (5) the list of six high priests goes from the return to Jerusalem down to the era of Darius III (rejecting Cross's reconstruction); and (6) it is possible to trace the history of the governors of Yahud, Samaria, and of the province beyond the river.

Next, Steinmann tackles literary issues including the following: (1) the identification of the documents consulted or quoted in Ezra and Nehemiah; (2) the literary method of developing parallel returns, problems, and resolutions in the two halves of Ezra as a means of emphasizing God's grace; and (3) the literary methods of emphasizing the building of the wall and providing for the needs of the people in the two parts of Nehemiah.

The major theological themes Steinmann emphasizes are: (1) worship (including its Christological implications); (2) the temple and its ministers (and their Christological implications); (3) prayer and Scripture; and (4) marriage. He ends the introduction with sections on law and gospel in Ezra and Nehemiah, the use of these two books in later intertestamental and NT writings, plus observations about the Hebrew and Aramaic languages found in Ezra and Nehemiah.

The commentary itself has a good balance between Ezra (238 pages) and Nehemiah (245 pages). The study of each literary unit includes (1) excellent textual notes that discuss the Hebrew text, sometimes phrase by phrase, emphasizing semantic, grammatical, intertextual, and syntactical aspects that are of great assistance to any reader, especially those who need some help with their Hebrew; and (2) a commentary. The commentary includes five excurses on issues such as Luther on Ezra, the origin of Samaritanism, and the walls of Jerusalem in the era of Nehemiah.

When discussing the book of Ezra, Steinmann concludes that Cyrus's decree in Ezra 1:2–4 was an oral proclamation about building a temple that expresses royal policy consistent with the Cyrus cylinder, but his words do not imply that Cyrus had saving faith in Yahweh, for Isa 45:4–5 says that Cyrus did not know God. Since the individual number of items in Ezra 1:9–10 do not match the total in 1:11 (5,400) Steinmann accepts the possibility of some textual confusion during scribal transmission. Although Ezra 3–6 records how the people attempting to restore normal life and worship were strongly opposed (Ezra 4–5), these threats in the time of Darius (4:24–5:17), Xerxes (4:6), and Artaxerxes (4:7–23) only enhance the texts' emphasis on how God providentially uses his people, their leaders, and even the Gentiles to overcome these hostilities. Steinmann views the Aramaic documents that are quoted as authentic and understands Tattenai as simply carrying out his bureaucratic duties in Ezra 5. The purpose of this story was to emphasize that continued progress was made on the temple due to the grace of God (5:5). Steinmann agrees with those who think some words have dropped out of the dimensions of the temple in 6:3. He sees Ezra, the skilled scribe, as a highly placed government official. Ezra 9–10 is really about rejecting idolatry (not marriage or divorce) so that the nation would remain undefiled. This narrative demonstrates the importance of prayer, confession of sins, and the value of wise spiritual leadership in times of crisis.

Nehemiah 1–6 are not just about building walls (mentioned only in 5:16), but also about the value of prayer, being a wise leader in stressful situations, dealing with opposition, and acknowledging that all success comes from God. Steinmann takes the year in 1:1 to be the 19th year of Artaxerxes and concludes that Hanani (1:2; 7:2) was Nehemiah's brother. Steinmann demonstrates how Nehemiah's prayer in 1:4–11 is related to phraseology in other biblical texts (particularly Deuteronomy). Throughout the story Nehemiah credits his success to "the hand of God upon me" (2:8, 18), a clear sign of God's grace. Steinmann views Jerusalem's rebuilt walls to include only the city of David (he includes a few maps drawings) and he defends Nehemiah's imprecatory prayer (4:4–5) since Nehemiah does not seek revenge for himself. In the difficult verse 4:17b he proposes a scribal error and read "in his right hand" instead of "the waters." The "we" in 5:10 does not mean that Nehemiah was among those charging high interest. In Nehemiah 7–13, Steinman accepts the view that the ministry of Ezra and Nehemiah overlapped (8:8; 13:26; 13:36) and believes there is no conflict in saying the Israelites had not celebrated the Feast of Booths like this since the days of Joshua (contrast 2 Chr 30:26 and 35:18). Steinmann believes the prayer in chapter 9, which reviews the history of the nation's rebellion and God's compassion, was led by the Levites. Finally, he interprets 13:1–31 as an enforcement of the stipulations of the solemn assembly in 10:30–39, even though not every issue was mentioned in the oath in chapter 10.

This is an outstanding detailed commentary that provides significant helps to those who know Hebrew. I highly recommend it, though some readers may not be completely comfortable with so many references to the gospel in Ezra and Nehemiah, or Steinmann's use of the Augsburg Confession, the Formula of Concord, or the Lutheran Service Book.

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Psalms. By William P. Brown. Interpreting Biblical Texts. Nashville: Abingdon, 2010, xi + 185 pp., \$20.00.

William P. Brown is professor of Old Testament at Columbia Theological Seminary. For the last fifteen years, he wrote several books related to biblical poetry, such as *Seeing the Psalms: A Theology of Metaphor* (WJK, 2002); *God and the Imagination: A Primer to Reading the Psalms in an Age of Pluralism* (CMBC, 2001); *Ecclesiastes* (WJK, 2000); and *Character in Crisis: A Fresh Approach to the Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament* (Eerdmans, 1996).

The Interpreting Biblical Texts series have focused on the engagement of the text with readers in light of two aspects: textual and contextual consideration. Brown's work seems to fulfill the main goal of the series in that "the book proceeds from poetry to theory, from the most narrow to the most integrative, from the lively microworld of interacting poetic segments to the Psalter's complex macrostructure and theological framework" (p. ix).

As Brown mentioned in the preface, this book is "more invitational than introductory" (p. ix). Neither can the introduction of historical discussion regarding biblical scholarship nor the discussion related to Ugaritic poetry be seen. Nevertheless, it is both informative and practical by presenting the coherent, cohesive unity and diversity of the various psalms' poetic patterns, styles, and genres with numerous examples and by suggesting the performative and theological perspectives of the Psalms, which invite readers into the deeper meditative world. The book consists of three major parts: analytical section by macro-analysis (chaps. 1–4), integrative section by macro-framework (chaps. 5–6), and application section by theological anthropology (chap. 7).

The analytical section discusses the basic elements of Psalms as poetry such as meter, parallelism (chap. 1), metaphor (chap. 2) and genres (chap. 3), and the performative function of the Psalter as an active and meditative expression to God (chap. 4). Chapter 1 introduces a brief comparative discussion between modern poetry and Hebrew poetry, and a detailed discussion about parallelism with good examples from Psalms. It is surprising to see, however, that Brown spends only a few lines to discuss the issue of poetic meter, which is one of the most important (although controversial) matters in Hebrew poetry. His explanation and application about parallelism are based on the old Lowth's classification without mentioning semantic and grammatical parallelism, even though Brown admits the limitation of Lowth's method. Furthermore, one may wish to see the verse number on the left margin of the biblical text in the examples. It helps readers check the verses easily in the long poems. In chapters 2 and 3, the author presents a helpful discussion that includes examples about metaphor and genres in Psalms. For metaphor, since he already discusses this at length in *Seeing the Psalms: A Theology of Metaphor*, his discussion here is quite brief, but precise. His discussion of the genres of Psalms presents nothing new because Brown's explanation follows Gunkel's identification. It is no surprise since no theory in history of form criticism might substitute for Gunkel's categorization yet.

Perhaps the most innovative and thought-provoking chapter in the first section would be chapter 4, which addresses the performative function of Psalms. Brown has focused on the verbal (related to the sound of human or musical instruments) and kinesthetic (related to the motion) activities of the Psalter and connected them with the longing desire of worship, which leads into the activity of meditation.

The integrative section begins with discussion regarding the collections of Psalms identified by their authorship or thematic distinction (chap. 5). Brown well explains the main characteristics of each collection and provides an insightful discussion of the chiasmic arrangement of Psalms 15–24, whose center is placed on cosmic Torah psalm in Psalm 19. In chapter 6, even though some scholars object to the coherent thematic

unity in Psalms as a book, the author dares to tackle one of the most intricate issues in Psalms. First of all, similar to G. H. Wilson, Brown treats Psalms 1 and 2 as the introductory psalms and traces some main themes that are featured throughout Psalms: "The wicked and the righteous, righteousness and refuge, torah and Zion, judgment and protection, justice and kingship, instruction and dominion, pathway and sanctuary, individual and king, happiness and wrath" (p. 116). He then presents the development of each book in Psalms according to these themes. His argument is persuasive, but not without problems. For example, Brown comments, "Book IV marks a significant shift away from the trappings of earthly royalty to the primacy of God's glory" (p. 126). For the developmental process of kingship, Brown's statement is true, but for other themes it is almost impossible to observe this development. Especially, in Book V, even the developmental process of kingship may not be clearly found. In observing the coherent themes in Psalms, our author seems successful, while in arguing the development of each theme throughout Psalms, his discussion is hard to swallow. Finally, in the application section (chap. 7), Brown provides a valuable observation about the complex characteristics of God and human in Psalms according to the genres.

Brown should be praised for his insightful contribution to the Interpreting Biblical Texts series. It will be a valuable source to those who desire a deeper appreciation of Psalms for meditating and worshipping God in a holy sanctuary setting.

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Ecclesiastes and The Song of Songs. By Daniel C. Fredericks and Daniel J. Estes. Apollos Old Testament Commentary. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2010, 472 pp., \$40.00.

This book comprises two distinct commentaries bound together: Fredericks (Belhaven College, Jackson, MS) is solely responsible for *EccleJ641sias* (pp. 15–263), while Estes (Cedarville University, Cedarville, OH) alone treats the *Song of Songs* (pp. 265–444). The reader finds a bibliography unique to each biblical book at the end of each commentary, but the volume as a whole concludes with a series of indices: joint Scripture and author indices, but separate subject indices for *Ecclesiastes* and the *Song*.

Both commentaries follow the same structure. An author's preface leads to an introduction to the critical issues surrounding the given book. The commentary proper presents discreet passages in an original translation followed by a section entitled "Notes on the Text," then a section called either "Form and Structure" (*Ecclesiastes*) or "Form, Structure and Setting" (*Song of Songs*), then "Comment," and finally "Explanation." The last two sections differ in that the "Comment" section aims at recovering the "original meaning" of the passage in a verse-by-verse investigation, while the "Explanation" seeks to elucidate the significance of the passage for the modern world. The multiple sections of the commentary sometimes prove helpful, but at other times confusing or repetitious. Readers will probably want to read each section of the commentary in case their particular question receives treatment at an unexpected place. These two commentaries fit comfortably within the Apollos series that aims at providing solid evangelical scholarship for the academy and the church.

Fredericks wants to read *Ecclesiastes* "with the benefit of the doubt" (p. 17), interpreting its message as consistent with other biblical literature (OT and NT). In his view, *Qoheleth* presents a fair view of life and has a positive message, affirmed in the epilogue. Thus, Fredericks seeks to eliminate "vanity" or "meaninglessness" as a possible definition of *hebel* in *Ecclesiastes* (e.g. 1:2), defining this word instead as "transitory"

(pp. 23–31). It cannot mean “without purpose, vanity” in Fredericks’s view, because humans do indeed have an exalted purpose in biblical theology: God has commissioned humans to care for his creation (p. 20; cf. Gen 1:26–28; Fredericks does not say whether he thinks Qoheleth knew this passage). He asserts, “The role of the OT wisdom literature, including Ecclesiastes, is to reflect this commissional theology by describing more fully our function as managers of God’s earth” (p. 20). Thus, *hebel* cannot mean “meaninglessness;” instead, “there are profound, good and enjoyable benefits to one’s wise conduct, though admittedly the downside to the answer is that there are no *lasting* advantages, since everything is temporary under the sun” (p. 22). However, since the meaning “insubstantial” (which Fredericks does allow for *hebel* in some instances; p. 27) stands close to “temporary,” readers may not be completely persuaded to abandon entirely the traditional interpretation of *hebel* for Ecclesiastes (see especially the aspect of “repetitiveness” in Ecclesiastes, noted by Fredericks on p. 29, which would seem to indicate some degree of “meaninglessness”).

Anyone familiar with Fredericks’s monograph *Qoheleth’s Language: Re-evaluating Its Nature and Date* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1988) will rightly expect him to argue in the present commentary that linguistic analysis fails to establish the lateness of Ecclesiastes, despite the common scholarly assertions to the contrary. He thinks that any peculiarity in Ecclesiastes’s language arises from its vernacular nature, opposed to the literary language of the rest of the Hebrew Bible (pp. 56–61). The language of Ecclesiastes thus allows for a very early date. Fredericks does not here explicitly say that Qoheleth is Solomon, but his discussion clearly implies this (pp. 31–36). At any rate, he does clearly say that the writer—the second voice appearing mostly in the epilogue (12:9–14; see p. 244)—intended to identify Qoheleth as Solomon (p. 31). Fredericks asserts a number of times without argument that Ecclesiastes constitutes a single speech made by Qoheleth, perhaps when foreign dignitaries (e.g. the Queen of Sheba) visited (p. 33; cf. pp. 31, 44, 56).

Estes also declines to take a firm stance on the authorship of the Song of Songs. He allows for the possibility that Solomon wrote it, but will not rule out a post-exilic date (pp. 271–75). Estes briefly surveys various interpretational approaches (pp. 275–86), presenting and rejecting “non-literal approaches” (e.g. allegory), typological approaches, dramatic approaches, and cultic approaches, before finally settling on what he calls a literal approach that understands the song as concerning romantic love and physical sex. Estes discusses briefly but helpfully the poetry (pp. 286–89), unity (pp. 289–91), and structure (pp. 291–92) of the Song, concluding that the Song is a unity (not an anthology) in the sense that it presents an “impressionistic song cycle” (p. 290) that is structured “in an impressionistic or poetic way” (p. 292). He goes on to say, “In an impressionistic manner, the Song traces the awakening of intimacy leading up to marriage in 1:1–3:11, the celebration of intimacy on the wedding night in 4:1–5:1 and the maturing of intimacy within marriage in 5:2–8:14” (p. 292). The last two sections of the introduction—“Theme” (pp. 293–99) and “Purpose” (p. 300)—highlight again the idea that the song celebrates human love in a marriage relationship.

Estes repeatedly insists that the couple in the Song refrain from premarital sexual intercourse. He knows this because other parts of the OT, he says, condemns it (“Premarital intercourse is consistently proscribed throughout the OT,” p. 314), but to substantiate this claim he can cite, apparently, only Deut 22:13–29 (pp. 294, 295, 314). However, some passages early in the Song—before the “marriage” in 4:1–5:1—seem to describe intercourse (e.g. 1:17; 2:1–7). Tremper Longman avoids this problem by labeling the Song an anthology of love songs without linear development (*Song of Songs* [NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001] 59–60). Estes’s belief in the linear development in the Song forces him to declare these early passages to be merely in the mind of the woman, not actually carried out: “Shulamith envisions Solomon fondling her sexually” (p. 322,

commenting on 2:6). Estes names the characters in the Song “Shulammith” and “Solomon” for convenience. While he does not think Solomon necessarily wrote the Song, he does think “Solomon is the literary persona used by the poet” (p. 267)—a questionable assumption.

Both commentaries provide readable and conservative expositions of these two neglected books. The explanations are of consistently high quality, though they are not always where one might expect to find them (e.g. Estes’s treatment of the change in speaker at Song 1:11, appearing in the “Comment” section rather than the “Form, structure and setting” section). While advanced students and scholars will rely on heftier tomes that provide greater detail, I recommend this volume to lay Christians and undergraduates.

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You Are My People: An Introduction to Prophetic Literature. By Louis Stulman and Hyun Chul Paul Kim. Nashville: Abingdon, 2010, 323 pp., \$25.00.

Stulman and Kim’s 323-page volume is divided into four parts, preceded by an introduction and followed by notes, a bibliography, and an index of Scripture references. Part 1 focuses on the book of Isaiah (pp. 27–96); Part 2 expounds on the book of Jeremiah (pp. 97–144); Part 3 covers the book of Ezekiel (pp. 145–84); and Part 4 features a discussion of the Book of the Twelve (pp. 185–250).

Versions of chapters 5 and 6 have appeared elsewhere, the latter in a *Festschrift* for Walter Brueggemann entitled *Shaking Heaven and Earth* (Westminster John Knox, 2005), and the former in *Inspired Speech: Prophecy in the Ancient Near East* (Continuum, 2004).

The title of this volume is somewhat misleading, since the tome is in fact not an introduction to the prophets in the usual sense of that phrase. It is, instead, “an attempt to read the prophetic literature as war-torn artifact, disturbing cultural expressions of disaster and tapestries of hope intended to help devastated communities survive massive loss” (p. 1). Our authors further assert that in their investigation they will “focus on the *synchronic* level or final form of the Hebrew Bible, although hopefully our study will always exhibit *diachronic* (historical) sensibilities” (p. 1). Finally, they assert, “At the end of the day, we would be delighted if this book contributes to the growing body of literature on hope” (p. 2). However, that may present a problem. If the prophets are seen as proclaimers of hope (which they certainly were) but only as that, they are both distorted and flattened. They also preached judgment, wrath, repentance, and other related theological themes. They were not, in sum, one-dimensional figures or preachers.

Will Stulman and Kim present us with portraits of the prophets that are more concerned with advancing an agenda of “hope in hard times,” or will the prophets be introduced and allowed to speak fully for themselves? That is the question that will occupy the remainder of this review.

Kim and Stulman first set about the task of explaining their motivation, which is quite honorable: to read the text in such a way that it speaks to us where we are (pp. 5–6). To do this, they wish to read the text as “art.” That is, “As an artistic enterprise . . . biblical interpretation must take into full account our fissured and disconcerting moment in time” (p. 6). Their interpretative framework or paradigm is “disaster literature and survival literature” (p. 6).

When we come to Kim and Stulman's treatment of Jeremiah (p. 97ff.), they opine that "the prophetic testimony to the breakdown of meaning and civility as well as to the crumbling of trusted social systems and venerable institutions all sound remarkably familiar" (p. 97). Certainly they should, since they are modern categories Jeremiah likely would have not even have recognized. Jeremiah would not have spoken of "the crumbling of trusted social systems," though he would, and did, speak of the punishment of God brought upon a people who had rebelled against him and were reaping the consequences of their wicked sowing. To be sure, attempting to make Jeremiah relevant is a desirable thing, but only as long as that relevance adheres to the message of Jeremiah without distorting it. We need not fear Jeremiah's theology or his terminology.

The weakness, then, of Stulman and Kim's treatment is the fact that they soften the prophetic message while attempting to make it relevant. And in softening it, and in transforming Jeremiah into a one-dimensional "flat" character who cares more about other things than he does about God's interaction with sinful human beings, they actually distort his person and his message.

When they write, "No wonder the prophet's haunting and poignant utterances of anger and despair ring true to many today!" (p. 98), they manage to remove God from the equation to some degree. It is not God's word through Jeremiah; rather, it is Jeremiah's word. It may seem a subtle distinction, but it remains, in my estimation, an important one.

Also telling is their opinion that "Jeremiah . . . comes to symbolize the war-torn people of God, endures personal assaults and national devastation" (p. 100). Again, Jeremiah, the historical prophet, the man called and commissioned by God to deliver a particular message to a particular people, is set aside in favor of Jeremiah the amalgamation of ideologies. Such a Jeremiah is a scholarly construct, however, and surely cannot be understood as the actual man, or the proclaimer of the actual message of the book that bears his name.

Also a bit distressing is their claim that "by the end of the book, it becomes clear—if there were ever a doubt—that God's place in the world is among the broken and dispossessed, the captured and conquered. Indeed, hope is to be found among the vulnerable and wounded. In this way, the book of Jeremiah unmasks illusions of power and reveals God's solidarity with exiles of old and exiles today" (p. 111). On the contrary, hope is found where God is, and God can be found among the powerful and the wealthy as long as they, like the poor and the oppressed, repent and turn in faith to him. There is no benefit in poverty or in wealth and the prophet Jeremiah can scarcely be claimed to have suggested otherwise. Rather, all are dependent on God and God is accepting of them all when they live in obedience.

Though I do think Stulman and Kim miss the point of Jeremiah on many levels, I also think that their reading of him and the other prophets is at the very least thought-provoking. Indeed, any volume on the prophets that provokes discussion of their work is worthy of a sympathetic reading.

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The Message of Obadiah, Nahum, and Zephaniah: The Kindness and Severity of God. By Gordon Bridger. The Bible Speaks Today. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2010, 303 pp., \$18.00.

Contemporary Western society recoils at the notion of a God who judges. Consequently, the absence of popular sermon series devoted to the potent prophecies of Oba-

diah, Nahum, and Zephaniah is not surprising. In this commentary, Gordon Bridger aspires to present twenty-first-century Christians with the continuing significance of three small OT books seemingly removed from modern church life. Bridger studied theology at Cambridge University, served as the president of Oak Hill College in London, and ministered in several churches throughout England before writing *The Message of Obadiah, Nahum, and Zephaniah*.

This volume, like its predecessors in the BST series, is written with the layperson in mind, focusing on biblical exposition and current application. For Bridger, this application is most clearly seen in God's kindness and severity, or salvation and judgment.

Bridger begins the book and each individual commentary by briefly addressing introductory matters. In these introductions, he provides the historical context of the biblical books built upon generally conservative dates (Obadiah c. 586 BC; Nahum c. 630–612 BC; Zephaniah c. 640–609 BC) and includes a theological treatment of prophetic inspiration. The organization and flow of the commentary are reminiscent of a sermon manuscript and read much the same way. Bridger's commentary is theologically driven and oriented around the sovereignty of God. God is sovereign over the nations and is just in exercising judgment for their violence, arrogance, and mistreatment of Israel. Amidst his comments on Obadiah he writes, "The sin of Edom was that she showed her hatred and rejection of God by the way she treated his people" (p. 58). The coming judgment promised to Edom transitions into an eschatological, cosmic description of the day of the Lord where justice will be dispensed and "the kingdom shall be the Lord's" (Obad 21).

In his commentary on Nahum, Bridger's message is focused on a theological explanation of divine judgment, which must be interpreted alongside the Lord's faithfulness (1:2–6), jealousy (1:2), patience (1:3), sovereignty (1:4–6), and ultimately his goodness (1:7–15). The only way one can truly grasp this mysterious benevolence is by recognizing and believing that Yahweh is acting for the good of his people. However, Bridger's emphasis on God's sovereignty does not negate human responsibility. He writes, "Yahweh is sovereign over all nations. In his sovereignty he used Assyria to discipline Israel; but Assyria was also responsible for the way she carried out that task" (p. 141).

Commenting on Zephaniah, Bridger writes that "there are two major themes in the book of Zephaniah: judgment and hope" (p. 185), and he structures his comments around this judgment-salvation progression. In discussing God's judgment in chapter 1, he stresses the personal involvement of Yahweh: "God is personally involved in judgment, whether it be through the consequences of our sowing to please our 'sinful nature' or through the judgments of history or, as here, through the forces of nature" (p. 188). That judgment is portrayed cosmically as the day of the Lord, and will eventually consume the entire earth (Zeph 3:8). However, Bridger still highlights the promise of hope and salvation declared in Zeph 3:9–20. Speaking of the day of the Lord, he writes, "That day is a day of salvation as well as judgment. We deserve judgment. The remnant receives God's grace" (p. 285). Just as judgment reaches to the ends of the earth, so, too, salvation will reverse the pride and confusion epitomized at the tower of Babel and bring the nations to worship in "pure speech" at Yahweh's holy mountain (Zeph 3:9–12).

This summary highlights the main expository and theological contributions of Bridger's work, which are not insignificant. He is to be commended for his desire to redirect Christians toward the OT, emphasizing that "all Scripture is God-breathed" and profitable. Unfortunately, his program might be more clearly demonstrated if he devoted more of his attention to the actual text. Aside from the small amount of actual commentary, the book is filled with stories, anecdotes, quotes, and illustrations that are recycled throughout the commentary. He uses the tower of Siloam story from Luke 13:1–5 twice to illustrate similar points (pp. 109, 191), every enemy of Judah is repeatedly compared to the Third Reich (pp. 50, 116, 150, 252), and he uses the same quote from another commentary twice within two pages (pp. 43, 44). Several of his applications and illustrations feel many steps removed from the text. One example among

many is his comment on Nahum 3:11. After stating that the drunkenness mentioned in the text likely refers to divine judgment, he then devotes four paragraphs to how literal drunkenness and self-indulgence is the sign of decline for all nations (pp. 163–64). This is perhaps true but not derived from the text.

In his striving for relevance, Bridger comments on global warming, America's recent war in Iraq, and other political issues fermenting in the Middle East. The prophets themselves are politically charged, but briefly addressing such hot button issues in the context of a commentary is somewhat distracting. Having read several commentaries in the BST series, I want to note that this installment is not representative of the whole with respect to its shortcomings.

In summary, Bridger's commentary offers a theological and devotional guide to new believers eager to delve into the Minor Prophets, and provides pastors with numerous sermon illustrations. However, readers looking for a clear exposition of the text will likely be disappointed. There are other works on the Minor Prophets equally as accessible and application-oriented, yet more textually focused. Two examples include, James Bruckner, *The NIV Application Commentary: Jonah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004) and Richard D. Patterson and Andrew E. Hill, *The Minor Prophets: Hosea–Malachi* (Cornerstone Biblical Commentary; Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2008).

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Codex Sinaiticus: The Story of the World's Oldest Bible. By D. C. Parker. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson: The British Library, 2010, xi + 195 pp., \$34.95.

Hendrickson Publishers and the British Library have teamed up to produce a new facsimile of Codex Sinaiticus, a work of generosity and magnanimity that will foster much understanding and scholarship. The facsimile is one of the results of an agreement between the Archbishop of Sinai, the Chief Executive of the British Library, the Director of the Leipzig University Library, and the Deputy Director of the National Library of Russia, St. Petersburg. These notables came together and agreed to collaborate in making Codex Sinaiticus available. As a result, high-resolution photos of the manuscript are on the Codex Sinaiticus Website, the facsimile of the Codex has been produced, and now the history of the Codex has been told. The reason these dignitaries from Britain, Egypt, Germany, and Russia were involved is fully explained by David C. Parker in *Codex Sinaiticus: The Story of the World's Oldest Bible*.

Parker has related the story of this Codex in a way that all involved parties have endorsed, and, given the convoluted history, that was no small task. He begins with a fascinating look at what would have been involved in producing this manuscript in the ancient world, and from there he tells the story of how the manuscript became known in the modern west. Anyone interested in text criticism or in the history of the transmission of the text of the Bible will find this book delightful.

The team of scribes who produced the manuscript was not just a team of copyists but artists and craftsmen. Parker takes the reader through the whole process of preparing the parchment (which "is distinguished from leather by the fact that it is not tanned"; p. 43). From there, Parker walks through the work of the scribes in such matters as laying out the pages, paragraphing, ornamenting, and scripting the text. He even discusses how it appears they divided the work, how they edited their own mistakes, which scribe was the sloppier, and which one appears to have been the senior member

of the crew. The volume is complemented with lovely full-color plates that illustrate various things Parker discusses, such as hair follicles, veining, and preparation cuts in the parchment. Anyone who wants a fuller understanding of what goes into text criticism should read this book.

Anyone interested in church history and the intersection of diplomacy and scholarship will be romanced by the intrigue of the tale of how the manuscript was removed from St. Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai in Egypt to St. Petersburg in Russia, with some leaves landing in Leipzig, while the bulk of the Codex was later removed from Russia to London. Was the manuscript about to perish before Tischendorf rescued it? Did the monks mean to donate it to the Tsar? Did Tischendorf steal it? This is one of those books that kept me up past my bedtime because I had to know how this stranger-than-fiction story would reach resolution.

Parker takes a more relativistic view of the canon and the stability of the text than is warranted, and he is more skeptical of the reliability of ancient testimony than necessary. Some of his statements reflect either blatant ignorance or careless disregard, which inspires no confidence in his relativism about text and canon. For instance, he writes in one sidebar on the books of the OT, "Of these, some portions were written in Aramaic, namely Daniel 2.4b–7.28 and Ezra" (p. 37), giving the impression that the book of Ezra is in Aramaic when it is only Ezra 4:7–6:18 and 7:12–26 that is in Aramaic. He either is not aware of this or overlooked his own error. In either case, we are right to watch our steps carefully before following him when he makes other sweeping assertions, such as when declaring, "there was no point in antiquity at which the Hebrew texts became fixed" (p. 34). Readers have warrant for suspecting that Parker speaks more on the basis of the assumptions of the left-wing of critical scholarship than first-hand analysis of the data. Parker also seems to contradict himself when he indicates that the canon was open (pp. 29, 31), only to acknowledge that the books included in Sinaiticus were not thereby regarded as canonical (p. 39). If we do not know which books are canonical until after Sinaiticus was produced, as Parker indicates (pp. 27–29), how do we know it includes books that are not regarded as canonical? I agree with his conclusion that Sinaiticus included non-canonical books, but in contrast to Parker's view of an open canon only addressed by what Athanasias "prescribed" (p. 29) in his thirty-ninth Festal Letter of 367, I would argue that Athanasius was only passing on and affirming what was already ancient tradition (see David Brakke, "A New Fragment of Athanasius's Thirty-Ninth *Festal Letter*: Heresy, Apocrypha, and the Canon," *HTR* 103 [2010] esp. 53).

More radical than Parker's relativism on canon and text is the assertion he makes about the Gospel of Mark. In Sinaiticus, "Son of God" in Mark 1:1 has been added above the line. On the basis of this run-of-the-mill text-critical variant, Parker writes: "To some early Christians, Jesus was made Son of God at his baptism, and this is probably what Mark intended" (p. 108). Never mind the fact that Mark immediately presents John the Baptist fulfilling Isa 40:3, which speaks of the preparation of the way of *Yahweh*, and Mark has John preparing the way for *Jesus* (Mark 1:3), hinting at the identity of Jesus. And so it continues in Mark's Gospel with Jesus doing what only God can: forgiving sins (Mark 2:1–12), for instance, or calming the sea (4:35–40; cf. Ps 107:28–29). Parker should trot out more evidence than this if he is going to assert that Mark held some form of adoptionism.

On matters that deal with text, canon, or theology, then, Parker's claims should be tested for internal consistency and against the actual evidence. He does report and discuss key pieces of evidence, which in itself has great value, even if he brings the evidence out only to argue against it. His work on the actual manuscript is invaluable. Almost in spite of himself, Parker's work helps to establish the antiquity and reliability of what this ancient Codex transmits.

Codex Sinaiticus is “the oldest surviving complete New Testament, and is one of the two oldest manuscripts of the whole Bible” (p. 1). Congratulations and immense gratitude are due to the parties involved making it available, and to David Parker for his work in telling its story.

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A Handbook of New Testament Exegesis. By Craig L. Blomberg with Jennifer Foutz Markley. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010, xx + 298 pp., \$22.99 paper.

In this volume, Craig Blomberg (Distinguished Professor of New Testament at Denver Seminary) teams up with former student, Jennifer Foutz Markley, to produce a handbook “for New Testament readers who have studied Greek as well as those who haven’t” (p. xii). While those with no knowledge of Greek may benefit from the work, they could find themselves becoming bogged down at certain points along the way (e.g. the chapter on textual criticism) due to the complexity of the task. Nevertheless, the aim of writing a book on exegesis for specialists and non-specialists alike is a commendable and important one, and this handbook accomplishes its stated purpose successfully.

Taking their inspiration from Gordon Fee’s *New Testament Exegesis* and believing that exegesis is caught as much as taught, Blomberg and Foutz Markley seek to improve on previous handbooks and guides in two primary ways. First, they provide numerous examples from Scripture to help students learn exegesis inductively as they repeatedly observe how it is done properly. Second, they aim to take students step by step through the full exegetical process. Although the claim to offer a full and complete methodology as no other guide or handbook has done before is a bit suspect (see p. xiii), the book does provide a comprehensive exegetical method that will serve students well.

A Handbook of New Testament Exegesis was designed specifically as a step-by-step guide for students in colleges and seminaries who will write exegetical papers. Although it touches on issues of hermeneutics, it remains an exegetical guide rather than a hermeneutics text. (For the latter, see especially William W. Klein, Craig L. Blomberg, and Robert L. Hubbard Jr., *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* [2d ed.; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2003] or Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral* [2d ed.; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2006]). The authors do not, however, prescribe how-to instructions for writing such papers, leaving that task instead to the individual professor. Overall, they view their work as more of a “tool box” rather than a detailed “how-to manual,” since interpreters will not need to apply all ten steps of the exegetical process to every NT passage (p. xvi).

The book is organized into ten chapters along the lines of the exegetical task. Following an introduction that defines terms and provides an overview of the book, the first two chapters deal with textual criticism and Bible translations. The goal of textual criticism is to “assess the various options and determine which one of the different readings is most likely the original one” (p. 1). Although they acknowledge different dimensions of originality, they are concerned primarily with recovering the biblical “author’s original” (p. 6). On Bible translations, they provide an informed and balanced discussion of the various translations, encouraging readers to understand the objectives of each translation in order to “choose the right kind of translation for each different modern context in which the Bible is used” (p. xiv).

In the next two chapters, the authors tackle issues of context. When dealing with historical-cultural background, they discuss traditional issues related to historical context but also append a nuanced section on "Social-Scientific Criticism" (see pp. 85–91). Their hope is that the "interpreter will want to continually seek the type of information that makes the student less of a tourist and more of a resident in the first-century Mediterranean world" (p. 92). They use a "concentric circles" approach to explaining literary context that also incorporates discussions of literary genre and figures of speech, while briefly touching on rhetorical and narrative criticism.

In chapter 5, they offer a linguistically informed discussion of word studies, complete with a look at the various tools required, the steps for doing a proper word study, and common errors to avoid when doing such a study. Similarly, chapter 6 focuses on studying grammar by providing plenty of examples of how knowing Greek grammar makes a difference in biblical interpretation.

Chapter 7 offers an insightful treatment of interpretive problems, a rare offering in exegetical handbooks. This helpful chapter is included because interpreters often confront issues that cannot be dealt with properly with only one exegetical step. Certain exegetical challenges "must be approached synthetically, often requiring that the interpreter combine two or more of the exegetical steps in order to come to some sustainable conclusion about the tenuous issue" (p. 167).

The final three chapters deal with outlining, theology, and application. They stress moving from a diagram of the Greek text to a resulting English exegetical outline. For the English-only students, they also provide guidelines for creating a reliable outline based on the structure of the text. In chapter 9 on theology, they tackle the relationship of exegesis and systematic theology and briefly address the "theological interpretation of Scripture" approach. In the final chapter, they propose a method for helping "the interpreter of Scripture make the journey from what a text *meant* in the first century to what the text *means* to a given audience today" (p. 241). In addition to discussing common "applicational pitfalls," they layout a sophisticated principlizing model for bringing the Bible into our world.

The book concludes with a summary of the exegetical process (pp. 269–72), a checklist for doing biblical exegesis (pp. 273–76), a select bibliography (pp. 277–83), a Scripture index (pp. 285–90), and subject index (pp. 291–98).

Blomberg and Foutz Markley have produced a volume with many strengths and relatively few weaknesses. The strengths fall broadly into four categories: presentation, awareness, target audience, and scholarship. On presentation, they clearly define terms (e.g. p. xii) and clearly explain how to proceed through each phase of the process (e.g. p. 13). They offer plenty of examples and do not shy away from treating difficult, controversial passages. In doing so, however, they remain squarely focused on how the example in question illustrates the exegetical issue rather than using the example to advance an agenda. One of the best features of the book lies in the tables and sidebars where the reader will find useful supplemental material and summaries of the topic under discussion (e.g. pp. 32–35, 46, 66, 87, 119).

Second, the authors are extremely observant and aware as they offer guidance. For example, in footnote 41 on p. 13 they observe that in the fourth edition of the UBS Greek NT the number of "D" ratings has been drastically reduced. Such helpful comments can be found throughout the book. They are also savvy to the history of exegetical issues (e.g. p. 16, n. 48), and they consistently keep the first-century context in view (e.g. questions related to Acts 8 discussed on pp. 97–98).

Third, the book never loses sight of its target audience (e.g. p. 17). Because many readers will be engaged in teaching ministries, the authors regularly comment on the implications of a particular phase of the task for ministry (e.g. pp. 26, 194, 218, 237).

While they consistently maintain high standards throughout for doing exegesis, they jettison “exegetical idealism,” which often cripples and paralyzes people engaged in a demanding teaching ministry. Blomberg and Foutz Markley also offer plenty of practical advice about how to use information and knowledge (e.g. pp. 82, 227).

Finally, rigorous scholarship underlies this practical book. They regularly footnote recent scholarly contributions on key issues (e.g. pp. 99, 101–2, 111) and provide the standard English translations of primary sources (e.g. pp. 72–73). They connect with recent advances in linguistics for the study of the NT (e.g. pp. 118–23), along with offering interpretive wisdom (e.g. pp. 38, 122–23) and interesting background information (e.g. p. 56). They resist the temptation to skirt or avoid important issues that might be too complex or sensitive (e.g. chap. 6).

There are only a few weaknesses, but even these do not detract from their quality work. It seems odd to have the “Abbreviations” section between the introduction and chapter 1; it would be less distracting if it had been placed before the introduction. In addition, it is inconvenient for readers not to have more sources quoted in the footnotes listed also in the bibliography. While this format is understandable because of space limitations, it remains difficult to find the bibliographic information for a resource when you notice it for the first time in abbreviated form in a footnote (e.g. pp. 11, 103–5). The rich material presented in the footnotes deserves a better summary in some form. There are only limited references to internet resources or computer software (a few on pp. 59 and 130), in spite of the fact that contemporary students live in this digital world. Lastly, perhaps a bit more attention could be paid to the role of the Holy Spirit in the task of interpreting and applying the Bible (see pp. 267–68).

Blomberg and Foutz Markley’s *Handbook of New Testament Exegesis* stands as a scholarly yet practical guide filled with clear explanations, insightful illustrations, and wise guidance. We can be grateful for a work that will serve upper-level college and seminary students extremely well for years to come.

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Jesus the Temple. By Nicholas Perrin. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010, xvi + 223 pp., \$29.99 paper.

Nicholas Perrin, a former research assistant to N. T. Wright and currently Franklin S. Dyrness Professor of Biblical Studies and Associate Professor of New Testament at Wheaton College Graduate School, has contributed previously to NT scholarship with *Thomas and Tatian: The Relationship between the Gospel of Thomas and the Diatessaron* (Academia Biblica 5; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002) and as contributor and editor, along with Mark Goodacre, of *Questioning Q: A Multidimensional Critique* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2005). In the present volume, *Jesus the Temple*, Perrin places the historical Jesus along a trajectory of counter-temple movements that encompassed strands of Second Temple Judaism and the work of John the Baptizer prior to Jesus and the early church that followed him.

The volume consists of a preface (ix–xi), a list of abbreviations (xiii–xvi), an introduction (pp. 1–16), five chapters of content (pp. 17–182), and a conclusion (pp. 183–90). An eighteen-page bibliography follows (pp. 191–208). There are three indices: ancient and biblical sources (pp. 209–16), modern authors (pp. 217–20), and subjects (pp. 221–23).

In a brief preface Perrin notes that he is advancing a new way of looking at the historical Jesus: namely, as a person who viewed himself as the human embodiment of

the temple (p. ix). Perrin suggests that by locating Jesus in the ebb and flow of Jewish counter-cultural movements, it is possible to bring various aspects of his life to bear in an integrated way. He further suggests that it is Jesus as both high priest and temple who holds the best promise for crossing time and history (p. x). For if the historical Jesus viewed himself as the temple, then Jesus himself embraces all of history, because, from an ancient Jewish point of view, "the temple embraces all of history" (p. x).

In his introduction (pp. 1–16), subtitled "Turning the Tables," Perrin sets forth the rationale of his study. He begins by questioning the common "un-crossable chasm" too often drawn between the historical Jesus and Paul and the early church. He suggests that a tangible point of continuity between them can be found in their shared perceptions regarding the temple. He identifies two, broadly-held suppositions regarding the temple: (1) its nature and function as a convergence point between heaven and earth; and (2) the eschatological expectation regarding the new temple, which was to be "the heavenly temple . . . come down to earth" (p. 11). In keeping with this, Perrin advances the following thesis: "I wish to argue that Jesus of Nazareth saw himself and his movement as nothing less than the decisive embodiment of Yahweh's eschatological temple" (p. 12).

Perrin assesses the preparatory ministry of John in chapter 1, "John the Baptizer and the Anatomy of Counter-Temple Movements" (pp. 17–45). He locates John against the backdrop of a "counter-temple movement." It was predicated on "a tradition of counter-temple protest, involving both the embodiment of righteousness and prophetic criticism of untoward priestly practices" (p. 20). Two examples of such counter-temple movements prior to John are found in the respective sects behind the Psalms of Solomon and the Qumran documents. Both sects viewed then current temple order in Jerusalem and the temple's priestly stewards to be corrupt and intolerable. Both also viewed this state of affairs as a harbinger of the execution of the divine plan to punish the wicked and vindicate the righteous. In the meantime, both sects functioned as a provisional form of the temple to come. They viewed themselves as straddling the present age and that of the age to come. The central figure of the coming age, the Messiah, would establish God's eschatological temple. Perrin next profiles John the Baptizer and his movement, based on seven points most scholars would assign to the realm of factual history: (1) ascetic lifestyle; (2) baptism of repentance; (3) nearness of eschatological judgment; (4) involvement of large crowds; (5) inclusion of Jesus before he broke off; (6) rejection by the ruling temple authorities; and (7) execution by Herod Antipas. While recognizing differences between John and the aforementioned two sects, Perrin nonetheless sees "significant family likenesses" among them in that they: (1) viewed the ruling priesthood to be corrupt; (2) maintained that the tribulation had commenced; (3) characterized themselves as the scriptural realization of "the poor"; and (4) carried out quasi-like temple functions (p. 44).

Perrin next turns in chapter 2 to consider "The Early Church as a Counter-Temple Movement" (pp. 46–79). In this portion, the author surveys, respectively, selective passages from the Apostolic Fathers, the Johannine literature, 1 Peter and Hebrews, Matthew and Luke-Acts, and Paul. He maintains that these representative voices avoid adopting two extreme opinions, that first-century Christians saw themselves as merely being like the temple or as supplanting the temple. Rather, Perrin suggests, "it makes better sense to suppose that these witnesses were united in the common though not necessarily universal conviction that the heavenly temple had begun to break into history through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (p. 75). It is on this point where the early Christians differed from the counter-temple movements of Second Temple Judaism. While both groups shared a similar conceptual framework, the sectarian strands of Second Temple Judaism looked forward to the coming Messiah who would be the temple builder. The early church, by contrast, believed the Messiah had come in the person of Jesus and that "his resurrection was the first installment of the coming temple reality" (p. 77).

In chapter 3, Perrin examines "Jesus's Action in the Temple" (pp. 80–113). He suggests that to grasp Jesus' cleansing of the temple (a phrase he retains simply out of convention; p. 80, n. 2) "is virtually tantamount to grasping the historical Jesus himself" (p. 81). Perrin examines briefly questions regarding the historicity of Jesus' action and whether he cited the scriptural passages attributed to him in Mark 11:17 (i.e. Isa 56:7 and Jer 7:11). Convinced of the historicity of both matters, he turns to Jesus' aims behind the action. Perrin does not believe it is necessary to choose between commonly proposed eschatological or non-eschatological interpretations. Instead, he maintains that "the most promising approach is to see the cleansing of the temple as simultaneously 'eschatological,' in the sense that it portended God's sovereign and decisive in-breaking into temple affairs, and 'non-eschatological,' in the sense that it was meant as a genuine call to repentance" (p. 89). Perrin views Jesus' cleansing of the temple as evidence that he and his disciples fit comfortably along a trajectory of counter-temple movements that encompassed John the Baptizer, Jesus' forerunner, and the early church, which followed him. Like both of them Jesus believed that the temple had incurred profanation owing to a corrupt priesthood and practices and that the tribulation had consequently commenced. Also, like both of them, "Jesus responded to this state of affairs by identifying himself and his followers as somehow integral to the divinely appointed transition leading up to the arrival of the true temple" (p. 109).

"Announcing the Kingdom among the Poor" is the subtitle of chapter 4 (pp. 114–48). In this chapter, the author pursues the rationale as to why Jesus stood for the poor and as the poor (p. 117). He finds the rationale for both actions in Jesus' priestly calling. Perrin concentrates principally on Mark 10:17–22 (a rich man) and 14:3–7 (the woman at Bethany). He suggests that these narratives indicate that Jesus and his movement sought to meet the economic needs of the destitute by brokering alms and that he called others to participate in the voluntary redistribution of goods. In Jesus' teachings and his actions he was "for, among and about the poor" (p. 145). Jesus thereby stood as the hope of restoration for the dispossessed, signaling that the eschatological jubilee was underway, and as a sign of judgment toward the corrupt priesthood of the day (cf. pp. 147–48).

The concluding chapter (chap. 5) focuses on the subject of "Implementing the Kingdom among the Impure" (pp. 149–82). In this chapter, Perrin contends that the kingdom's relationship to the eschatological temple and the problem of the ritually impure land converge and inform each other in two of Jesus' characteristic activities, namely: (1) healing and exorcizing; and (2) eating with a variety of table companions (p. 151). The principal pericopae of focus are the Gerasene demoniac (Mark 5:1–20) and the accounts of Jesus' feeding of the five and four thousand (Mark 6:30–44 and 8:1–10, respectively). Perrin maintains that these characteristic activities of Jesus served as "public signs that he had reconstituted time, space, and a people around himself, the new convergence of heaven and earth, the new temple" (p. 179). In thus acting, Jesus, who claimed to bring in the kingdom, was further claiming to establish a reality that was simultaneously political and religious or spiritual (p. 181).

In his conclusion, entitled "Issuing Some New Tables and Tabling Some New Issues" (pp. 183–90), Perrin summarizes the results of his study. He then concludes with the following observations: "When the historical Jesus overturned the tables, he effectively announced that the kingdom had come and, as a result, worship, the very point of human existence, was now about to be possible in a whole new way. Just what this whole new way means we have yet to understand or experience fully" (p. 190).

Perrin's work is stimulating to read. As a former research assistant to N. T. Wright, he reflects instinctively many of Wright's qualities in terms of method (critical realism and double dissimilarity), assumptions (Judaism under exile, Jesus as Messiah), engag-

ing style, broad breadth of vision, control of a wide range of primary and secondary literature, and accessibility to non-specialists. Given these qualities, it is easy for the reader to be swept up in the explanatory power of his thesis and the felicitous manner of its presentation. At the same time, however, the strengths of the volume can also veil an inherent difficulty it faces: the need to substantiate and demonstrate a thesis of this consequence in the span of a mere 190 pages. Given the relative brevity of the study and the complexity of the interpretive issues with which it must contend, it is doubtful that many readers not already sympathetic to his method, assumptions, and interpretive conclusions will feel he has demonstrated it sufficiently. What Perrin has done, however, and done effectively, is present a highly suggestive and potentially fruitful line of interpretation that will warrant further reflection as well as considerable fleshing out in subsequent work.

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Memories of Jesus: A Critical Appraisal of James D. G. Dunn's Jesus Remembered. Edited by Robert B. Stewart and Gary R. Habermas. Nashville: B & H, 2010, xviii + 334 pp. \$22.99 paper.

Memories of Jesus is a compilation of thirteen essays by scholars responding to James Dunn's *Jesus Remembered*. Each of the essays is worth summarizing briefly. In the first chapter, Robert Stewart traces the history of historical Jesus research from Reimarus down to the present in an effort to place Dunn somewhere on the spectrum of historical Jesus scholars, ranging from modern approaches to postmodern approaches.

In the second chapter, Marcus Bockmuehl charges Dunn with underplaying the contributions of scholars such as Gerhardsson, Byrskog, and Kelber, with not adequately exploring the relationship between eyewitnesses and the oral tradition, and with failing to explain adequately what the new perspective means for the old perspective. Bockmuehl also questions whether Dunn's view makes it possible to get back to the historical Jesus at all. Finally, Bockmuehl wonders whether Dunn was even asking the right questions.

In the third chapter, Scot McKnight, asks about the difference between Jesus remembered and the historical Jesus, as well as about the value of a remembered Jesus as opposed to either the historical Jesus or the church's Jesus. McKnight also questions the impact of faith on the Jesus tradition and wonders about the distinction between Jesus remembered and the redactor's theology. McKnight asks whether it was the event of Jesus' death or the remembered telling of that event that was redemptive.

In the fourth chapter, Byrskog, like Bockmuehl, questions the extent to which Dunn's perspective can be called new. Byrskog is puzzled by the degree of emphasis Dunn places on community and calls on Dunn to clarify the role of eyewitnesses in relation to community performance.

In the fifth chapter, Craig Blomberg proposes that the 80% agreement between parallel passages in the Synoptic Gospels is evidence of literary dependence. He provides a statistical analysis of numerous parables and concludes, in support of Dunn, that most were due to oral influence rather than direct literary dependence.

In the sixth chapter, Jens Schroter argues that Dunn's category of "impact" should be reassessed in light of an early "Christian catechesis," which, says Schroter, made no distinction between the words of Jesus and other traditions. Schroter argues that Dunn

does not successfully describe how the oral tradition was transmitted, and he disagrees with Dunn's view that Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom was more central to Jesus' message than Jesus' proclamation of himself.

In chapter 7, Craig Evans seeks to address the ways in which the teaching and activities of Jesus may have been dissimilar from traditions common among his contemporaries both before and after Easter. Evans works through several examples to show that the criterion of dissimilarity, if used properly, is still a valid and useful tool.

In chapter 8, Bill Warren tries to highlight the value of textual criticism to historical Jesus research. Warren argues, for example, that although the vast majority of D-Text (Western Text) readings are late, some are likely to reflect late first- or early second-century oral traditions.

In chapter 9, Charles Quarles argues, contra Dunn, that a fair application of the criteria of multiple independent attestation, coherence, and embarrassment supports the historical reliability of several aspects of the birth narratives.

In chapter 10, Ben Witherington expresses disappointment that Dunn does not discuss whether Mark and Q preserve eyewitness memory and that he does not seriously engage the work of scholars like Byrskog or Bauckham. Witherington considers it ironic that, while Dunn is critical of the collectivist view of the form critics, Dunn's own view of oral tradition is collectivist in nature.

In chapter 11, Paul Rhodes Eddy argues, contrary to Dunn, that Jesus believed himself to be the Messiah. Since Dunn himself argues that Jesus tended to modify popular conceptions of prophet, exorcist, and teacher, Eddy suggests that it is plausible to conclude that Jesus did the same with the concept of Messiah.

In chapter 12, Stephen Davis characterizes what he called the "official doctrine" of *Jesus Remembered* to be: "we do not have access to Jesus himself but only to the earliest memories of Jesus." For Davis, this approach raises an important question. If some of these memories are judged to be accurate, would this not constitute access to Jesus himself? Since Dunn often arrives at conclusions about Jesus, Davis charges Dunn with not following his own doctrine. Davis also questions Dunn's claim that Paul's view of the resurrection was different than that of the evangelists.

In chapter 13, Gary Habermas expresses disagreement with Dunn's belief that Paul thought the resurrection body of Jesus was more spiritual than physical. Habermas also questions Dunn's conception of the historical task as going back to Jesus remembered rather than to Jesus himself.

In chapter 14, James Dunn graciously responds to each of his critics in turn. Dunn acknowledges that he "did not do justice to Birger Gerhardsson" and that he "overplayed the difference between Bailey's local congregation model and Birger's rabbinic model." He also acknowledges that he did not give enough attention to apostolic and eyewitness testimony. With regard to the birth narratives, Dunn states that his concern was to build the strongest case possible for the historical value of the Jesus tradition and that he did not think it wise to build that case on the birth narratives. With regard to Eddy's insistence that Jesus thought of himself as Messiah, Dunn agrees that Jesus redefined the role of Messiah and applied that to himself, but he insists that Jesus' contemporaries expected a Messiah who would be a royal military figure and Jesus rejected that role. Dunn asks, "Does it actually matter whether we can describe Jesus' self-awareness . . . without using the term 'messianic'?" In response to criticism of his view of the resurrection, Dunn admits that he can "scarcely take it" when his belief in the bodily resurrection is challenged. Dunn insists that he *does* believe in the bodily resurrection but that bodily resurrection does not necessarily mean *physical* resurrection. Dunn insists that for Paul, the physical is what decays and corrupts, which is not true of the spiritual body.

In defense of Dunn, some of the criticisms expressed in *Memories of Jesus* seem to be something less than substantial. One example is the question posed by more than one critic about how *new* Dunn's new perspective really is. One might envision critics quibbling with Jesus over how "new" his "new commandment" really was. In a few other cases, Dunn's critics seemed to miss the point; for example, one scholar challenges Dunn on the grounds that Jesus did not inspire faith in all of his hearers. It also seems that some of Dunn's critics expect him to address adequately and solve all possible problems or issues raised by his proposal. Good scholarship often raises as many questions as it solves; so, while it is entirely valid to ask such questions, it seems unfair to criticize Dunn for not having addressed all of them in a single book.

Other issues are much more substantial. For example, more than one scholar questioned the gulf between the Jesus of history and the remembered Jesus, and whether it was possible to move from the latter to the former—as Dunn himself occasionally appears to do—all the while insisting that *all we have* is the remembered Jesus. Even more substantial is the question about the relationship between eyewitness testimony and the corporate memories of early Christian communities. Dunn acknowledges the importance of eyewitnesses in developing the tradition but insists that he did not want to "make the authority and value of the Jesus tradition dependent on being able to trace it back to specific eyewitnesses." Dunn's point is well taken, but the criticism remains valid. A future edition of *Jesus Remembered* would be improved by exploring this connection further. Much more serious is Dunn's view of the resurrection. Both Davis and Habermas rightly take issue with Dunn's view that Paul did not believe in the physical resurrection of Jesus as well as the fact that Dunn believes that Paul had a different view than that of the Evangelists. Dunn responds by saying that he believes in a bodily resurrection but says it does not follow that the bodily resurrection was physical. Dunn would do well to clarify his clarification.

All of the respondents express appreciation for the enormous contribution of Dunn's *Jesus Remembered*. Overall, the essays in *Memories of Jesus* not only provide excellent support, correction, and balance to the discussion, but they also point toward stimulating avenues for further research.

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Who Chose the Gospels? Probing the Great Gospel Conspiracy. By C. E. Hill. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010, xii + 295 pp., \$27.95.

Popular accounts of biblical canon formation are often fraught with intrigue and marked by persistent rumbles of conspiracy. Since the fourfold Gospel corpus of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John came to function as the foundational unit of the NT canon, the following questions naturally arise: "Why *these* four?" and "Why *these four*?" Many scholars of early Christianity argue that the early church was "drowning in a sea of Gospels" and that "Christianity's early centuries were something of a free-for-all with regard to Gospel literature" (p. 1). If there were a multitude of competing accounts of Jesus' life and all Gospels were created equal, then the narrow selection of the canonical Gospels would be a matter of coercion, with a particular faction of the church choosing which Gospels would belong in the church's authoritative Bible. Accordingly, many agree that the selection of the Gospels was a late, controversial, and arbitrary development that was only achieved through the methodical suppression of rival voices.

In this volume, Charles E. Hill seeks to present the historiographical minority report to this scholarly consensus. Through an investigation of the relevant historical data, Hill aims "to examine critically some of the foundational scholarship used to support and promote this now popular narrative of how the church ended up with four, and only four, Gospels" (p. 4). Hill serves as professor of New Testament at Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando, Florida, and this volume draws on a substantive body of work dealing with the formation of the Gospels and early Christianity.

In his attempt to debunk the "conspiracy theory" of a late and coercively established Gospel corpus, Hill revisits the major figures in the debate and tells a different story about what they perceived and what they received. After a chapter on recent manuscript discoveries in Egypt, Hill begins with Irenaeus of Lyons in the late second century. In his writings, Irenaeus mentions each of the Gospels and provides a creative defense of why there are four of them. In order to render Irenaeus's witness to a Gospel collection insignificant and "silence the Bishop," some scholars portray Irenaeus as a lone ranger, almost totally isolated from the rest of his contemporaries. To counter this portrait of a "lonely Irenaeus," Hill notes that Irenaeus wrote confidently "as if the church had been nurtured by these four Gospels from the time of the apostles" (p. 41). In this sense, "he simply wrecks the popular paradigm," because he seems to assume rather than establish this section of the NT (p. 41). Hill next surveys a number of figures that followed Irenaeus (e.g. Tertullian, Origen) and shows from their writings that the acceptance of the four Gospels was relatively widespread.

In the rest of the book, Hill digs deeper into church history in search of a figure capable of choosing the Gospels. Hill proceeds to implicate Clement of Alexandria, Serapion of Antioch, and the author of the Muratorian Fragment as "co-conspirators" along with Irenaeus in granting the four Gospels authoritative status. These figures "at points far distant from each another [*sic*] on the map, are all saying or implying that the church has the same four acknowledged Gospels" (p. 99). The presence of Gospel harmonies (e.g. Tatian's *Diatessaron*), works of synopsis, and liturgical pulpit editions also assume the existence and circulation of the Gospels in the late second century. These works are "all significant literary-technological 'packaging' projects which presuppose the primacy of the four" (p. 121).

Pushing back further, Hill engages the mid-second century teaching of Justin Martyr. In his apologetic work, Justin appeals to the "Memoirs of the Apostles," which were written by "Jesus' apostles and their followers" and were utilized in the worship of the churches (p. 132). When Justin cites these memoirs, the content is drawn from Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Consequently, Hill concludes that "Justin knew all four canonical Gospels and knew them as an already standard grouping" (p. 143). As was the case with Irenaeus, Hill argues that Justin was not necessarily out of step with his contemporaries in his view of the Gospels. Justin too had "co-conspirators" that indicate the public and widespread usage of this collection. A number of works among the Apostolic Fathers (e.g. Polycarp of Smyrna, Ignatius) also exhibit an awareness of "the gospel" not only as an oral proclamation but also as a written entity. Though these early precursors are by no means definitive, they do suggest that the "religious apparatus" that "made the reception of the four Gospels, as well as the rest of the New Testament, possible (if not inevitable), was in place already in the late first century" (p. 204).

In his last presentation of evidence, Hill entertains the possibility that there was an "arch-conspirator" in the first century who had a hand in choosing the Gospels. He suggests that an important, and perhaps the earliest, testimony to a four-Gospel collection is embedded in the writings of church historian Eusebius. In his work *Ecclesiastical History*, Eusebius records a selection of comments from Papias, bishop of Hierapolis in the early second century. In these selections, Papias recounts the testimony of a figure named John the elder, who gives witness to all four Gospels and even asserts that the apostle John wrote his Gospel in order to complement and complete the Synoptics. Even

if this account is "legendary," the fact that Papias recounts it means that he was aware of the close relationship between the four Gospels. Papias, then, represents "the earliest first-hand source for a recognition of all four Gospels" (p. 222).

After this extensive survey, Hill returns in a concluding chapter to the book's central concern. If his survey of evidence is plausible, then the question of who chose the Gospels at least predates the fourth century. Each step taken back into the history of the church has a signpost pointing to an earlier generation. The evidence for an authoritative moment of selection by a "primal chooser" is "embarrassingly lacking" and "we simply know of no councils or synods from this period which deliberated on the matter" (p. 230). Even the attempt to formulate possible criteria of canonicity that the church used misses the point, because "the church essentially did not believe it had a choice in the matter!" (p. 231). According to Hill, the question would not have made sense to the churches of the second century, because these writings "had been in the family as long as anyone could remember" (p. 233). In this context, the internal textual properties of the Gospels themselves are what commended them. These were the Gospels that presented Jesus as the Messiah of the Hebrew Scriptures and the ones in which the church "encountered the real Jesus and divine power" (p. 239). The competing Gospels, if they were true rivals at all, paled in comparison. In other words, recognition of the four canonical Gospels was actually not much of a choice.

One helpful aspect of Hill's volume is his emphasis on manuscript evidence and relevant archeological discoveries (e.g. chap. 1). In canon studies, external historical evidence that has a bearing on the canon formation process is often scant and fragmentary. This reality makes the careful investigation of biblical manuscripts crucial and means that an interpreter's presuppositions will play an important role in an analysis of the data. Hill is aware of this problem, and a vital part of his critique of those who downplay the existence of early forms of canonical texts rests squarely upon the assumptions that are made in the process (e.g. see Hill's discussion of "minimalism," pp. 185–89). Further, Hill helpfully delineates between clear and tentative conclusions that can be drawn from the historical evidence. His case for an early establishment of the four Gospels is cumulative and moves from certain to plausible cases (e.g. p. 206). Hill also provides a historical context for various points of conflict that affect the interpretation of the manuscript evidence (e.g. "Do Christians read other books?" pp. 75–78). In this way, Hill presents the "other side" of the argumentation used by the scholarly consensus.

Much of the ink spilled in the canon debate revolves around how "canon" is defined. Is it only a closed list, or does it also involve authority and use? Hill raises this question in the introduction (pp. 5–6), but he does not return to it formally. This definitional issue might have been traced throughout his discussion or at least revisited directly in the conclusion. Part of the burden of Hill's study, though, is in fact to demonstrate the connection between authoritative usage in the churches and what it means for a work to be "canonical." Also, because of the nature of the sources under investigation, sometimes Hill's connections are thin and more difficult to follow (e.g. Papias's nested quotations). However, as noted above, Hill recognizes this ambiguity and revises the tenor of his conclusions accordingly. In these areas, Hill might have strengthened his argument by interacting with the work of David Trobisch in *The First Edition of the New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

Although Hill discusses many technical details and messy historical issues, he manages to keep his prose accessible and stimulating throughout. He also frequently engages the arguments of figures who have popularized the current secular paradigm of canon formation (e.g. Bart Ehrman, Elaine Pagels, Dan Brown). Rather than a conspiracy plot marked by malevolent skullduggery, Hill's narrative uncovers "the less sensational truth" (p. 101) involving an early and natural recognition of a four-fold Gospel collection in the early church. This apologetic aspect makes this book a helpful resource for evangelicals who are interested in careful and reasoned responses to these claims about

the Bible and early Christianity. Hill also provides helpful introductions to a number of key issues in the canon debate and includes a brief glossary of unfamiliar terms. Thus, among the many competing accounts of Gospel selection, Hill's volume would be a good choice.

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Documents and Images for the Study of Paul. Edited by Neil Elliott and Mark Reasoner. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011, xii + 418 pp., \$35.00 paper.

Elliott and Reasoner have provided a much welcomed resource containing invaluable insight into the social, political, and religious world of Paul. Inspired in part by David Cartlidge and David Dungan's *Documents for the Study of the Gospels* (2d ed.; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1994), *Documents and Images for the Study of Paul* provides the reader with a firsthand look into a generous portion of texts and other materials from early Christianity. Interest in the first-century world in which Paul ministered, of course, is hardly new. As Elliott and Reasoner briefly discuss, several works have been published during the last century that examine the social, religious, and political world of the NT writers in general or the world of Paul in particular. What is especially unique and helpful about this present work is its accessibility and scope. Many of the previous studies of the world of Paul have either focused primarily upon one particular aspect of the first-century world (e.g. women's place within society or the early church) or required the reader to locate a number of obscure sources on their own. In welcome contrast, this volume provides the reader with a fairly balanced treatment of a number of subjects relevant to the study of the first-century world of Paul in an accessible and convenient format. While certainly not comprehensive in all subjects addressed (a most daunting task!), the volume provides the reader with a fresh and firsthand introduction to many important aspects of the world of Paul without the cumbersome and challenging task of locating a number of obscure texts that in many cases have not been translated into English.

Following a brief introduction, the volume includes six thematically arranged chapters on topics relating in some way to Paul's life and ministry. Each chapter begins with a helpful introduction that typically emphasizes the importance or uniqueness of a specific aspect of Paul's ministry or message and any insights that might be gleaned from the Pauline corpus. Each chapter concludes with a "questions for reflection" section designed for review and further reflection and a short bibliography of some of the more notable works students may wish to consult. A number of black-and-white photographs of important archeological sites, manuscripts, paintings, pottery, inscriptions, sculpture, artifacts, and other related sources are scattered throughout the book. In addition, several helpful indices are included, furthering the book's accessibility and ease of use.

In the first chapter, the authors provide an insightful introduction into how various aspects of Paul's self-presentation may have been perceived during his lifetime. As the material provided in the chapter reveals, Paul often presented himself in ways that would likely have been perceived as either unfavorable or unconventional. Among other things, Paul frequently portrayed himself as a slave and apostle of Christ. How these roles would have been perceived by various parties during the time of Paul is discussed in light of a sampling of several ancient writings. The chapter also provides valuable insight into the typical practices, functions, and lifestyles of philosophers during the time of Paul as well as some of the virtues that they held in high esteem. Common at-

titudes regarding the practice of manual labor and other subjects relating in some way to the practices of Paul are also explored.

Chapter 2 discusses the typical methods and functions of letter writing in the first century. While certainly not as exhaustive as the more specialized studies written by scholars such as E. Randolph Richards, Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, Stanley Stowers, or M. Luther Stirewalt, the chapter provides the reader with an excellent introduction into the world of first-century letter-writing and provides a sampling of many first-century letters. The chapter concludes with a discussion of some of the key themes included within the Pauline corpus that relate in some way to the gospel message. This discussion is especially helpful in pointing out the various ways Paul's letters challenged conventional thinking regarding the practice of idolatry and the worship of the imperial cult.

Chapter 3 explores the origin and nature of the gospel of Augustus—a gospel that served as an obvious parallel and competitor to the Pauline gospel. The chapter includes a helpful discussion of the various ways in which ancient writers such as Virgil praised the accomplishments and abilities of Augustus, not least being his ability to end civil war and usher in a period of peace and prosperity. A variety of materials from the time of Augustus and subsequent centuries are identified and discussed within the chapter, providing the reader with a firsthand glimpse into the various ways imperial cult worship was encouraged and rationalized.

Chapter 4 considers several questions relating to Paul's self-identity, his criticisms regarding the spiritual state of the Jews, his attitudes toward the Mosaic Law, and the plight of various first-century Jews. Several questions relating to Paul's attitude toward the Mosaic Law and the Jewish people, of course, have been hotly debated over the last several decades in large part in response to the work of scholars such as E. P. Sanders and James D. G. Dunn. Readers with only a limited knowledge of these topics will especially benefit from the sampling of important texts from sources such as Philo, Josephus, 4QMMT, and various secular historians from antiquity.

Chapter 5 discusses Paul's ambition to create assemblies of believers characterized by holiness and godliness. Much attention is given in the chapter to common Gentile attitudes regarding sexuality and marriage and the corresponding practices that deeply disturbed Paul. Modern readers of Paul's letters frequently assume that the sexual behavior condemned by Paul corresponds precisely to common sexual behavior in our own time. As Elliott and Reasoner conclude, however, this is not always the case. They contend, for example, that "homosexual practices in Paul's day were not correlated with homosexual orientation in the way we routinely presume that they do" (p. 267). An additional focal point of the chapter is how the concept of the *ekklesia* compared to various communities and associations in the Greco-Roman world.

Chapter 6 examines the legacy of Paul as a letter-writer and theologian. Following an all-too-brief discussion of the disputed Pauline letters, Paul's literary influence on several ancient texts is briefly explored. For a more comprehensive study on Paul's literary influence in early Christianity, the reader may wish to consider Richard Pervo's recent release, *The Making of Paul: Constructions of the Apostle in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2010).

As might be expected, many of the subjects treated within this book have been treated more exhaustively elsewhere. Few volumes, however, expose the reader to as many relevant ancient sources and parallels between Paul's letters and the world in which he ministered in such a convenient format. For this reason, this volume is especially well suited for use in the classroom. Some professors and teachers, however, may be hesitant to select this book as the primary or sole text for courses on the life and letters of Paul, opting instead for alternative volumes dedicated more exclusively to Paul's missionary journeys and/or the content of his letters.

Finally, while the materials included in this volume promise great insight into the various ways in which Paul's letters challenged first-century thinking and practice, the reader will be well served to exercise a degree of caution. Many of the ancient sources contained within the book derived from an elite class within the Greco-Roman world who possessed significant literary abilities. In contrast, a large number of first-century Christians likely came from less privileged backgrounds. As such, many of the sources discussed throughout the book may not be fully representative of all those within the various Pauline communities.

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You Belong to Christ: Paul and the Formation of Social Identity in 1 Corinthians 1–4.
By J. Brian Tucker. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2011, xiv + 332 pp., \$38.00 paper.

What makes people identify with a particular group or community? How does this affect their beliefs, behavior, and feelings? These are some of the basic questions that social identity theory seeks to answer. Using such a theory in the exegesis of 1 Corinthians 1–4, Brian Tucker provides a fascinating reading of the process of community formation in Roman Corinth, which moves the scholarly discussion on the Corinthian church a significant step forward. Given the large number of social science studies on the Corinthian church since Theissen's seminal essays in the 1970s, Tucker is to be congratulated on this notable accomplishment.

This study proposes that in 1 Corinthians Paul is concerned with the continuation of Gentile identity within the Christ-movement, just as in Romans and Galatians he was concerned with the continuation of Jewish identity within the Christ-movement. Tucker presents his view as a particularistic approach to group identity, since he believes that Paul allows particular ethnic identities to continue to influence the life of believers. This approach stands over against the scholarly consensus that Paul was universalistic in an attempt to devalue or destroy all previous social identities in favor of one new Christian identity. Tucker, associate professor at Moody Theological Seminary in Plymouth, MI, follows in the footsteps of his promoter William S. Campbell of the University of Wales (see his *Paul and the Creation of Christian Identity* [London: T & T Clark International, 2006]), utilizing a newer method, the social identity approach.

As the dust of debates on the New Perspective on Paul settles, ethnicity and ethnic identity have surfaced as key categories for further study. The concept of identity has gained in popularity, parallel to its growing popularity in psychology and sociology. Monographs speak of personal, ethnic, social, and corporate identities as socially constructed concepts, each with their own theories behind them. Tucker chose social identity theory, originally conceived by Henry Tajfel and refined by John C. Turner, as his main method of analysis, supplementing it with components from other theorists. The use of this theory in NT studies was first pioneered by Philip Esler with his 1996 commentary on Galatians and was initially adopted by only a handful of other scholars. In the last five years, increasing interest in this theory has resulted in several published dissertations (including this book) and edited books by such notable scholars as Harland, Holmberg, and Ehrensperger (with Tucker).

Tucker's study opens with a well-documented history of research, locating his own contribution in line with social historians like Edwin Judge and Andrew Clarke and social theorists like Philip Esler and David Horrell. Tucker adopts the scholarly stance that Paul is thoroughly Jewish, that influence from Roman imperial ideology is Paul's greatest worry, and that a diversity of ethnic social identities is crucial for Paul in

fulfilling his mission. An overview of scholarly views on the parties in Corinth starts with Baur's proposal of conflicting theological parties. Tucker examines next how Greco-Roman rhetoric, Hellenistic-Jewish wisdom, Roman philosophy, and Paul's defense of his apostleship might have contributed to the divisions. Since each factor offers only a partial explanation of the conflict, Tucker proposes that the overarching problem is a continuing but erroneous identification of many of the Corinthian believers with aspects of their Roman social identity.

In order to flesh out this thesis, the study provides three chapters on method which are then applied in five chapters with a close reading of 1 Corinthians 1–4. Chapter 2 outlines Tucker's understanding of social identity theory. Since the historical development of the theory is already described elsewhere, he opts for an exposition of various social identity concepts such as: *intergroup* and *intragroup* behavior, stereotyping, ideology, belonging, social influence, prototypicality, and narrative identity; surprisingly, deviance is not included. Each concept is briefly illustrated from selected passages in 1 Corinthians. Although initially the discussion is easy to follow, every page adds new concepts and their scholarly discussions, so that the overall research framework gradually eludes the reader. Evidently, Tucker has mastered the literature quite well, and it is indeed useful to complement the original theories of Tajfel and Turner with the further work of Stryker, Burke, and Lawler. However, a clear presentation of the methodological framework would have been sufficient, with only the highlights of scholarly debate in the footnotes.

Chapter 3 considers how social identity has been used in NT studies. Tucker discusses several scholars who focus mostly on Romans and Galatians in their research on Christian identity formation. Tucker aims to broaden the focus to include 1 Corinthians. Campbell, the only representative of a particularistic approach, argues that Paul did not transform Jewish identity into a form of Christian identity, but rather he accepted it as a relevant ethnic identity within his Christ-believing communities. The universalistic approach is represented by scholars like Esler, Holmberg, and Dunn, from whom Tucker adopts elements for his own approach in spite of his critique. Esler, though, fits better with the particularistic approaches, but more importantly, the terms "particular" and "universal" need definition. For instance, Tucker clearly does not consider Baur's approach particularistic, even though Baur proposed many versions of Christianity. This seems to be particularistic at the theological level. Instead, Tucker appears to be particularistic primarily on the sociological level, and consequently he labels scholars as universalistic who conceive of the church as the true Israel or as a replacement of Israel. Since these terms are essential for Tucker's main thesis, greater clarity in their definition is needed.

The methodology section closes with chapter 4 on the role of honor, patronage, and kinship in the construction of the Roman civic identity in Corinth. In more familiar territory of social history, Tucker argues that the Corinthians still identified too much with their Roman identity without adequate transformation by their new belief in Christ.

The second half of the book walks through 1 Corinthians 1–4 in a close reading. First Corinthians 1:1–9 (chap. 5) describes the foundation of a salient "in Christ" social identity as a divine calling into a community that is not merely cultic but exists in competition with the official city assembly. Paul reminds the Corinthians (social memory) of God's grace through which they entered this community. In 1 Cor 1:10–2:5 (chap. 6), Paul argues that Roman power and Greek rhetoric are improper identity markers, thus engaging in identity (re)construction and transforming their Roman social identity to become more Christ-like. Chapter 7 shows that over-reliance on the world's wisdom and power (2:6–9) as well as over-identification with old social identities (3:1–4) form major hindrances to Christian social identification. In response, Paul addresses the entire community as mature (2:6) and exhorts them to be transformed through the spirit and the mind of Christ (2:10–16). They need to realize that all belong to God (3:5–23; chap. 8); leaders are only servants, and the key is not human but divine agency. Finally,

in 4:1–21 (chap. 9), Paul encourages proper self-assessment, describing his own mission and suffering as a model in order to correct their mental map of leadership. Tucker's brief concluding chapter summarizes his main thesis, points out the usefulness of social identity theory, and sketches some avenues for future research.

Tucker's close reading of 1 Corinthians 1–4 reads like a specialized commentary. More summaries (and signposting) would have been helpful in keeping the main lines of social identity formation in view. Tucker interacts extensively with existing scholarship, but on various occasions his discussions are so brief that they are cryptic even for the specialist. Overall, Tucker has produced an important study that adds a new reading to the scholarship on Corinthians, which in itself is a bold step forwards. Certainly scholars and commentaries should take note of this study. Even if the theoretical complexity is at times overwhelming, this is but a minor fault in a daring effort to blaze a new trail in the exegesis of 1 Corinthians. Social identity theory has much to offer NT studies (and other areas of theology besides), and I am grateful for Tucker's contribution in this area.

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The Drama of Ephesians: Participating in the Triumph of God. By Timothy G. Gombis. Grand Rapids: InterVarsity, 2010, 188 pp., \$20.00 paper.

At just under 200 pages, Timothy G. Gombis's book on Ephesians is not a heavy-weight commentary—and that is exactly as he wants it. His work, *The Drama of Ephesians: Participating in the Triumph of God*, has two goals: to reconfigure the commonly held assumptions about the nature and structure of Ephesians and to reimagine the church for today. In both cases, he guides the reader through his argument in a convincing manner as he makes the case for a dramatic reading of Ephesians that highlights the responsibilities of the church as “gospel players” (p. 181). This book grew not only from his dissertation work but also from his urban ministry. These experiences, especially the disappointments despite good will and hard work, contribute to Gombis's insights into Paul's ecclesiology and eschatology.

In his first of seven chapters, he lays out his reading strategy for Ephesians. According to Gombis, the epistle should be read as a drama (a narrative approach), having an apocalyptic function and following the pattern of divine warfare. The apocalyptic function highlights God's triumph over all evil as well as provides the narrative structure from which to examine these powers and principalities that war against God's people. Gombis argues that the pattern of divine warfare drives Paul's narrative by noting the *inclusio* “in the strength of his power” in 1:19 and 6:10, with 1:20–23 as Ephesians' thesis statement: Jesus is exalted above the powers.

Chapter 2 lays out the nature of these powers and principalities as entities that rebelled against God and now enslave both individuals and nations in self-destructive patterns. These powers are distinct from human institutions, but their influence is often seen in harmful social activities. For example, Gombis suggests that the United States' complex modern social welfare system, established with good intentions to help others, is corrupted by the powers and principalities. The end result is a defeatist attitude among the very poor the system was designed to help. These powers operate in such a way that people assume that oppression is “normal” or “inevitable” (p. 54); the church must discern God's redemptive and life-giving patterns.

Chapter 3 examines 1:3–14 as these verses set out to transform the imagination of God's people. Chapter 4 focuses on 1:18–2:22, explaining God's triumph over the

powers accomplished in God's victory over sin (2:1–10) and God's defeat of the powers that divide humanity (2:11–18). Chapter 5 focuses on Paul's example, which demonstrates a "subversive performance" (p. 110) highlighting God's strength. Chapter 6 studies 3:14–4:16, where the gifts of the Spirit are explained as "directors and coaches" (p. 140) supporting actors (believers) as they improvise the drama. Chapter 7 offers the perceptive note that a believer's spiritual warfare is not accomplished through culture wars, but in the mundane work of life. The church should be a discerning, cruciform "community of resistance" (p. 160).

Gombis draws on his personal ministry experiences well to illustrate his arguments; they reveal an author who is as much on the journey as the reader, learning his part and improvising. The drama paradigm helpfully brings into sharp focus Ephesians' central concern of the church's actions in the world and the cosmic forces aligned against it. His use of the term "apocalyptic" might not satisfy a purist, but his argument that Paul advocates having a heavenly perspective on earthly problems is solid. He is judicious in his analysis of Judaism, although his approach does not emphasize the first-century AD Jew/Gentile dynamic in Ephesians. The divine warfare pattern usefully serves to unite the epistle's claims of God's cosmic victory and the armor of God motif, bringing together spiritual and earthly realities that our modern world has separated.

In a few places, his characterization of poorly executed theology might be overdrawn (pp. 14–18, 76–77), and his comparison between a twenty-first century American pastor's incarceration and Paul's imprisonment left me unconvinced (p. 109). His two pages of endnotes might leave some readers unsatisfied if they want to pursue his argument and conversation partners more deeply. Yet these are minor quibbles about a solid argument that successfully engages with Ephesians' call for the church to serve.

His brief treatment of the household codes (pp. 175–78) and assumption of Pauline authorship sidestep important critical scholarship issues. Moreover, an in-depth discussion of the household codes' application today would be consistent with his focus on the new humanity believers share in Christ. However, I would not fault him for touching lightly on the subject, as he makes clear that his goals focus simply on making sense of Ephesians' repeated claims of God's cosmic victory and the believers' responsibility to be Christ's church in the world. Overall, the undergraduate student, pastor, and lay leader will benefit greatly from this practical examination of Ephesians with its focus on God's drama and the church's crucial part in witnessing to the triumph of God in Christ.

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Saint Peter: The Underestimated Apostle. By Martin Hengel. Translated by Thomas H. Trapp. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010, xiv + 161 pp., \$18.00 paper.

This translation of *Der unterschätzte Petrus: Zwei Studien* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006) makes available in English what was possibly the final work published by the late Professor Hengel. It is a worthy cap to an illustrious career. Furthermore, the work has been excellently translated and so reads as well in English as it does in German, which is no mean feat.

As the German subtitle indicates, the work consists of two essays. The first and longer essay (102 pp.), "Peter the Rock, Paul, and the Gospel Tradition," discusses the role and theological contribution of Simon Peter in the early church. Surprisingly to some, Hengel begins with Matt 16:17–19, which, although a Matthean addition to the tradition, contains key elements of the historical picture of Peter, namely: (1) his

nickname "the Rock," which deliberately alludes to the Israelite "foundation stone" tradition; and (2) his importance in creating and/or expressing early Christian theology. In Hengel's view, Peter, although uneducated and probably speaking Greek with a heavy Aramaic accent, was the one who formed the early theology that the Gospels later pick up. This accounts for the fact that he is, after Jesus, the most frequently mentioned person in the NT (even more than Paul) in stark contrast with the other members of the Twelve. For Hengel, Mark was indeed the interpreter of Peter (who needed interpretation), publishing his Gospel three to seven years after Peter's death. The fact that the other Gospels relied on Mark is another indication of Peter's influence as the first leader of the church, alongside James (whose position was ultimately suppressed) and Paul (who is more known because of his letters). While Hengel does not attempt to demonstrate in this relatively short essay what in Mark is traceable to Peter, he does argue that Peter is responsible for the earliest stratum of post-Easter theology.

It is clear that what Hengel has written is fascinating. It is all too easy to focus on Paul and forget that there was another influential figure in the church, one who preceded Paul. For Hengel, Peter forms a mediating force between James, who in his eyes focused on Jewish purity, and Paul, who insisted on Jewish-Christian and Gentile-Christian unity. Between these two positions, Peter argued for Jewish-Christian and Gentile-Christian unity at one level and separation at another for the sake of the Jewish-Christian witness in Jerusalem. While James's position would eventually be pushed out of the church, Peter's position remains because of his deep theological influence.

Hengel builds this picture, it should be noted, without giving up his critical position on the Gospels and without using either Petrine letter. He considers 1 and 2 Peter late first century (contemporary with 1 Clement) and first half of the second century (about the time of the Pastoral Epistles) pseudepigrapha, respectively, intended to give Peter a literature like Paul's. (There is a helpful three-page chart that presents the relative dating of events and works cited in the two essays, so when in doubt, one can always discover Hengel's position.) Yet those who would date the Petrine literature earlier will still find this work fascinating, since the essay does not revolve around this assumption. When reading Hengel one has to follow his evidence and his argument, not try to fit him into a box. While he dates 1 Peter at about the time he dates the Gospel of Matthew, he argues for the historicity of Jesus' having nicknamed Simon "the Rock," for the martyrdom of Peter and Paul in Rome at about the same date, and also for Paul having made a missionary trip to Spain. He scorns those who are overly historically skeptical, just as he would scorn those who insist that the uneducated Peter (who he argues could read, but not write very well) wrote one or both of these letters. This essay has something to say to every critical position and makes a contribution whether the topic involves the Gospels, early church history, James, or Paul.

The second essay, "The Family of Peter and Other Apostolic Families," is a history of attitudes toward marriage and family in the first two centuries of the Christian era, attempting to trace the changes and the reason for them. It starts with and keeps referring to Simon Peter, since the tradition clearly says that he was married even as celibacy came to be something of a norm. For Hengel, there was a network of forces at work in the church with respect to marriage and celibacy: Jesus' call to leave family and possessions, which in Mark does not include leaving one's wife; Jesus' own conflicted relationship with his family of origin; the strong tradition that Simon Peter was married and had children, which continued long after celibacy was exalted; and Paul's comments in 1 Corinthians 7, which under Encratic influence were used to justify despising marriage. Then there was Paul's personal example of singleness (although Hengel discusses the idea that Philippians 4 refers to Paul's wife). In this conflicted history, it is clear that even in the Pauline mission Paul was reliant on house churches and thus on married

couples. It is also clear that Paul had nothing against those apostles who were married. As the history develops, Clement of Alexandria becomes the mediating figure, rejecting Encratism but also arguing that after producing children marriages should only be spiritual. Yet it is he who attributes a wife to Paul. In the end, the Peter/Paul tension in this regard will be part of what splits East from West.

Hengel again paints a fascinating picture. One wishes that he had expanded this essay to reflect more thoroughly on the issues that it brings up. Yet what he does say is suggestive in that one clearly sees that, even when struggling with the value of marriage, the church could affirm that Peter and Philip were married and had children, even if, strangely, Peter's wife is never named. What could this mean for contemporary discussions of marriage that seem to affirm only one side of the issue?

So here are two essays that are joined by their common interest in Simon Peter. While the second essay is about attitudes towards marriage, it develops this by following the twisting path of attitudes towards and statements about Peter's marriage, having first established its reality from NT materials. This following of Peter joins it to the first essay, which is more focused on Peter, on why he rose to prominence and on his theological contribution (rooted in his preaching). Yet that essay is not any less historical in that it asks not only the question of how Peter rose to prominence but also the question of how Peter came to be obscured. Here are two essays from one of the giants of NT study. Agree or disagree, like the conclusions or not, they are well-argued essays with a wealth of research data behind them. One can critique Hengel, but before doing so one should read him carefully and learn from his breadth of knowledge, because the only sensible way to critique him is first to "out-master" this master, which will take some doing.

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The Common Tradition Behind Synoptic Sayings of Judgment and John's Apocalypse: An Oral Interpretive Tradition of Old Testament Prophetic Material. By Paul T. Penley. Library of New Testament Studies 424. London: T & T Clark International, 2010, xii + 185 pp., \$110.00.

Since source-critical study typically demands detailed and complex work, Paul Penley must be commended for his foray into the tedious topic of a common tradition behind the Apocalypse of John and the Synoptic Gospels. Penley attempts to go beyond earlier source-critical studies in this area by Boismard, Vos, Bauckham, and Vanni in three ways: (1) by using consistent statistical testing of common material; (2) by avoiding an overarching framework that demands a specific date for the Apocalypse or Synoptics; and (3) by recognizing an author's common pattern for the use of sources. Penley isolates passages from the Apocalypse that have similarities to divine judgment sayings in the Synoptics in three main passages: the Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24; Mark 13; Luke 21), Jesus' lament over Jerusalem's destruction (Luke 23:27–31), and the stern critique of Jewish religious leaders (Matt 23:34–36; Luke 11:49–51). Penley finds these passages to have common themes, content, and wording to parts of the Apocalypse of John.

Since Penley is not arguing for any direct literary relationship between the Synoptics and the Apocalypse, Penley establishes in chapter 2 the reliability of oral traditions for the weight of his source-critical study. Penley avoids the debate on the Synoptic Problem, but he does point out J. G. Herder's emphasis on fixed oral tradition and its role in the formation of the Synoptic traditions. When examining John's usage of the OT in

the Apocalypse in chapter 3, Penley concludes that John of Patmos uses the OT with creative independence but still in acquaintance with Jewish and Christian usages of OT passages at the time. With these preliminary matters addressed, the heart of Penley's study is chapters 4–7 in which he closely compares passages from the Apocalypse and Synoptics in terms of vocabulary, phrases, grammar, syntax, ideas, and contexts.

In the first half of chapter 4, Penley compares the sequence of the six seals in Revelation 6 to that of the judgments in the Olivet Discourse in Mark 13 (and Luke 21). Even though Penley finds many differences between the passages, he argues that the similarities in sequencing the judgments point toward a common tradition behind both. In the second half of chapter 4, Penley argues that the expression, "the time is near," in Rev 1:3; 22:10 shares a common tradition found in the Synoptic Gospels (Mark 13:29; Matt 26:18; Luke 21:8). In chapter 5, Penley examines two phrases unique to Luke that are similar to phrasing in the Apocalypse: "Jerusalem will be trampled under foot by the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24b; cf. Rev 11:2b) and "those who dwell on the earth" (Luke 21:35; cf. twelve usages in Revelation). Penley expresses caution when he concludes that these two phrases in Luke 21 "demonstrate the likelihood" of John being influenced by a common tradition behind Luke.

In chapter 6, Penley sees a common tradition behind the phrase "and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will mourn over him" (Rev 1:7) and Matt 24:30, since both verses "represent the only two passages in Jewish and early Christian writings before Justin Martyr that combine Zech. 12.10 and Dan. 7.13" in this manner (p. 130). Then Penley makes a case for a common tradition for the usage of Hos 10:8b behind the phrase "and saying to the mountains and rocks, 'Fall on us and hide us'" (Rev 6:16) and Luke 23:30. In chapter 7, Penley examines the phrase "and in her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all who have been slain on the earth" (Rev 18:24) to other possible sources, but he determines this to be most similar to phrasing in the double tradition in Matt 23:34–35 (// Luke 11:49–50).

Finally, chapter 8 presents Penley's cumulative case for a common tradition based on his seven points of comparison from chapters 4–7. Penley does not claim that any kind of direct literary dependence on common sources existed; instead, he argues for a common oral tradition behind the interpretation of OT passages in the Synoptics and the Apocalypse. One of the important outcomes of Penley's study is the realization that "the traditions that controlled the appropriation of OT prophetic material in the Synoptic accounts . . . also gave shape to parts of the message of judgment in John's Apocalypse" (p. 156).

The strength of Penley's thesis is the cumulative evidence more than the individual data. Individually, much is open to question about the relationship of the Synoptics and the Apocalypse in Penley's comparisons. For example, in chapter 4, when Penley examines the phrase "the time is near," one cannot help but wonder if such a short phrase is able to bear even the partial weight of a theory of common tradition. Granted, Penley demonstrates that the wording in Rev 1:3 (and 22:10) is closer to Mark 13:29; Matt 26:18; Luke 21:8 than to Rom 13:12; 1 Cor 7:29; Phil 4:5; Heb 10:25; Jas 5:8; or 1 Pet 5:7. Nevertheless, imminence and suddenness are such common themes in apocalyptic literature that one wonders how much can be concluded from the usage of the phrase. Furthermore, the statistical validity alone of isolating a four-word phrase (as delineated in Tables 4.4 and 4.5) from a book like Revelation, which has roughly 9,000 words in Greek, must be questioned.

In chapter 5, Penley's case for a common tradition behind Rev 11:2b and Luke 21:24b, not merely usage of the same Jewish literature (e.g. Zech 12:3; Dan 8:13; *Pss. Sol.* 2:19a; 17:22b), seems to have good reasoning. His analysis, however, of the expression "those who dwell on the earth" raises questions. He identifies this phrase

as a "*terminus technicus* in Revelation" (p. 106). Yet of the twelve occurrences of the expression in the Apocalypse, only once (14:6) is the verb (κάθηναι, "sit"; not κατοικέω, "live, dwell") used that is also found in Luke 21:35. The connection between Luke and Revelation, then, seems tenuous at best, since it is based only on the three-word prepositional phrase "on the earth," even though Penley considers that to carry "high marks" statistically (p. 106).

One of Penley's strongest items of comparison is Rev 1:7 to Matt 24:30, but unfortunately this might weaken his overall argument. Most of his earlier comparisons between the Apocalypse and the Synoptics showed an affinity more toward Luke. Now, material that is unique to Matthew enters the discussion which stretches this alleged common tradition to further strata within the Synoptics. This begs the question of how "common" was this source Penley is finding if only tiny pieces are isolated from various strata within the Synoptics and it is not even common to all three.

Since Revelation has a relatively unstable manuscript tradition compared to other NT books, one would like to see mention of text-critical matters, especially in a study based on careful comparison of wording, but none is found. Variant readings appear in key manuscripts such as Codices Alexandrinus and Sinaiticus at some of the points where Penley compiles statistical evidence (e.g. Rev 1:7; 11:2; 14:6). These readings would affect the data, but the minority readings are not addressed.

Overall, Penley has shown that the Apocalypse of John has occasional and intriguing similarities to content, themes, and wording from the Synoptic Gospels. In light of the length of the Apocalypse and the apocalyptic perspective of parts of the Synoptics, however, is this evidence of a common tradition or merely coincidental similarities? Certainly, the Apocalypse has more in common with the Synoptics than the Fourth Gospel, but the common tradition that Penley seeks still remains vague and unclear.

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God in New Testament Theology. By Larry W. Hurtado. Library of Biblical Theology. Nashville: Abingdon, 2010, xii + 152 pp., \$21.00 paper.

This book is the fourth volume in the Library of Biblical Theology series by Abingdon Press. Hurtado begins his investigation on God in the NT by analyzing why the topic has been so neglected. Building off the work of Nils Dahl, Hurtado concludes that the topic of God has been neglected because of the emphasis on knowing God through his actions. Therefore, God has been studied under other systematic categories. A second reason he gives for the neglect is that some scholars have presupposed an understanding of God from the OT. He challenges the conclusion that the NT contributes nothing unique to the topic of God.

Hurtado is encouraged that, since the publication of Dahl's essay in 1975, the body of research has increased modestly. He attributes this, in part, to Dahl's essay since it is cited in most of the literature. While more research has been done, there are still some significant issues and texts that have been under-investigated. Hurtado does a wonderful job of taking his readers through the recent research. His summaries are to the point, and, when he inserts some responses and criticisms, they are insightful. For example, after summarizing Dunn's teaching on God in his Pauline theology, he criticizes Dunn's conclusion that it is odd that faith had to be in Christ and not simply in God. Hurtado responds: "For Paul, faith that ignores Jesus would be a disobedient

or ignorant faith, not because Paul was simply narrow in mind-set but because for him faith was always to be shaped in response to God's revelatory actions, of which Jesus is the climactic one" (p. 15). At other times, I had wished for Hurtado to provide a response (positive or negative) to some of the thoughts contained in the writings he reviews (i.e. Neil Richardson's conclusion that Paul was more theocentric than most Jewish texts of the period; p. 12). Finally, it should be noted that a distinct contribution of this chapter is that Hurtado's selections are diverse, including writings in English from North America and Europe, dissertations, and German writings.

In chapter 2, he analyzes God in relationship to deities in the Roman environment. In particular, the NT authors advocate that the only God worthy of worship was the one God, and worship of other gods was idolatry. In this way, a strong monotheism is advocated in the NT. He also concludes that God is not portrayed in an abstract way in the NT but as a particular deity. He affirms that NT teaching remains primarily in continuity with the OT. Hurtado discusses specific areas of continuity, including how the NT authors understand Jesus in reference to God in the OT and how ethics in the NT is built utilizing the God of the OT. He then addresses how some, in early Christian history, emphasized a strong discontinuity with the OT: Christian Gnostics and Marcion.

Hurtado forms his understanding of God around God's actions, as that is the primary way the NT (and OT) reveal to us knowledge about God. This is why the relationship between Jesus and God is so critical in NT teaching. God as "Father" existed prior to the NT, but it is emphasized more in the NT and it takes on different connotations since Jesus is his "Son" in a unique way. Christians are also "children of God" and can therefore call God "Father." By doing this, Christians are affirming that they come to God and know him through Jesus his Son.

In the section on God as Life Giver, Hurtado affirms the teaching that the resurrection provides hope for believers in their future resurrection and demonstrates God's power to raise the dead. However, it is this resurrection power that also enables believers to be transformed and to put to death their sinful tendencies. In the final section of this chapter, he emphasizes an area of development in the NT's view of God, specifically manifested in devotional practices. The NT's linking of God and Jesus is so tight that "all of God's previous actions and self-disclosures can be retroactively understood in light of Jesus" (p. 43). However, he clearly demonstrates that God is not diminished in the NT, since it is this same God that sent Jesus and that Jesus obeys. Thus, Hurtado explains his "binitarian devotional pattern" that he has further explored in *One God, One Lord* (2d ed.; London: T & T Clark International, 2003). He then presents the texts from which the doctrine of the Trinity developed.

Hurtado's synthesis of teachings is brief but insightful. His descriptions appear to be accurate, and they demonstrate a scholar who is conversant with the different specialties of NT studies (e.g. Pauline studies, Johannine studies). We should be grateful that this reflective scholar has allowed us to read his thoughts on the NT's teaching on God.

Chapter 3 is essentially an expansion of what Hurtado began in chapter 2 on the linking of Jesus and God in the NT. He starts by demonstrating the obvious: Jesus is a prominent theme in the NT. He then justifies his belief that this does not push God to the sideline, since Jesus is the agent and unique expression of God. Hurtado's repeated concept that God and Jesus are "uniquely linked and also distinguishable" is significant and ably defended (p. 54). He does this through analyzing several areas that demonstrate God's connection to Jesus' actions, Jesus' purpose, and the worship of both Jesus and God. The consequences (or effects) of this presentation of Jesus being so intimately connected to God causes adjustments in understanding the OT's presentation of God. These adjustments will be made in areas such as creation (Jesus as God's agent), God's prior actions (e.g. Jesus as the rock in Exodus 17), God's prior

revelations (e.g. Jesus in Isaiah 6), and God's elect (defined now as being "in him"). In the end, while the NT is in full continuity with the OT's understanding of God, it also develops the OT's understanding.

An exploration of how the divine Spirit relates to God and how the Spirit impacts our understanding of God is the purpose of chapter 4. In the first section, Hurtado reviews the Spirit in the OT, intertestamental literature, and Qumran, and shows that, while the Spirit was a topic of discussion in each of these, the references in the NT dwarf them. He then turns his attention to the Spirit in the NT, and he briefly covers several major issues related to pneumatology, including eschatology and the Spirit, the experience of the Spirit by the new covenant community, and Jesus and the Spirit. In this last area, he provides seminal thoughts on the theme of the triadic structure in the presentation of God in the NT.

In his final chapter, Hurtado concludes that the NT treatment of God is sufficiently unified ("a profound unity"; p. 99) to justify an approach of analyzing God throughout its writings. He reflects at length on how the triadic shape of God in the NT developed into the doctrine of the Trinity, and he describes how the NT's presentation of God was a critique of pagan religions in the Roman world.

Regarding some criticisms, I would have liked for Hurtado to have listed books that he intentionally left out of his discussion in chapter 2. While he might not have had time to integrate the thoughts of Köstenberger and Swain's *Father, Son and Spirit* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2008), I am left wondering if it was an oversight. The structure of the chapters was often hard to follow, not because of Hurtado *per se*, but because the reader is left deciphering the font size and capital letter usage to figure out the structure. It is unfortunate that the book has endnotes and not footnotes. Many times I found myself turning to the back of the book to see whom or what the author was citing.

The only major criticism is that it was difficult to follow exactly how Hurtado wants us to understand God through his chapter on the Spirit. The connections were not as clear as they were in other areas. While it was probably included to round out the discussion on each member of the Trinity, I found much of the content somewhat disconnected compared to most of the book. This focus on one major criticism is not to say that I agreed with Hurtado's interpretations throughout (see his discussion on Heb 6:4–5 [p. 82] and on John 20:19–23 [p. 87]). He also seems to favor the Johannine community hypothesis (p. 109), a proposal with which some, like myself, are less than comfortable.

In the end, however, this is a helpful book for understanding an obviously important, but surprisingly under-researched, area of NT theology.

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Did the First Christians Worship Jesus? The New Testament Evidence. By James D. G. Dunn. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2010, viii + 168 pp., \$19.95 paper.

In this volume, Professor James Dunn offers his latest contribution to the question of the relationship between Jesus and God, as it was conceptualized by the writers of the NT. His discussion is broken into four main sections.

In the first section (pp. 7–28), Dunn discusses NT vocabulary as it relates to the reverencing of God and Jesus. He looks first at general worship terminology, exploring the range of usage of *proskynein* ("to worship"), *latreuein* and *latreia* (terms for cultic service), *leitourgein* ("to offer cultic worship"), *threskeia* ("devotion to a god"),

epikaleisthai ("to call upon"), *sebein* (another term used for worship), and *eusebein* ("to revere"). He follows this up with a discussion of related terminology, such as *douleia* (a term for slavery), *phobein* and *phobos* (terms conveying fear or reverence), *ainein* and *epainein* (terms for praise), *eucharistein* and *eucharistia* (terms for thanksgiving), and *charis* ("grace" or "thanks"). Next he discusses *doxazein* ("to glorify") and *doxa* ("glory"), in order to ascertain how the glory of God and of Jesus were integrated by the earliest Christians. Finally he looks at words related to "blessing," such as *makarios*, *eulogia*, and *eulogētos*.

As it relates to the central question addressed in the book, Dunn's conclusions are somewhat negative: "'Worship' as such is a term rarely used in reference to Christ" (p. 27); "[c]ultic worship or service (*latreuein*, *latreia*) as such is never offered to Christ, and other worship terms are used only in relation to God" (p. 27); "[t]he first answer to our question, 'Did the first Christians worship Jesus?,' would therefore seem to be, 'Generally no,' or 'Only occasionally,' or 'Only with some reserve'" (p. 28). Nevertheless, he does acknowledge that "worship language is used in reference to Jesus" on occasion, and he calls this "very striking" (p. 28).

In Dunn's second section (pp. 29–58), he looks at worship *practices* in the NT, focusing first on prayer (pp. 30–37), next on the singing of hymns (pp. 38–43), then consciousness of sacred times, meals, and people (pp. 43–52), and finally, the offering of sacrifice (pp. 52–56). Dunn notes that "few prayers" are offered to Jesus in the NT, "few hymns" are sung to Jesus, and "no sacrifices were offered to him as to a god" (p. 57).

Dunn then moves on in the third section to an examination of the Jewish background, looking at various intermediary and divine agents who stand between God and the world in a variety of Second Temple texts (pp. 59–90). Among these are angels such as the OT Angel of Yahweh (p. 67), the human form which is seated on God's throne in Ezekiel 1 (p. 69), and Yahoel in the *Apocalypse of Abraham* (p. 69). He then considers personified attributes of God, such as Spirit, Wisdom, and Word (pp. 72–84). Finally, he looks at key human mediators, such as Moses, Elijah, and Enoch (pp. 84–89).

In Dunn's final section, he considers the NT data more closely. He first asks (and answers) the question, "Was Jesus a monotheist?" (pp. 93–101). He looks at the use of the title Lord (*kyrios*) in reference to Jesus and its implications for his divine status (pp. 101–16). Then he looks at Word, Wisdom, and Spirit as offering possible illumination to the way in which the earliest Christians spoke of and thought about Jesus in relation to God (pp. 116–29). Finally, he considers the testimony of the book of Revelation (pp. 130–32), the use of the title "God" in connection with Jesus (pp. 132–36), the connection between Christ and Adam (pp. 137–40), and the role of Christ as heavenly intercessor (pp. 140–41).

After surveying all of this data, Dunn draws his final conclusions about the question with which his book is occupied: "No, by and large the first Christians did not worship Jesus as such. Worship language and practice at times do appear in the New Testament in reference to Christ. But on the whole, there is more reserve on the subject" (p. 150). And again: "So our central question can indeed be answered negatively, and perhaps it should be. . . . Christianity remains a monotheistic faith. The only one to be worshipped is the one God" (p. 151).

Having surveyed the contents of Dunn's study, I would now like to make some evaluative judgments about the merit of his work. The following are my critical observations. Is it only a coincidence that the book opens (p. 1) and closes (p. 151) with comments about inter-faith dialogue and the "stumbling block" that is caused by Christianity's elevation of Jesus to a divine status? I cannot escape the feeling that Dunn is bending over backwards here to assure Jews and Muslims that Christians really are monotheists, and therefore, we do not actually worship Jesus (which would amount to polytheism),

but rather we worship God “as enabled by Jesus . . . as revealed in and through Jesus” (p. 151). To worship Jesus himself, rather than looking *through and beyond* Jesus to God, is subject to the charge of “Jesus-olatry” (p. 147).

I must confess, I find this all astounding language, coming from a Christian scholar. No Christian who maintains the catholic faith in its integrity could accuse a person of “Jesus-olatry” for worshipping Jesus. (Um, wasn’t this settled at Nicea?) Jesus is not merely the best revelation of God we have, in a perfect human life, which is what Dunn’s Christology seems to amount to when all is said and done (pp. 119–22).

I am left with disturbing questions. Does Dunn actually believe that Jesus was “begotten of the Father before all worlds” as the eternal Son of God? Does he admit that Jesus is not only God (insofar as he reveals the true God), but “very God of very God”? Does he confess that the Son is “of one substance with the Father”? I must confess that I find it frustrating to have to ask such questions at the end of Dunn’s study, and it bothers me that he seems to view Nicene orthodoxy as some sort of philosophical subtlety that the modern church really does not have time for anymore (p. 2). Dunn is unwilling to speak of Jesus as sharing in God’s unique “identity” (pp. 141–44), and he denies that the Johannine prologue necessarily teaches the personal pre-existence of the Son of God (as God’s eternal Word) prior to the historical life of Jesus (pp. 119–22). At the end of the day, Christ’s deity for Dunn appears to be purely functional (p. 143), and thus it has no real, ontological, eternal basis in the very life and being of the God who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

What is the evidence for the worship of Jesus in the NT at the end of the day? Does it prevent the church from actually worshipping Jesus and only allow us to worship *God the Father through Jesus*, insofar as God has revealed himself to the world in Jesus (Dunn’s language)? Dunn himself acknowledges the evidence, though he downplays it by a curious way of counting texts. Since the NT *more often* speaks of worshipping God than it does of worshipping Jesus himself, then that must mean that the early Christians were hesitant to ascribe to Jesus the same degree of devotion that was offered to the one God. Does the church’s theology and practice, as formally defined in the Nicene Creed and historic liturgy, depart from the spirit of the NT?

The Lamb of God is the co-recipient of worship in heaven with God the Father in Rev 5:14 (p. 12). The angels in heaven are told to worship the Son of God in Heb 1:6 (p. 11). The early Christians regularly “called upon” (pp. 15–16) the enthroned Jesus in prayer and at least at times offered worshipful doxologies to the risen Christ (p. 24). Both Paul and Stephen addressed prayers directly to Jesus (pp. 34–36). In the book of Revelation, the church’s hymns are offered to Christ as God with the Father (pp. 42, 130–31). John 5:23 tells us that the Son is to be honored by all “just as” God the Father is honored (p. 123). How one can gather from all this that the worship of Jesus himself is a form of idolatry is difficult to decipher. There is no actual conflict between the worship of Jesus and the worship of the one God. Giving the Son the same status as God glorifies God the Father (Phil 2:11). Because orthodox Christians confess that the Father and the Son share the same divine life or essence (John 1:1; 10:30; 8:58), there is no need to choose between the Father and the Son in worship (John 14:9–10). The Being of God subsists eternally and equally in each person of the Holy Trinity, and that is why we worship the one God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matt 28:19).

It would be nice if scholars of such stature as James Dunn would use their God-given gifts to promote Christian orthodoxy, rather than undermine its very foundations.

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Jews and Anti-Judaism in the New Testament: Decision Points and Divergent Interpretations. By Terence L. Donaldson. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010, xi + 176 pp., \$24.95 paper.

In this work, Terence Donaldson outlines the interpretive issues surrounding Jews, Judaism, and the relationship of the church and Israel in the NT. He immediately involves the reader emotionally by relating the experiences of Jules Isaac during the horror that was Nazi Germany. Utilizing Isaac's biography, Donaldson establishes the role played by the Christian church's interpretation of the NT during and preceding the period of Nazi governance.

After solidifying the importance of the issue and briefly tracing the development of related scholarship, Donaldson defines the relevant terms. To begin with, he distinguishes anti-Judaism from anti-Semitism by designating the former as a theological stance without racial prejudice. He then proceeds to define further the term "anti-Judaism" by specifying its associations with Gentile Christianity. This leads to a logical discussion as to whether the NT should be categorized as supersessionist and whether or not the NT reveals that the parting of the ways between Jew and Gentile Christian was overtly painful. Naturally, these discussion points merely set the stage for the ensuing examination of NT texts and various scholarly interpretations of these texts.

In the last section of the prolegomena, Donaldson introduces three key axes that will govern his analysis of the examined portions of the NT. First, he asks how the NT authors understood and constructed the identity of the group to which they belonged. Second, Donaldson examines the location of the NT author and his readers with respect to the separation between Christianity and Judaism. Third, he investigates the rhetorical function of the NT text in question. Using these three points of discussion and the interpretations of other scholars, Donaldson analyzes Matthew, Luke-Acts, John, and the Pauline writings. He excludes the Gospel of Mark and some of the other writings of the NT from his research in favor of the books that have more overt statements concerning the Jews or the teachings of Judaism.

Donaldson's observations on Matthew illustrate the pattern that governs the whole book. Using the three axes mentioned above, he demonstrates how different scholars can still come to radically different conclusions. For example, some scholars understand the Gospel of Matthew to be written to the church as a Gentile organism that is separate from and has a hostile relationship with Judaism. Such an understanding of the Gospel's audience and authorship points to Matthew's vilifying the Jews and supporting the idea that the church has superseded Israel. Conversely, some scholars view the Gospel of Matthew as aimed at a Jewish sect within Israel. This yields conclusions that the polemic of the Gospel is averse to the Jewish leadership, while seeking to encourage a group of believers that are still part of Judaism. Noting these two extremes, Donaldson states that one's understanding of the authorship, audience, and chronological setting is determinative for any conclusions about the Gospel's attitudes towards Jews and Judaism.

Given widespread scholarly agreement that if there is any book in the NT that is potentially anti-Judaic in nature it is the Gospel of John, Donaldson's treatment of the book is illustrative. He sets the stage by noting the oft-cited 8:44, in which the Jewish leaders are described as descendants of the devil instead of descendants of Abraham. Yet in 7:11–13, there is a mixed reaction to Jesus among the Jews, which illustrates that not all Jews are against Jesus in John's Gospel. The primary problem, of course, is the Gospel's ambiguous use of the term "the Jews" within the book. Thus, the nuances of John's use of this term are the primary focus of his chapter on this Gospel.

Donaldson then proceeds to apply his three criteria to John. First, he notes that the self-definition in John is somewhat confused. On the one hand, there are many negative references to the Jews that indicate a separation from the Jews and Judaism in general. For example, he notes that in John's Gospel it is "the Jews" that call for Jesus'

crucifixion, whereas the other Gospels are more specific in singling out the Jewish leaders. On the other hand, other passages within John indicate that Jewish believers are the ones addressed and that not all Jews are against Jesus. Thus, Pilate acknowledges Jesus' Jewish identity, and Nathanael and others proclaim Jesus to be King of Israel (1:49; 12:13). Likewise, there are comparatively few references to Gentiles in the Gospel.

The tension in the use of the term "the Jews" leads Donaldson to his second criterion: the social location of the Gospel of John. After a brief discussion of the likelihood of a growing division within Judaism and its negative effects on synagogue membership, he traces the arguments of R. E. Brown and others who postulate the theory that John was written in several stages. Following this vein of thought, Donaldson postulates that John was written by a community of Jewish believers who had experienced a painful expulsion from the synagogue. Therefore, the Gospel reflects a tension between a community of Jewish believers and their fellow Jews.

Donaldson's final axis, the rhetorical function of the Gospel, is his shortest section in the chapter. He notes that the Gospel of John was clearly meant to persuade and that it reflects a growing anti-Judaism, but he understands the Gospel to be aimed at a Jewish audience. The separation from the synagogue is inevitable, however, and Donaldson notes that this separation allows for the larger mission to the world that is also present in the Gospel. His conclusion, like his conclusions in other chapters, is not definitive. He sees John as a Jewish story with a later anti-Jewish overlay, but the degree and amount of that overlay are a matter of individual judgment among scholars.

Donaldson concludes his work with a discussion about the NT as a whole that bears strong similarities to his discussion on the Gospel of John. He notes that the three axes that govern his book are crucial for assessing the anti-Judaic and supersessionist tendencies of the NT. Yet he points out that there is little agreement among scholars as to the locations of these axes in the books covered or for the NT as a whole. This lack of consensus naturally results in very different conclusions about the presence and level of anti-Judaism and supersessionism within the NT.

In point of fact, Donaldson demonstrates that even with a strong methodology definitive conclusions can often be elusive. This represents one of the strengths of his book. The work is a solid demonstration that with good methodological tools one can successfully summarize an incredibly complex and sensitive issue. Donaldson shows what a large difference setting and assumptions make in the conclusions one derives. This is clearly evident in his analysis of the different results reached by various scholars studying the same material. He also illustrates, intentionally or not, that even neutral methodology will not secure a consensus among scholars who are dealing with a partial picture of past events.

In keeping with the spirit of Donaldson's intentional reticence to commit to a conclusion himself, I want to note that the lack of definitive assessment in the book can be viewed as a positive or negative, depending on the audience. If readers are seeking a solution, or at least Donaldson's solution to the question of anti-Judaism in the NT, they will be disappointed. As seen in his treatment of John, Donaldson gives some problematic texts that have elicited scholarly and religious debate and the positions of different scholars with respect to his three axes. Yet the conclusions are left up to the reader, and Donaldson offers few critical assessments in the book. The author does occasionally mention the strengths and weaknesses of a scholarly viewpoint but consistently avoids arguing for a particular position as the best possible solution. This lack of definitive conclusion, in my opinion, is the major weakness of the book. The net effect is that the book reads like a commentary or an encyclopedia article instead of an academic monograph.

If, however, readers are looking for an excellent summary of the scholarly opinions and historical possibilities of the NT's perspective on Judaism, they will find Donaldson's work a rich and rewarding resource. Indeed, anyone seeking to understand the

academic study of Judaism and the NT would be remiss in ignoring the book. The author manages to weave together divergent viewpoints in a way in which these contrary positions critique each other. In this way, Donaldson somewhat offsets the weakness mentioned above by allowing his sources to interact with one another. With this caveat in mind, I warmly recommend *Jews and Anti-Judaism in the New Testament: Decision Points and Divergent Interpretations* as an introduction to the debate concerning Jews and Judaism in the NT and as a helpful and concise reference for one's library.

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The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on the Way. By Michael Horton. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011, 1056 pp., \$49.99. *An Introduction to Christian Theology.* By Richard J. Plantinga, Thomas R. Thompson, and Matthew D. Lundberg, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010, xx + 634 pp., \$29.99 paper.

The wide gulf and divisions in contemporary theology are illustrated in these two texts on systematic or Christian theology. While each text is written by authors from Reformed institutions of higher learning and claims Scripture as a primary source, they could not be more different in their theological analysis and conclusions. The purpose of this review is to try to examine and critically interact with both the content and reasons for their differing theological conclusions. Both texts provide helpful introductory sections that allow the reader to understand the emphases and viewpoints. Each provides helpful charts along with an extensive glossary and bibliography. When a text is used to compare or contrast analysis of viewpoint, it will be called the Horton text and the Plantinga text.

Michael Horton is the J. Gresham Machen Professor of Apologetics and Systematic Theology at Westminster Seminary California. He is writing from what seems to be a classical Reformed position that defends not only the Calvinist perspective but also "orthodox" or "scholastic" Reformed thinking of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. What is unique and important about this text is not Horton's defense of classical Reformed theology but that he incorporates contemporary frameworks of thought (such as speech act theory) and uses the classical theological *loci* of philosophy, Christian history, historical theology, and biblical theology in an informed and thoughtful manner throughout the discussion of each doctrine. The text can be used by Reformed seminary students as well as college students, ministers, and laymen who are willing to wrestle with deep theological questions that deeply engage historical and contemporary thought. It is written in an engaging narrative style, with the idea that theology (doctrine) is connected to the larger story of the Christian faith (drama), which is then tied to worship (doxology) and practice (discipleship). A minor issue in the text is that in its desire to be narrative, its major ideas and points and concepts tend to get lost in the dense discussion of major doctrines and ideas. The book is divided into six parts with a theocentric focus: (1) theological method (Knowing God); (2) the doctrine of God (God who lives); (3) creation, providence and humanity (God who creates); (4) the person and work of Christ (God who rescues); (5) salvation, church and sacraments (God who reigns in grace); and (6) eschatology (God who reigns in glory).

In part one, Horton integrates his theocentric focus in the development of his theological method. He begins by stating that "the triune God is the object of theology and that this God is knowable because he has revealed himself to us" (p. 35). Chapter

one provides a philosophical background to understand how we can know God. Horton defines what he sees as three competing philosophical concepts that result in differing theological perspectives that shape different understandings of doctrine. He contrasts three different ways of knowing reality (ontology) under the paradigms partially developed by Paul Tillich: overcoming estrangement, meeting a stranger, and the stranger we never meet. The stranger in this paradigm is God, and the philosophical understanding of how God relates to the world shapes how humans can know God (epistemology). Each paradigm helps determine to what extent the grace of God is internal to the world (God as immanent and being as univocal) or entirely outside of the world (God as transcendent and knowable only in analogical ways).

In the stranger we never meet, the worldviews of atheism and deism affirm the concept that God is not knowable. More relevant to our postmodern context and the Plantinga text is the paradigm of overcoming estrangement, which is identified with the philosophical views of pantheism (all is one) and panentheism (God as dependent on the world). In panentheism, adopted by many liberal and postmodern theologians (and highly influential in the Plantinga text), the infinite qualitative and quantitative distinction between God and the world is minimized or erased (p. 36). Thus, the worldview leads to the practical abolishment of the classical doctrine of God and to the ideas of creation and eschatology (God's relationship to the world) as mere projections of our modern/postmodern viewpoints, which are discussed and sometimes adopted in the Plantinga text.

The philosophical perspective, which Horton sees as consistent with the classical Reformed worldview adopted by Horton, is the paradigm of meeting a stranger. This means that God and the world are distinct both qualitatively and quantitatively. He is distinct qualitatively in that he is holy and totally separate from humans; God does not need the world to be complete. He is quantitatively distinct because he is morally opposed to us in that "we are estranged from God by sin" (p. 42). As a result, "it is not simply that God possesses more being, knowledge, power, love and justice, but that God transcends all comparisons with us—even with those that he reveals in Scripture" (p. 43). Thus, we cannot reduce God to projections of our earthly existence. Any attempt to redefine God to our categories (such as suffering love in Moltmann) is misguided. Knowing God is limited to revealed truth communicated analogically that accommodates our creaturely capacity (p. 54). In contrast with modern and postmodern theological trends, this means that the classical concepts of the doctrine of God and his transcendence are affirmed. In fact, Horton helpfully adopts Eastern theological distinctions between the essence of God (not knowable) and his energies (his works knowable through his revelation in an analogical sense) as a way forward to understand the communicable and incommunicable attributes of God.

Horton closes his discussion of the first section by discussing the doctrine of revelation. Incorporating the models of revelation from an important text by Catholic theologian Avery Dulles, he rejects the idea that Reformed theologians have a solely propositionalist view of Scripture. Instead, he combines concepts of revelation as propositions, encounter, and acts in history as the proper way to understand Scripture and special revelation. As an external act of a transcendent and holy God to a sinful humanity, the act of general revelation is insufficient to bring salvation, but only makes us morally accountable to God. Only in special revelation as revealed in the externally revealed Scripture through the person and work of Jesus Christ alone leads to salvation by grace through faith. In affirming *sola Scriptura*, Horton defends the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture and provides a stinging critique of recent postmodern evangelical views of Stanley Grenz and John Franke. Grenz and Franke locate the inspiration of Scripture in the affirmation of the community rather than the text itself (conflating inspiration with illumination). This view eliminates the concept of the Bible as revelation

and the Word of God intrinsically. It is a form of "hermeneutical Pelagianism" (p. 173) that "has the unintended consequence of eliminating Scripture's status as revealed canon that stands outside and above the pious individual and community" (p. 172). For Horton, the Bible is the Word of God, not because the community accepts it as true, but because it is God's book. In determining the role of Scripture in relation to church history, and philosophy, Horton provides the following order of importance in formulating doctrine: "(1) the Scripture as infallible canon, qualitatively distinct from all other creeds and confessions; (2) under this magisterial norm, the ministerial service of creeds and confessions; (3) contemporary proclamation of God's Word in the church around the world; (4) long-standing interpretations in the tradition; (5) the particular nuances of individual theologians" (p. 218).

In part two, Horton discusses the doctrine of God and the Trinity. He begins by affirming the incommunicable attributes of God (God as simple, self-existent, immutable, impassible, and eternal [atemporal]). In perhaps the greatest contrast to the Plantinga text, Horton affirms classical theism against the postmodern "rebellion," which from the perspective of Horton is indistinguishable from the views of nineteenth century German liberalism and the Hegelian schools of thought (p. 226). The identification of orthodoxy with Greek philosophy, a charge repeatedly emphasized in the Plantinga text, is untrue as it relates to God's nature. God's classical attributes are based on biblical concepts (both implicitly and explicitly).

In the doctrine of Trinity, Horton discusses its historical grounding and biblical formulation. He analyzes and appropriates the findings and emphases of the Eastern church (threeness) and the Western church (oneness) while affirming the threeness and oneness of God in a manner consistent with the historical creeds. Horton rejects the social trinitarian view of Jürgen Moltmann as tritheistic: "[I]ts denial of the unity of the Trinity in substance or essence that they share in common is exegetically and ecumenically untenable" (p. 298).

In part three, Horton begins his discussion of the doctrine of creation (the God who creates) with the classic Reformed doctrine of predestination. He discusses all of the major historical viewpoints, from Pelagianism to Arminianism to Calvinism and points in between. He articulates the Reformed view from a Trinitarian perspective: all events are accomplished in history from the Father in the Son and through the Spirit. "God directs all of history toward his purposes without in any way cancelling liberty, contingency and the reality of creaturely causes" (p. 362). From this perspective, Horton does not believe that the creation story is either a scientific discourse or a myth, but an historical prologue to the law in which the progress of God's story (covenants) is understood.

However, Horton draws the line on the issue of the historical Adam, stating that "Christian theology stands or falls with an historical Adam and an historical fall" (p. 424).

This is seen in Horton's discussion of the image of God and fall of humanity. With the image of God being an ethical relationship, when Adam sinned he maintained his relationship in the covenant (Adamic) community, but lost his moral ability to fulfill his covenant obligation (prophet, priest, and king). As federal representative for all humanity, all humanity sinned through Adam. Only in Christ, the second Adam, can the image of God be partially restored.

Sin is individual, institutional, and systematic, and against the liberal ideas of progress and the postmodern objections to its character as requiring judgment, the concept of total depravity means that liberation can only be effected by God through the gospel of his grace (external).

In part four, the God who rescues includes an informative section on the historical background with a classical Reformed perspective of Christ as prophet, priest, and king. In agreement with recent discussion of the work of Christ, Horton sees the life as well

as the death of Christ as part of his work in saving humanity. However, against many of those discussions, he emphasizes that in the work of Christ, “none of the important aspects of Christ’s saving work—his active obedience, conquest over the powers, vindication of his just government and moral example—can be established unless his death is understood as a vicarious satisfaction of himself in the place of sinners” (p. 492). The work of Christ leads into a discussion of the doctrine of salvation that, in addition to a defense of the Reformed *ordo salutis*, provides a helpful discussion on the doctrine of justification with a critique of the “new perspectives on Paul.” By looking at the biblical text and the paradigm of meeting a stranger, it becomes clear that the righteousness of God must be imputed externally (Horton) rather than imparted internally (N. T. Wright). This is part of what Horton calls “the golden chain,” with justification serving as the engine that pulls adoption, new birth, sanctification, and glorification in tow (p. 708). The Holy Spirit forensically (outside of us) provides the source of inward renewal that is the pledge of our resurrection and glorification (p. 709).

In the final section, Horton advances the classical Reformed notions of the continuity of Israel and the church, which relate the old covenant of circumcision and Passover to the new covenants of infant baptism and the Lord’s Supper. The historic doctrinal positions of church government and the nature and number of sacraments in Roman Catholicism, Lutheranism, and the Free Church are also examined.

In dealing with eschatology, Horton uses the concept of holy war and the model of “intrusion ethics” as described by Meredith Kline to provide his analysis of the last judgment. As God instructed Israel to carry out total sanctions against Canaan in order to effect an ethical (not ethnic) cleansing in order to prevent its corruption in the promised land, the final judgment is based on his total cleansing of spiritual forces of evil and demonic forces. The era of common grace will end and usher in the reality of heaven and hell (exclusivism). He covers the three major worldviews of salvation (exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism) with an extended critique of inclusivism. The final judgment, like holy war, reveals the wrath and holiness of God in which the sheep and the goats are separated and eternal punishment and reward are the eschatological reality in an amillennial framework.

Plantinga, Thompson, and Lundberg are professors of religion at Calvin College, an institution associated with the Reformed Church of America. They have written a textbook that appears to be designed for college students as “an introduction and an invitation to Christian theology” (p. xiii). The theological commitment of the authors, according to the text, is broadly ecumenical while ecclesiastically within the Reformed tradition (p. 25). From the contents of the book, it appears to me that their Reformed tradition means a Reformed view of church sacraments and government. The ecumenical aspect probably means a broadly liberal/postmodern view of the Christian faith with adoption of essentially postmodern viewpoints of essential Christian doctrines. If one were to purchase this text and expect to see the historic Reformed faith affirmed in any significant way, one will be disappointed.

Part one, consisting of two chapters, is an introduction of Christian systematic theology. It discusses the idea of systematic theology and how it works. It attempts to “sketch the critical context in which we must forge, refine and articulate our theology today” (p. xv). This context is the postmodern world, in which theology must be “internally consistent and practically relevant to our trying time” (p. xvi). It is this commitment to postmodern relevance that shapes the findings of the text (p. 44). Part two discusses the various themes or doctrines of Christian theology, while part three traces the major historical developments of the Christian faith.

In part one, the topic of sources of theology is discussed in a classical framework, with Scripture as the primary source, tradition as a secondary source, and philosophy as a tertiary source. There is an excellent discussion (and chart) of these sources with

their corresponding branches (biblical theology, historical theology, and philosophical theology) resulting in a systematic theology. Accordingly, "theology thus involves the attempt to grasp the biblical basis of a given Christian teaching, see that teaching has developed, and ask how it might best be understood and expressed in the present" (p. 23). To be understood and expressed in the present, it must be contextualized to our postmodern situation or context. This means "bringing theology into engagement with the dynamics of culture" (p. 28).

The postmodern context is the death of modernity, with its rationalism, secularization, oppression of minorities, and overemphasis on individualism. In its place, postmodernism emphasizes epistemological pluralism and global consciousness with an eye toward poverty, ecology, and equality issues. The focus of this text shifts the emphasis of theology away from individual salvation towards a "holistic" view of salvation that addresses the "ecological crisis," the "economic imbalance of the world," and other problems affecting our modern society.

In part two, the authors formulate a doctrine of God and the Trinity in a way that advocates a broadly social (and egalitarian) view of God and his relationship to the world with an emphasis on immanence. It rejects what the text calls Greek philosophical thinking in the classical formulations of the doctrine of God (see Horton text, pp. 226–28 for a critique) and advocates a social view of the Trinity (see Horton text, pp. 296–99 for a critique) that focuses on the individual nature of the three persons of the Godhead in relationship with each other. This view "gathers up the personal, dynamic and relational gains in the doctrine of God and facilitates their applications to other doctrines and issues" (p. 146). For example, the social doctrine of the Trinity advances "the family image in creation and the church that reflects the divine Trinity and, by extension, the human community or persons in right relationship in general" (p. 141). A social view of the Trinity is also less individualistic and replaces the dominant image of the person of the Father that upsets feminists (pp. 144–45).

Instead of a separate discussion of the transcendence of God, Plantinga proceeds to deal with this important issue within the doctrine of creation as a simple affirmation that God is separate from the world and created the world. The immanent nature of God, as seen in his creation of the world, means that God is "radically within creation, namely, in the Spirit" (p. 176). After a very helpful and insightful description, Plantinga adopts the relational view of the image of God. Evolutionary theism brings into question the historical existence of Adam, while the idea of sin affecting all humanity through Adam is dismissed as unjust.

In another excellent descriptive discussion dealing with the person of Christ, the text agrees with the creedal view of the Council of Chalcedon while at the same time advancing a kenotic twist in which Jesus empties himself of all divine attributes except eternity during his time on earth. While the kenotic concept is consistent with the text's earlier denial of immutability as well as other aspects of classical theism, I believe that the version of kenotic theology formulated in the text is inconsistent with the concepts of Chalcedon (especially its affirmation that the properties of both natures of Jesus are preserved).

After a fine discussion of the biblical text and the images of the cross in church history, the authors proceed to deemphasize the idea of substitutionary atonement as a punishment for human sin. Even though the Bible deals with priestly images of the work of Christ that are clearly substitutionary in nature, the idea of the wrath of God being placed on Jesus is criticized. In the place of penal substitution, the text adopts as the primary image the model of reconciliation based on the resurrection of Christ that focuses on "liberation, humanization and cosmic shalom" (p. 281). In an extension of the discussion of the role of Holy Spirit working immanently within creation, the

authors propose the possibility of a universal role for the Spirit in creation, and seem to reject the idea that the primary work of the Holy Spirit is individual redemption. Part two closes by adopting the inclusivist view of salvation and an amillennial perspective of the millennium.

Both the Horton text and the Plantinga text are well written and provide excellent descriptions of Christian theology and the various viewpoints represented in the history of the Church. From my perspective, the problem with the Plantinga text lies in two related issues: (1) wholesale adoption of contemporary viewpoints; and (2) either the lack of candor or a properly nuanced discussion of the different views of Scripture in relation to their contemporary perspective. While tradition is discussed as a secondary source, it is hardly ever used in that manner. The theological viewpoints of John Calvin, Augustine, and Martin Luther give way to those of Jürgen Moltmann, Sallie McFague, and Langdon Gilkey.

Second, the text discusses only two views of biblical authority (used by more conservative Protestants): infallibility (faith and practice) and inerrancy (wholly without error; pp. 60–61). In fact, there are many different theories of biblical authority. As carefully categorized in the classic text *The Uses of Scripture in Modern Theology*, David Kelsey lists many ways the Bible is used in Protestant theology (both liberal and conservative). The perspectives and advocates of many, if not most, of the modern theologians cited favorably in Plantinga would disagree with the view that Scripture is infallible or inerrant. On almost every occasion when the Plantinga text decides the proper doctrinal approach to a theological question, they defer to the findings of “modern theologians” or “modern theology” (e.g. pp. 74, 138, 163, 198, 327, and 356). In fact, it seems that a major criterion for adoption of a viewpoint is “whether it is compelling in today’s world” (p. 274). While the text claims that it does not fall into the trap of liberalism, where the present is privileged at the expense of the past (p. 22), this is precisely what occurs.

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Coming to Grips with Genesis: Biblical Authority and the Age of the Earth. By Terry Mortenson and Thane H. Ury, eds. Green Forest: Master, 2008, 478 pp., \$16.99 paper.

While there is no shortage of academic treatments of the Genesis account of creation, here is a book written from a special creation perspective that offers refreshingly rigorous academic textual, historical, and theological analyses of the early chapters of Genesis not often found within the scientific creation genre. The work is a *Festschrift* in honor of James C. Whitcomb Jr. with a foreword by John MacArthur. Its fourteen authors seek to understand the original context, authorial intent, and related issues such as natural evil and theodicy that remain so relevant to a responsible interpretation of the biblical creation and flood accounts.

For instance, Mortenson assesses the early history of English geology and its relation to traditional Christianity while noting the interplay among geologists regarding “deep time” and its inroads into Christian theology. A distinctive contribution comes through his warning about and detailing of difficulties that occur when evangelicals attempt to communicate with geologists working within a worldview contrasting with a recent earth history model.

Richard L. Mayhue's essay "Is Nature the 67th Book of the Bible?" unpacks assumptions sometimes made by scholars who endorse this question. Mayhue critiques the assertion by Hugh Ross that Nature is indeed the 67th book of the Bible with all the rights and privileges that such a claim brings.

In "The Genre of Genesis 1:1–2:3: What Means This Text?" Steven W. Boyd provides a thorough analysis of many of the questions that scholars ask when examining the issue of genre. With Bishop Ussher, Boyd holds that not only the earth, but also all matter in the entire galactic universe, was created during the recent week of creation (for example, the angels were created early on Sunday morning). This inclusive worldview represents a central and distinctive position of the book and is a concept receiving continued discussion, being either strongly approved or disapproved by members of the Christian theological community at large.

In an examination of the Hebrew word *yom*, Mayhue argues the case for an author-intended, historical, literal, and plain understanding of the word "day" in the Genesis account. In so doing, he concurs with Gerhard Hasel's "The 'Days' of Creation in Genesis 1: Literal 'Days' or Figurative 'Periods/EPOCHS' of Time?"

While assessing the biblical meaning of "death," James Stambaugh also addresses the critically important issue of natural evil in our world. He parses the usages of the various terms and words associated with death. Stambaugh's opinion that plant death (which would by implication include the death also of the forests and the vegetable kingdom at large) occurred before sin seems somewhat speculative arising as his conclusion does from a biblical record rather limited regarding the topic. Moreover, his understanding of "death" as the separation of the body and "soul" will be open to further discussion, particularly by the "embodiment" theologians like Nancey Murphy.

Thane Hutcherson Ury presents the views held by the magisterial Reformers regarding the origin of natural evil. He outlines seven results of an epoch-making nineteenth-century English period of theology composed of traditionalist and liberal or accommodationist wings and how the respective theologies were or were not influenced by the new findings of geology of the day. He discovers that the subtle evolution of the church's understanding of divine goodness during this period and the accommodationist reading of Scripture led liberal Christian thinkers of the time to interpret natural evils as the "intended, non-intrusive agents in the *very good* creation" (p. 421). This means that their theodicy differs sharply from those of the Reformers. Ury concludes that these gradual, subtle shifts constitute a tragedy for the church and for Christians who endorse accommodation yet who seek to see in the face of God a truly inviting and loving visage. Ury's important point is that to uphold a recent creation, as contrasted with the deep-time of theistic evolution, tends to safeguard the compassionate character of the living God of the Bible. This telling point seems to be often lost in contemporary discussions of theodicy.

In terms of overall assessment, *Coming to Grips with Genesis* carves a valuable academic niche for itself by its fresh, in-depth treatments of the early chapters of Genesis. Although projected for use in seminaries, the book is accessible to serious general readers interested in a deeper understanding of Genesis 1–3 and its impact upon Christianity. Moreover, the theological community at large can benefit particularly from the book's critical analysis of the theological implications of promoting accommodation resulting in the denigration of the goodness and wisdom of God. One weakness of the book is the lack of any discussion of the scientific challenges often lodged against a recent creation of life model of earth history. Minimally, a word about the most recent and cogent sources for scientific support for such a model would be helpful.

While a future companion volume could discuss some these scientific and philosophical issues from a special creationist perspective, Mortenson and Ury present a volume

bursting with robust, respectful, and cogent scholarly expositions of biblical creation which are not often accessible today. The academic community stands in debt to the authors for this distinctive contribution.

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Recovering the Real Lost Gospel: Reclaiming the Gospel as Good News. By Darrell L. Bock. Nashville: B & H Academic, 2010, viii + 146 pp., \$16.99 paper.

Darrell Bock (Ph.D., University of Aberdeen) is Research Professor of New Testament Studies and Professor of Spiritual Development and Culture at Dallas Theological Seminary. As a scholarly writer, he is best known for his many publications on the Gospels and the writings of Luke, including major commentaries on Luke and Acts. Among his popular publications are a book-length response to Dan Brown's mega-seller, *Breaking The DaVinci Code* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2004), and a follow-up study, *The Missing Gospels* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2006)—which is seemingly what Bock's present book title plays on.

Before proceeding to the review proper, I should admit up front that this book was a surprise to me for several reasons. When I asked to review it, I had just seen the fairly aggressive advertising that Broadman & Holman had done, including several recommenders' blurbs. The mentions of "biblical theology" caused me to assume I would be dealing with a fairly classic biblical theology methodology. However, to my initial surprise, the approach Bock is employing is, in my opinion, virtually as close to systematic theology as biblical theology.

As I read on, though, I had the *déjà vu* sense that I had previously encountered a fair amount of the material. At that moment, not having any of Bock's commentaries within easy reach, I grabbed what I did have: the Dallas Seminary faculty volume, *A Biblical Theology of the New Testament* (Chicago: Moody, 1994), which Bock edited with Roy Zuck. In his chapters on the theology of Luke and Acts, I noticed a marked similarity between categories in *Recovering the Real Lost Gospel* and their earlier development in *A Biblical Theology of the New Testament*. Then, I recalled Bock had written the "Introduction" to that work (pp. 11–17), where he makes his case for much the same biblical theology methodology worked out in the volume presently being reviewed.

A second area that was surprising to me has already been mentioned above: no real mention of the "lost gospels" issues that have been so visible in NT studies the past several decades and that have spilled over into the public consciousness through the writing of several best-selling fiction and non-fiction works in recent years. The reason I expected those issues would come into play in this book is because of its title: *Recovering the Real Lost Gospel*. Given Bock's previous publications in that area, I wonder if Broadman & Holman suggested the final book title, to entice a wider readership to consider the book. The volume's subtitle (*Reclaiming the Gospel as Good News*) is a better reflection of what the book is about. However, if unbelievers choose to read the book based on its slightly misleading title, the title may be justified somewhat in increased outreach.

The third and fourth areas that, at first glance, were surprising to me from the advance publicity were the size and popular nature of Bock's volume. Without the back matter (i.e. the biographical sketch of the author and indexes), the text itself is only 136 pages long. In respect to the "scholarly" level of the book, there are only seven true

footnotes (i.e. bibliographic in nature) in the entire book—four of which are in one chapter (three of which refer to Bock's own previous publications). All additional content in footnotes are Scripture citations, usually passages of 3–4 or more verses—sometimes as long as a half-chapter or more. What that tells me is that this book is short and simple by design, at least partly because of the well-documented brief (i.e. instant everything) attention span of much of the intended audience. In spite of its size and simplicity, though, Bock has still packed a powerful literary punch into the short span.

A final area of surprise is one of which younger readers of *JETS* might not be aware, but which the “old heads” among us will remember well. This book is very much about the gospel, but is significantly different from the various publications of the “lordship salvation” controversy twenty years ago, all of which focused squarely on the gospel message. The two primary reasons for that, in my opinion, are (1) the gospel is approached in Bock's volume from a “wide-angle lens” perspective, not just the “snapshot” focus on the point of becoming a Christian, as was primarily the case with the tomes two decades earlier; and (2) the tone of the book is irenic, not polemical.

Now, to the review itself. In overview, Bock's work includes a very brief Foreword (by Rick Warren), a concise Introduction, seven chapters, a crisp Conclusion, a very brief Appendix, and two short indexes. Only one chapter is over twenty pages long.

The title of the Introduction is “The Gospel from the Hub to the Whole: More than Dying for Sin.” As the title implies, it is Bock's intent from the beginning to make clear his bedrock contention that “the gospel” is about much more than just the cross or the point of saving faith. Biblically, his most important argument in the Introduction seems to be that Paul's reference to the cross in 1 Cor 2:2 is a synecdoche (i.e. a part representing a whole) and his laying out of the historical dimension of the gospel in 15:3–5 should be understood in light of 1:30: “But from Him you are in Christ Jesus, who for us became wisdom from God, as well as righteousness, sanctification, and redemption” (HCSB).

In Chapter 1, “The Gospel Starts with a Promise: Relationship in the Spirit,” Bock goes all the way back to Genesis, surveying the biblical covenants (i.e. Abrahamic, Davidic, and New), referring to them as “the gospel's backbone.” He then moves crisply through key passages in Luke and Acts that show that Jews and Gentiles are one new people possessing the Holy Spirit in Christ.

In Chapter 2, “The Gospel is a Meal and a Washing: The Lord's Table and Baptism,” Bock again goes back to the OT roots of these NT rites: the Passover meal and ritual cleansing. In discussing the transition from Last Supper to Lord's Supper, it seems to me that he emphasizes that corporate/community angle of the Supper more than many such discussions. The cleansing of baptism “means that God gives us the new life of His Spirit and makes us into a new temple of His presence” (p. 37).

Chapter 3, “A Unique Action Meeting a Comprehensive Need: The Cross,” Bock frames Micah 6 and Romans 3 as two divine lawsuits against humanity made in God's image, whose need is desperate because of their sin (Rom 1:18–3:18). The cross is discussed in several contexts (1 Corinthians 1; Galatians 6; Ephesians 2; 1 Peter 1; Hebrews 8–10) as the reflection of the Lord's incredible commitment to recover the lost and restore his image in mankind.

In Chapter 4, “The Gospel is Inaugurated as a Gift of God's Grace,” Bock rehearses several crucial angles on the grace of the gospel or the gospel as a gift. Key passages (e.g. Acts 2; Romans 4; Galatians 1–2; Ephesians 2; Titus 2–3; 1 Peter 1; Jude; and John 1) are probed for what they contribute to the subject. A catchy, but still substantive, summary quote here is: “Everything about grace rotates around Jesus. He brings it. He shows it. He gives it” (p. 71).

In Chapter 5, “The Gospel is Affirmed in Divine Action and Scripture: God Showing Who Jesus Is,” the key question being asked and answered is whether it is legitimate (Bock's word is “kosher,” p. 74) to substitute Jesus into God's place in revealing who

Jesus is. This chapter is the most atypical in the book in two respects: (1) there is much more discussion of historical/cultural background issues here than elsewhere in the book; and (2) as already noted, there are scholarly footnotes in this chapter not found elsewhere in this volume. These words from the chapter's conclusion pull together well what Bock is arguing here: "God had demonstrated to all the world—both inside Israel and outside—who Jesus was. . . . He was a one of a kind person who brought God's promised kingdom and was called to be God's anointed. And best of all in the view of the early Jewish Christians, it was all completely kosher" (pp. 86–87).

In Chapter 6, "Embracing the Gospel: Repentance and Faith," Bock carefully discusses the key terms "turn," "repent," and "faith." His word studies, while not comprehensive, still hit all the high points with precision. Particularly telling is the final section of the chapter: four passages in which these three terms are used in various combinations (Mark 1:15; Acts 3:19–21; 20:21; and 26:15–23). Putting it all together, "So repenting, turning, and faith are three parts of a single triangle of response" (p. 109).

Chapter 7, "A Different Kind of Power Through a Way of Life Pleasing to God: Reconciliation, Peace, and Power of God unto Salvation," is a concise exposition of the believer's reconciliation and peace with God, then the power of God not just to justify, but also to sanctify (see Romans 1–8)—only slightly different in content than the treatment in a soteriology class that has a biblical theology flavor. Near the end of the chapter, Bock makes this "big picture" statement: "This is the good news we have sought to recover in this book. It is good news to know that God gives us the power to live as He designed us to live. That power stands at the center of the gospel" (p. 121).

In his Conclusion, "Getting the Gospel Clear: A Relationship Rooted in God's Love, Not Just a Transaction," Bock begins by asking the question, "Why should God pursue those who have chosen to go their own way?" His answers: "[F]irst, God loved us; second, God sought to motivate us through His love" (p. 125). He ends with this overarching assertion: "[R]elationship, rooted in God's love and everlasting in duration, is what Christianity is all about. The gospel is what the church is called to preach—and to live. It is a message we need to recover and share with a tone that reflects the love and reconciliation that motivates it because it is a testimony to the wonderful and deep love of God for us" (p. 132).

The Appendix, "Showing the Gospel," is but two pages long and clearly an attempt to make sure there is no basis for criticism of this work in regard to a typical historical blind spot for evangelicals: "We are to be salt and light, and being salt and light includes caring for and about God's creatures and His creation. There is no reason to have an either-or mentality about these matters: there's no reason to choose between preaching the Word of the gospel on the one hand and serving on the other. That kind of dichotomized thinking is not biblical" (p. 135).

(Mostly) obvious strengths of *Recovering the Real Lost Gospel* are: (1) its writing style is crystal clear as well as eminently readable; (2) its tone is generally very upbeat and peaceful, for the most part keeping the "heat" (i.e. emotions, notably anger or defensiveness) level down, thus allowing the "light" (i.e. insight) level to go up; (3) I have to think that even the very brief Foreword by Rick Warren is a strength, given the popular targeting of the book, since far more readers at that level know about *The Purpose-Driven Life* and who Warren is than are familiar with Darrell Bock; (4) the initial analogy that the cross is like the hub of a wheel, but not the entirety of the gospel, sets the stage very helpfully for Bock's development of the good news; (5) Bock actually made his case well to back up the hub/wheel analogy throughout the book; (6) because I wrote the entry on "Gospel" for the *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* and "Repentance" in the NT for the *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, I can attest that Bock's discussion of the various elements of the gospel message in chapter 6 is on target exegetically; (7) of wider contemporary theological significance, Bock tied his progressive dispensational

views into the gospel from the very beginning, as his discussion of the biblical covenants in chapter 1 shows (i.e. ultimately, there is one people of God); and (8) without stating it as part of his agenda, Bock forges an implicit synthesis of a sort between a gospel message that appears to lean somewhat toward the Hodges-Ryrie side of the older gospel controversy, but more toward the MacArthur side in regard to the need to show the fruit of repentance and Eph 2:10/James 2 good works resulting from being saved.

The few perceived weaknesses (or limitations) of Bock's volume are: (1) I do not understand why the chapters are sequenced in the order Bock chose, particularly holding off the chapter on the "embracing" (his terminology) of the gospel message through repentance and faith until chapter 6 (of seven chapters)—though that may been part of his strategy of showing that "the gospel" is much more than the cross or initial faith; (2) a couple of the chapter titles (see chaps. 5 and 7, as well as the Conclusion) are overly long and unwieldy; and (3) if an in-depth scholarly discussion of the gospel message, or some other aspect of the good news, is desired, the reader will be at least somewhat disappointed (though such can be found in most of Bock's commentaries and some of his other writings).

Would I recommend *Recovering the Real Lost Gospel*? Yes . . . unreservedly, and for the widest possible readership, even though I should say before closing that I do not agree with every aspect of his treatment. Its apparent primary popular audience definitely needs to have laid out for them an understandable overarching biblical narrative of the good news in a span brief enough, and simple enough, for them to handle. However, in a very real sense, pastors, teachers, and scholars need just as badly to read and interact with its content. Why? I say that for two reasons: (1) because they need to come to grips with the now broadened landscape of foundational issues (thanks at least partly to Bock) that revolve around "the gospel"; and (2) because they minister to—or are charged with preparing those who will minister to—the same generational groupings of largely biblically illiterate people—or, at least those with short attention spans—that Bock has intentionally, and for very good reason, targeted.

If nothing else (though there is much more!), in *Recovering the Real Lost Gospel*, Darrell Bock again demonstrates exceedingly well that a brilliant scholar can communicate at a widely understandable level.

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