

BOOK REVIEWS

Christopher A. Rollston, *Writing and Literacy in the World of Ancient Israel: Epigraphic Evidence from the Iron Age*. Archaeology and Biblical Studies 11. Atlanta, SBL, 2010, xx + 171 pp., \$21.95 paper.

While there exist valuable scholarly collections of ancient Hebrew inscriptions (e.g. G. I. Davies, Renz and Röllig, Dobbs-Allsopps et al., Ahituv), to which one should add, at a more popular level, P. Kyle McCarter, *Ancient Inscriptions* (Washington: Biblical Archaeology Society, 1996), non-technical introductions to West Semitic epigraphy as a field, with its methods, results, and limits, remain scarce. Since J. Naveh, *Early History of the Alphabet* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1982), G. Garbini has written *Introduzione all'epigrafia semitica* (Brescia: Paideia, 2006), but it is essentially an overview of the various regional corpus, and already a lengthy and detailed book. It is all the more appreciable that a leading epigraphist such as Christopher Rollston has been willing to write a concise textbook on this fascinating subject. In addition to teaching at Emmanuel School of Religion, Johnson City, Tennessee, Rollston is editor for the journal *MAARAV* and has published valuable contributions to epigraphic research.

The book is divided into two parts. In the first, concerning the question “broad tableau?” Rollston rapidly describes the traces we have of the earliest alphabetic system in the second millennium BC, as well as the Ugaritic cuneiform alphabet. Then he devotes more space to the stabilized and standardized Phoenician script, introducing among other items the royal Byblian inscriptions from the tenth century BC, and convincingly reasserting their conventional dating against recent attempts by B. Sass to postdate them. Following Naveh, Rollston argues that the Phoenician script was widely used in the Levant until distinctive national scripts developed from it during the ninth century (for Paleo-Hebrew) and eighth century (for Aramaic). Finally, in a pleasant and well-illustrated chapter, the main types of inscriptions are outlined mainly according to the material on which they were written, such as monumental stones, statues, pottery, papyri, and seals.

The second part of the book explores the work of ancient scribes. In light of Mesopotamian, Egyptian, and biblical texts, Rollston underscores the high status of this profession in antiquity. Though avoiding the term “school” because it is often understood in too narrow a sense, he brilliantly demonstrates that “Israelite scribes were the recipients of formal, standardized education” (p. 113). He concludes that Israelites were certainly capable of producing “literature” in Iron Age IIA. However, when one sees his assertion that “elites in ancient Israel were writing during Iron Age IIA (900–800 BC)” (p. 134), one wonders whether he follows the “low chronology” (still rejected by a majority of archaeologists and recently modified by I. Finkelstein himself) or whether 900 BC means the earliest date at which he can establish there was literature during Iron Age IIA (as seems to follow from his argumentation). In the last chapter, Rollston deals with the problem of the authenticity of items found in today’s antiquities market, trying to navigate between systematic acceptance and *a priori* rejection of them.

Those already acquainted with Rollston’s publications will find here, gathered in a convenient synthesis, several ideas he has developed in scholarly articles, such as

his groundbreaking “Scribal Education in Ancient Israel: The Old Hebrew Epigraphic Evidence?” (*BASOR* 344 [2006] 47–74). Not surprisingly, some ideas presented in this book would not be shared by all epigraphists. There has already been a debate between Rollston and his *Doktorvater* (P. Kyle McCarter) about whether the script of the Tel Zayit abecedary is Phoenician or a sort of “South-Canaanite” precursor of Paleo-Hebrew (R. E. Tappy and P. Kyle McCarter, *Literate Culture and Tenth-Century Canaan: The Tel Zayit Abecedary in Context* [Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2008]). Regarding the literature in Iron Age Israel, Rollston makes an excellent case for its existence (at least) as early as the ninth century, contrary to a current trend among biblicists but standing with other competent epigraphists (e.g. A. Lemaire, A. Millard). It would have been interesting to discuss the case of the tenth century (even if one thinks that Israelites wrote them in Phoenician script), as well as the historical implications of the fact that Israel and Judah shared the same script.

In spite of the presence of technical pages on Paleo-Hebrew paleography (pp. 97–107), this work is well written and quite clear, perfectly suited for non-specialists provided they have a rudimentary idea of the Hebrew alphabet. For somebody already interested in the topic, it is delightful reading. Not only is it *the* book I would recommend as an introduction to West Semitic epigraphy, but it would certainly be useful for many biblicists to read it, in a context where many of them draw hasty conclusions about the composition of the biblical texts without having a sound idea of the concrete work of ancient scribes.

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The Bible and Ecology: Rediscovering the Community of Creation. By Richard Bauckham. Sarum Theological Lectures. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2010, xi + 226 pp., \$24.95 paper.

How should one understand the relationship between humanity and the rest of creation according to the Bible? In this book, Richard Bauckham criticizes the dominion model, the stewardship model, and even the priestly model as inadequate to account for the biblical teaching on this issue. Instead, he demonstrates from Scripture a portrait of humans as fellow creatures in a reciprocal relationship with the rest of creation, all of which is redeemed in Christ according to Col 1:15–20. Only when Christians begin to appreciate the whole witness of Scripture regarding the non-human creation will we think rightly about ecological concerns.

Bauckham begins his survey with a look at the Torah. In his view, Genesis 1 has been misinterpreted to give humans a kind of control over creation that biblically belongs to God alone. “Subduing” is a reference to agriculture, “having dominion” means “participating in God’s caring rule over his creatures” (p. 19), and the creation order does not suggest human authority any more than it suggests creeping things have authority over the birds. After a lengthy discussion of Genesis 1–2, Bauckham argues that the flood narrative shows the dire consequences of violence within creation and holds out Noah as a model of “the peaceable and caring relationship with animals that had been God’s creative ideal” (p. 24). Killing for food is also not God’s ideal but is a concession that is given with certain restrictions that are unfortunately ignored today. Furthermore, Israel’s land law demonstrates a regard for the rest of creation that is too often forgotten.

Chapter 2 focuses on Job 38–39, which powerfully gives the reader joy in and humility toward God's creation. Chapter 3 considers various biblical texts (e.g. Psalms 104; 148; Matt 6:25–33; Rom 8:18–23) that view humans as part of a theocentric "community of creation," in which God alone is exalted and nature is neither divine nor secular, but sacred. In chapter 4, Bauckham counters the claim that the Bible promotes a negative view of wilderness, holding out the examples of Adam ("the first naturalist," p. 130), Noah, and Jesus (who "was with the wild animals" in Mark 1:13) as counterevidence. In Chapter 5, Bauckham shows that Jesus' redemption of "all things" includes nature (cf. Col 1:20), and argues that as we await the final reconciliation of all things, our present ministry must involve not only reconciliation to God but also reconciliation to all creation.

Over the years, Bauckham has proven himself such an able scholar that one now expects his research not only to inform the reader but also to tear down faulty paradigms, and this book does not disappoint. In an age in which many in the church are surprisingly more reluctant than those outside the church to express ecological concern, Bauckham successfully demonstrates that this hesitance is rooted in Enlightenment thought that goes against the grain of Scripture. He exposes faulty interpretations of texts and introduces other passages that are typically unconsidered in regard to this subject.

The person who thinks about non-human creation within a dominion or a stewardship framework needs to read this book. Readers will not find specific instructions for applying this message but will encounter a solid biblical challenge to transform their way of thinking about the non-human creation. They will be pleased with Bauckham's knowledge of the biblical text in its original context, and yet will not be burdened with the need to understand Hebrew or Greek or the cultural background of the biblical texts.

At times Bauckham's critique of modern culture is prophetic: "It is the exclusive focus on a vertical relationship to the rest of creation—whether it be called rule or dominion or stewardship or even priesthood—that has been one of the ideological driving forces of the modern technological project of dominating nature" (p. 11). He also asserts, "Christians have been surprisingly slow to appreciate the connection between the modern world's rejection of God and the ecologically disastrous modern project of technological conquest of nature" (p. 30). He stresses that "Jesus Christ is . . . the one who, through his resurrection . . . renews all things. Thus to see creation whole we must see it in relation to the *crucified and risen* Jesus" (p. 158). It is this kind of prophetic voice that Christians need to heed, not only to be relevant in an ecologically broken time but also to be faithful to Scripture.

Some evangelicals will have trouble with Bauckham's non-literal reading of the creation account and his acceptance of macro-evolutionary ideas, but these do not affect the basic thesis and will hopefully not prove a stumbling block. Bauckham's book also encounters the danger of stressing the horizontal relationship between humans and the non-human creation to the extent that the vertical relationship may be forgotten. The author himself recognizes a vertical relationship but says little about it because of his desire to challenge the purely vertical paradigm, and therefore one is left wondering how, for example, Psalm 8 speaks to the human-to-non-human relationship. These weaknesses, however, pale in comparison to the strengths. A paradigm shift is needed, and it can only come from solid exegesis of Scripture and a confrontation with all the biblical evidence. Bauckham's book offers that and for this reason is a necessary resource for the church to become what it is meant to be.

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The Immoral Bible: Approaches to Biblical Ethics. By Eryl W. Davies. New York: T & T Clark, 2010, x + 172 pp., \$34.95 paper.

Eryl W. Davies advocates “biblical ethical criticism” of the Hebrew Bible. Three areas are explored: the nature of hermeneutics; problematic passages in the Bible, especially Joshua 6–11, concerning the “Holy Wars” of Israel; and the evaluation of biblical criticism for the contemporary, rhetorical reader. Although the author allows for several hermeneutical approaches, he analyzes five—evolutionary, cultural relativity, canonical, paradigmatic, and reader-response. He demonstrates weaknesses and strengths in each, claiming “there is not a single hermeneutical key for unlocking the biblical message and, in our postmodern age, many may well feel that the convergence of as many approaches as possible is an inherently good thing, since the biblical text is too multifaceted to be exhausted by a single interpretative strategy” (p. 2).

The book thus takes a rather eclectic approach for interpreting ethically dubious passages concerning violence, warfare, bigotry, polygamy, human fanaticism, intolerance, and other “immoral” passages in the Bible. However, the author tends to favor the reader-response strategy as the optimum approach for a plurality of dialectical, conversational, and open-minded criticism of the Bible. He asserts, “The graphic descriptions of violence and brutality in the Hebrew Bible are likely to provide the greatest stumbling block for readers in the twenty-first century” (p. 21).

Progressive changes in history are recorded biblically in the chapter entitled “The Evolutionary Approach.” Tracing the historical approach to Hegelianism and Julius Wellhausen, one of the founders of higher criticism and historicism, Davies ties ideological changes in Israel during the thousand years or so of Israel’s history (p. 43). In addition, the author calls this historical approach “evolutionary,” relating it to Gerd Theissen, influenced by Darwin’s theory of evolution, applying it to the Bible, where “evolutionary theory has, too, undergone evolution” (p. 42). One of the negative results, then, is the downgrading of the Hebrew Bible, focusing on only the NT as the outcome of only those constant historical elements of the OT that survived.

The cultural relativist approach explains away such atrocities as slavery, the holy war, patriarchy, polygamy, and other immoral tendencies by limiting them to cultural situations. One problem with this approach, raised by Davies, is called “distanciation” (p. 61). The Hebrew Bible is turned into a “historical relic,” not relevant to current culture. A lack of rational, moral judgment follows from accepting another culture’s privileged situational ethics.

The canonical approach would single out passages for moral integrity, but exclude others. Davies suggests that readers must skip over Joshua 6–11 or eliminate it from the canon so as not to “offend our moral sensibilities, and focus instead on passages for our ethical guidance of our lives” (p. 99). We cannot avoid what Brueggemann calls the “wild and untamed” (p. 100) ethical witness of the Hebrew Bible.

The paradigmatic approach would provide types for following moral and immoral behavior, but which are appropriate principles to follow? Davies warns this approach “invites readers to indulge in a hermeneutics of desire and permits them to draw from the text whatever lesson or message they please” (p. 118). By this method, slavery, racial discrimination, and ethnic cleansing could be held as paradigmatic models for society.

Instead of the previous generalized approaches, Davies suggests the reader responds with what Judith Fetterley calls the “resisting reader,” with a duty to converse and interact with the text critically, with an open mind (p. 120). The reader-response approach allows the reader to use judgment, appraisal, evaluation, assessment, approval or disapproval, acclaim or criticism, acceptance or rejection (p. 121). Davies concludes that “the morally offensive passages of the Hebrew Bible, such as Joshua 6–11, must be

questioned and critiqued in an open, honest forthright way" (p. 137). Not only should the reader respond to the text, but also to the way it is being interpreted by biblical exegetes. Davies advocates this approach of "ethical criticism" in his conclusion. If we enter into the argument of the passages, we will be transformed by the process of ethical criticism itself.

From a classical, exegetical view of interpretation, Davies has much to offer to the exegete, but his response results from the exegesis of the passage. The plain sense is the common sense and contextual sense for the whole counsel of the Scriptures. Much of this book is rhetorical strategy for the postmodern approach or an eclectic approach to hermeneutics. I question the author's lack of mentioning the inerrancy of Scripture and the power of interpretation by the priesthood of believers with the help of the Holy Spirit. The book serves a good purpose by introducing the audience to some hermeneutic approaches, but does not serve as a book that helps to resolve questions of immorality in the field of philosophical ethics nor in the Hebrew Bible. His reader-response method works on the reader, entering into the argument with an open-mind and critical discourse, but returning to an exegesis of the passage would be worthwhile as a priority.

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James M. Hamilton Jr. *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2010, 640 pp., \$40.00 paper.

Dr. Jim Hamilton is an outstanding scholar, a creative writer, and a highly effective communicator. All these traits shine through in his latest book *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment*.

In many ways, this lengthy work is the fruit of more than a decade of teaching, studying, and thinking through the storyline of Scripture. Hamilton's careful attention to the text, combined with his passionate reverence for its divine author, shapes his prose as he tackles the daring and daunting task of biblical theology: finding its theological center. As the title suggests, Hamilton argues that the central theme of the Bible is God's glory in salvation through judgment.

Hamilton begins with a solid attempt to summarize the current state of biblical theology and previous attempts at finding its center (pp. 37–65). This chapter is well written and discusses the essential methodological issues needed to accomplish his task; yet, it is not unnecessarily verbose. This introductory chapter would be a great read for those wanting to get an up-to-date feel for the discussion. Hamilton then traces his leading theme (God's glory in salvation through judgment) through every book of the Bible (pp. 67–551). In the OT, Hamilton follows the Hebrew structure of Torah, Prophets, and Writings, and in the NT he looks at the Gospels and Acts, then the Letters, and finally the book of Revelation. Each section begins with a discussion on the theology and structure of each of these chunks of Scripture, and then ends with a summary of how his leading theme best represents the main point of each section.

What I appreciated most about the book is that it is clear Hamilton has worked through many passages exegetically and the fruit of his labor has already been published in over a dozen articles. Hamilton's biblical theology is grounded in a meticulous study of Scripture—as it should be. Nothing is stated in a haphazard manner; everything is well thought out. Nevertheless, readers may disagree with some of Hamilton's exegetical conclusions. For instance, some may not be convinced that "Esther's feminine

virtue" is showcased as she submits "to the desires of her husband" (p. 322). (I do not think this is what it means when Esther lusciously adorns herself with oil and spices as she spends the night with the king, bringing him more pleasure than the rest of the virgins; Esth 2:14–17.) In any case, it would be difficult to fault the author for not making a solid attempt to argue his case.

The entire book is well researched, and yet is presented in a readable manner. Hamilton's creative writing style kept my attention throughout. Good writers often read outside their field, and it is clear Hamilton has done so.

I thoroughly enjoyed this book and will come back to it often as I think and teach my way through the Bible. Overall, Hamilton has made a solid contribution to the field, and those who want to throw their hat in the ring will have to reckon with his fine work. I have already found the book useful in preparing lectures for OT Survey courses and for other Bible classes where I seek to connect individual books with the overarching narrative of Scripture.

I do have one quibble with Hamilton's thesis, however—one I suspect many practitioners of biblical theology will have. While God's glory in salvation through judgment captures the main emphasis in some books of the Bible (e.g. Exodus and Ezekiel), for other books it seems a bit forced. I am in agreement that this theme *may* be the center of the Torah or the Prophets (though I still think the kingdom of God is better), but when it comes to the Writings, Hamilton's thesis is less convincing. Overall, the author attempts to show that "the Writings have the *same* theological center as the Law and the Prophets: The glory of god in salvation through judgment" (p. 271, emphasis added). He then surveys each book and finds striking uniformity—each book of the Writings contains Hamilton's leading theme. For instance, the book of Ecclesiastes certainly argues that "the centrality of God in all of life" is the only way in which humans will have true shalom (p. 320). So far so good. But Hamilton goes further to add: "This glorifies God in salvation through judgment" (p. 320), and it certainly does, but is this the main theme of Ecclesiastes? Or is the main theme of the Song of Songs: "Through the judgment comes salvation to the praise of the good Creator" (p. 308)? Or can Job be boiled down to God being "glorified in salvation through judgment" (p. 276)? Does Solomon in Proverbs 1–9 seek "to save his son through the judgment wisdom announces against folly, and the one who is saved through that judgment lives out the glory of Yahweh" (p. 298)? Is the center of the book of Esther "that God glorifies himself by saving his people through the judgment visited upon their enemies. He is worthy of all praise" (p. 322)? Maybe; readers will have to determine if they find his arguments persuasive. I am still unconvinced, however, that "the Writings have the same main theme as the Law and the Prophets" (p. 273). In other words, I do not see Esther, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes emphasizing the glory of God in salvation through judgment to the same extent that Exodus, Isaiah, and Ezekiel do. Such a conclusion may have some theological merit, and it would certainly resonate with Jonathan Edwards's theology (and the Edwardians among us), but it seems a bit forced exegetically. Why not just say that Esther portrays God as working behind the scenes in a hidden, yet sovereign, manner to bring about an ironic deliverance of his people? This would better portray the actual thrust of the rich plot narrated in the book—a book where God's glory is not mentioned. I would have been more convinced had Hamilton admitted that God's glory in salvation through judgment is not the main emphasis in every single book in the same way. A dominant theme does not have to dominate every book for it to be *the* theological center of the canon as a whole.

The book ends with two quite respectable chapters, one that answered some anticipated objections about his thesis (pp. 553–63) and the other that connects biblical theology to pastoral theology (pp. 565–71). This final chapter reveals Hamilton's heart,

which is woven throughout the book as a whole: biblical theology is designed to shape discipleship, fuel prayer, and foster sound Bible study in the life of the church. And this is what I enjoyed most about the book. Hamilton does not study, write, or teach as a mere academic detached from the church. When Hamilton rolls up his sleeves to dig into the text, he does so with a passionate burden and love for the Bride of Christ. In this light, *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment* is a model of true ecclesial theology.

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Old Testament Narrative: A Guide to Interpretation. By Jerome T. Walsh. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2009, 269 pp., \$30.00.

This book joins a number of other books that provide the modern reader with the basic principles of how to read narrative texts in general and biblical texts in particular. Some of the books in the author's "For Further Reading" list include the following: Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*; Shimon Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art in the Bible*; and Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative*.

The introduction and first chapter place the study of narrative criticism within its realm of scholarship. Walsh contends there are various meanings to the text, and the particular realm of study will lead to different conclusions as to the meaning of the text. Historical criticism, for example, seeks to get at the earlier written and oral forms of the text and determine the original author's message. Narrative criticism, however, looks at the text in its final form "and asks what it communicates to its readers in that form" (p. xii). Walsh then sets the stage for his work by asserting that in his approach, he will not take into account the information from source, form, and redaction criticism. Robert Alter, however, argues that the contributions of these fields of study should be taken into account even in narrative criticism and that all contradictions cannot be easily harmonized.

Walsh does actually take the contributions of these fields of study into account, but he does not deal with the tensions in the text in the same way. Rather than positing multiple redactors and sources, Walsh proposes that at times, there are multiple conflicting narrative voices created by the author to present different points of view. Walsh indicates that this explanation for tensions in the text is a relatively new development in biblical studies. He also presents the concept of "breaking frame," in which the narrator "steps out of his storytelling role to say something directly to the narratee, something that is related to the story but not precisely part of it" (p. 99) as another explanation for tensions within the text.

The second part of chapter 1 explains the relationship between the world of story, narrative, and text, and the relationship between the real author, implied author, narrator, characters, narratee, implied reader, and the real reader. Walsh also lays out his basic plan for the remainder of the book.

Each of the book's chapters presents a particular narrative topic and then provides examples primarily from 1 Kings 1–11 that illustrate the principles he presents. He focuses on the English text (NRSV) and does not assume his readers understand Hebrew. Each chapter then ends with a set of leading questions from the stories of Jeroboam (1 Kgs 11:26–14:20), Elijah (1 Kgs 17:1–19:21), and Ahab (1 Kgs 20:1–22:40) to guide readers through the process of applying these principles on their own. After covering the topics of plot, characters, characterization, point of view, manipulation of time, gaps and ambiguities, repetition and variation, voice(s) of the narrator, structure and

symmetry, and responsibilities of the reader, Walsh concludes with three appendices. These appendices provide the reader with Walsh's responses to the questions raised at the each of each of the chapters for the three sets of stories.

This book has some great features for a textbook. Few teachers have the opportunity to teach a course that focuses solely on biblical narrative, but books like this book are helpful because they focus their examples on a particular set of texts. To be sure, Bar-Efrat's work is a little broader in the biblical books from which he draws his examples. Books like these can then be helpful as supplemental texts to teach narrative principles in a course covering the historical books, and Walsh's book is especially helpful in the practice exercises it provides.

One of the publishing frustrations with the book is that the notes are at the end of the book and grouped by chapter number, but the page headings in each chapter give the chapter title. The result is that every time readers want to check a note, they will have to check the chapter number they are in and then go to the back of the book to find the note. It would have been helpful to have included the chapter titles in the notes section, so the reader would not have to find the note in a two-step process.

In the appendices, Walsh invites the reader to examine his explanations of the texts and see how they compare with the explanations the reader developed. He states that if his explanations do not seem plausible, that "they may demonstrate ways of *misreading* that you ought to avoid" (p. 133, Walsh's emphasis).

Walsh does provide a number of great examples and explanations throughout the book for the nine narrative topics covered, but there is always the danger in narrative criticism of making too much out of things that are not said. In a few places, Walsh seems to do this, and I cite here one example. In his discussion of 1 Kings 13, Walsh points out that two miracles occur—the altar at Bethel crumbles and Jeroboam's hand withers. When Jeroboam responded to the prophet, the text only referred to the king's withered hand and said nothing about the destroyed altar. Walsh then contends that a frame break occurs in the text and that the narrator thereby informs the narratee that the prophecy had indeed been fulfilled by the time the story is being told, but it did not actually crumble that day. He assumes that if it had crumbled, the text would have certainly mentioned it.

One could also surmise that given the two events, Jeroboam was much more concerned about the prophet restoring his withered hand—something the king could not do—than he was about an altar that had just crumbled and that others could easily rebuild or replace. The two events could certainly have occurred on the same day, and the text's failure to mention the altar might simply be due to what is viewed as the greater sense of urgency on the part of Jeroboam.

This is a great book with many great examples that illustrate principles of narrative study. It would provide a great supplemental text in an English Bible course that includes the study of 1 Kings.

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Gonzalez, Robert R., Jr. *Where Sin Abounds: The Spread of Sin and the Curse in Genesis with Special Focus on the Patriarchal Narratives*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2009, xvi + 294 pp., \$34.00 paper.

Traditionally, scholars have divided Genesis into the primeval history and the patriarchal narratives, emphasizing that the former describes the spread of sin and the latter its solution. Arguing against this thematic division, Robert Gonzalez claims that

the theme of the spread of sin and the curse operates throughout all of Genesis. In fact, the patriarchal narratives demonstrate a pattern of intensification of sin rather than its solution. Gonzalez's work is extremely readable, and he effectively uses footnotes to cover more technical arguments that may not interest a casual reader, but are nonetheless important, such as the arguments surrounding the identity of the "sons of God" (p. 77). He also limits the scope of the work to the final form written by Moses that conveys reliable historical information. Thus, he does not address the source- or form-critical debates that surround Genesis. His method is essentially a canonical reading that follows the interpretative principle of Scripture interpreting Scripture to resolve ambiguities in the Genesis text.

After a brief survey of the secondary literature that shows that there has been no comprehensive study of the spread of sin throughout Genesis, Gonzalez uses part 1 to analyze the nature of the first sin and the curse. He argues that the primary sin in Genesis 3 is that of pride in which Adam and Eve assume divine power. He supports his argument by making intertextual connections to Ezek 28:12, Phil 2:6, and 1 John 2:16. While this is helpful, he could have easily stayed focused on Genesis 3, which provides enough evidence that pride was the essential characteristic of the first sin. Later in part 1, Gonzalez provides a helpful discussion of the limits of the divine curse upon Adam and Eve. He claims that there is a redemptive element within the curses; for example, the earth provides both food as well as thistles for Adam and the blessing of fruitfulness is still present for Eve even if it is accompanied by pain.

Part 2 contains the analysis of sin and curse in the primeval history that demonstrates the intensification of sin. For example, Gonzalez contrasts Cain's fall with that of Adam and Eve, showing an intensification of every element of the fall. He continues to discuss the spread of sin as revealed in Genesis 3–11. Perhaps most interesting in the discussion is the examination of the spread of sin in the genealogies, which bolsters his claim of a pattern of intensification (e.g. Lamech in Genesis 4). What is more, Gonzalez shows that children's sin consistently surpasses the sin of their parents.

Part 3 is by far the longest section of the book, containing six chapters that examine each generation of the patriarchs. Gonzalez follows a pattern in which he first describes the sin and attempts to excuse the patriarchs. He then offers his analysis that successfully demonstrates the sin of the patriarchs. His exegetical analysis is thorough, interacting extensively with the secondary literature. His conclusions are convincing, especially through his use of intertextual connections between Genesis 12–50 and Genesis 3–11. For example, he shows intertextual connections between the rivalry of Esau and Jacob and the rivalry of Cain and Abel (p. 171). Later, he continues the discussion of the intertextual use of Cain and Abel by connecting it to the story of Joseph.

Gonzalez provides a reading of Genesis that offers a helpful corrective on this historic tendency to overemphasize the piety of the patriarchs and minimize their sin. For example, rather than excusing Abram for claiming Sarai was his sister, he demonstrates that Abram sinned by his selfishness and failure to protect his wife. What is more, Abram failed a test to trust YHWH through this deception. In each generation of the patriarchs, Gonzalez argues that the spread of sin becomes more intense. He concludes, "So that 'avalanche' of sin that begins in primeval history continues to spread beyond the hubris of Babel and into the patriarchal history, where it wreaks havoc even among God's chosen people, one generation after another (p. 192).

Gonzalez's discussion of the fourth generation of the patriarchs provides perhaps his strongest arguments that the spread of sin is a unifying theme in Genesis. He draws intertextual connections between Genesis 37–50 and Genesis 3–11. For example, he argues that the violence that characterized Cain, Lamech, and antediluvian civilization is still present in Dinah's rape at Shechem. If anything, the violence has grown worse in the patriarchal period. While Gonzalez agrees that God's grace is present, it "is displayed against the dark backdrop of human sin abounding" (p. 232).

While the bulk of part 3 concerns the spread of sin in the patriarchal narratives, the final chapter examines the spread of the curse. He shows that the curse of Genesis 3 is still present in Genesis 12–50. Gonzalez sees the curse against Eve present in the barren mother motif and the curse against Adam present in the patriarchal famines. Finally, the punishment of mortality is present in the patriarchal narratives. Gonzalez argues that declining patriarchal life spans demonstrate the deepening effects of the curse. Death becomes more imminent in each subsequent generation.

Gonzalez's work is an extremely helpful analysis of the spread of sin throughout Genesis. He is able to show that Genesis is essentially the story of the spread of sin as well as God's gracious interventions. As Gonzalez argues in the introduction, this pattern of spread and intensification reflects Paul's argument in Rom 5:12–14 where Paul uses the expression "from Adam to Moses" to describe the origin, scope, and results of sin (p. 1). Generally, Gonzalez models a method of intertextual exegesis that successfully demonstrates connections between Genesis 3–11 and 12–50. However, as he makes intertextual connections to other parts of the canon, he at times relies a little too heavily on the NT—especially Paul—when it is not necessary to support his argument, such as in the case of the nature of the first sin. However, this observation is but a minor critique of a very helpful book that provides an alternative to the thematic bifurcation of Genesis 3–11 and 12–50.

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The Message of Ezra & Haggai. By Robert Fyall. The Bible Speaks Today. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2010, 186 pp., \$16.00 paper.

Robert Fyall is Senior Tutor in Ministry for the Cornhill Training Course in Scotland. He has also served as director of Rutherford House in Scotland and as pastor of a church in Durham, England. In addition to this expository selection in The Bible Speaks Today series, he has written several other works, including volumes in the New Studies in Biblical Theology collection and the Focus on the Bible series.

The author's approach begins with exploring the historical context, literary structure, overall themes, and relevance of each book in an introductory section. He then examines the books of Ezra and Haggai by chapter, covering the major events, themes, and application of each. Frequently he sprinkles in related biblical references from Nehemiah, Zechariah, Malachi, and flashbacks from the Pentateuch to support his supposition that the return from exile was another version of the Exodus theme. Throughout, Fyall often refers to Ezra and Haggai as cast from the same mold as Moses—leading Israel from a place of bondage into freedom. The result is a historically informative, theologically sound resource that gives the modern reader an insightful perspective on spiritual implications of Ezra and Haggai.

Fyall explores the significance of the years before Ezra's return to Jerusalem covered in Ezra chapters 1–6, focusing on God's "behind the scenes" activity from 538–516 BC to bring the exiles back to Jerusalem (pp. 28–99). Fyall wisely accommodates readers from a wide theological spectrum in his explanation: "We need to hold in tension the reality that God works out everything according to his own purposes and yet that humans are responsible beings who are answerable for their decisions and actions" (p. 30). It is within this very tension that Fyall carries out his balanced study of the political events that led to the return of the exiles, the opposition they encountered, and the rebuilding of the temple.

Without miring the reader down in tedious detail, Fyall thoroughly surveys the political atmosphere under Cyrus that allows the exiles to come back legally in 538 BC, the significance of the lists of their names, the significance of return to sacrificial worship, and how Israel overcame opposition to the rebuilding of the temple. Finally, Fyall takes the reader through the completion of the temple in 516 BC, never failing to draw the reader from the biblical text into personal application.

Fyall celebrates Ezra's arrival and role as priest and prophet in his discussion of Ezra 7–10 (pp. 100–137). Within this framework, he reveals the primacy of Ezra's influence, saying, "The re-establishment of Torah at the centre of the nation's life was essential if the purpose of the return from exile was to be fulfilled" (p. 100). Fyall points out Ezra's influence in guiding the Israelites in wholehearted prayer, confession, and repentant action.

The remainder of the book is devoted to a study of Haggai as one of the prophets who stirred up the apathetic Israelites to finish the building of the temple. As he does with Ezra, Fyall paints Haggai in the same prophetic light as Moses (p. 142). The five points of emphasis Fyall finds in Haggai's four month ministry are "the word of God," "the Temple," "Messianic hope," "Covenant," and "Eschatology" (pp. 143–44). Each of these the author uses to further his final summation that "this little book is an encouragement and challenge, especially in days when the cause of Christ seems in such decline in the West and the temptation to give up or fall away is abundant" (p. 186).

Fyall's foremost goal in *The Message of Ezra & Haggai* is to convey a faithful understanding of "God's purposes and God's people" (p. 17). He accomplishes this broad goal successfully through a systematic study of the historical/religious events recorded in Ezra and Haggai and their corresponding spiritual significance. Though Fyall's purpose is not ground-breaking scholarship, this study does contribute significantly to the discussion about how the spiritual messages of the ancient books apply to the modern Christian.

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The Book of Hosea. By J. Andrew Dearman. New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010, xiv + 408 pp., \$45.00.

In his introduction, Andrew Dearman maintains a balanced tension between attributing parts of the book to Hosea himself or to some "anonymous disciples" who likely had a role in collecting and editing these prophecies. Dearman "undogmatically" agrees with the idea that nothing in the text requires a date later than the eighth century BC. He suggests the book originated in Judah after the fall of Israel, with some later editorial updating. The difficult Hebrew in this book is due to the prophet's unusual use of metaphors, scribal transmission problems, Hosea's elliptical style, and the unique northern dialect used in Israel. The text itself is divided into two sections: chapters 1–3, which are about Hosea's family, and chapters 4–14, which are about God and his people (there are two subsections: 4:1–11:11 and 11:12–14:8). He attributes the positive statements of hope to Hosea himself, but considers seven of the fourteen references to Judah as editorial additions.

After a detailed historical review of the political history of the period, Dearman attempts to reconstruct the "narrative substructure of his theology," which reflected the received traditions (from the period of Israel's ancestors like Jacob, the wilderness period, and life in the land) valued in Hosea's community. This theology is structured

around two theological metaphors: (1) Israel is God's household; and (2) the national covenant is comparable to a marriage. Dearman finds several base texts that support a narrative matrix of these root metaphors, although he cautiously attributes to Hosea only general knowledge of these Pentateuchal traditions because he is unsure when these texts were written. Based on these ideas, Hosea gives a "sustained application of the prologue and the first two commandments of the Decalogue to the crisis he perceives for Israel in his day" (p. 35). Aspects of this theology include the belief that there is no other God than Yahweh, God loves and chose his people, God used a prophet to bring the people up from Egypt, the nation has broken the covenant, God is like an eagle swooping down on its prey, God hates their golden calf, God is the one who gives agricultural plenty, and in the end God will gather his people as one nation.

Dearman believes the idea of household is the primary institution of social structure in Hosea, based on the predominance of household imagery (father, husband, groom, son, children, brother, descendants, wife, house). Marriage and covenant are constituent parts under the root metaphor of household. It explains Israel's faithless (political and religious) relationship with God.

The commentary on Hosea 1–3 addresses the relationship between symbolic acts and the reality they portray. Although some acts can be offensive, such acts do effectively communicate God's horror at the state of Israel's unfaithfulness. Hosea 1–3 refers to one woman (not a different woman in chapter 3) and does not support the retrospective interpretation of Gomer's harlotry. Her harlotry is seen as a metaphorical representation of her religious and social unfaithfulness. Dearman rejects the common translation of 1:4 "I will punish" for the better "I will bring." He thinks Hosea may be the father of all three children, accepts the view that 1:7 was an editorial addition, and comments on the adaption of 1:10 and 2:23 in Rom 9:25–26. He does not view "I am not her husband" in 2:2 as a legal declaration of divorce and works hard at explaining the difficult imagery associated with the sinfulness of the wife, her shaming, and the wooing of the unfaithful wife in 2:2–23. In 3:3, Dearman translates the final clause as "nor I with you," indicating a lack of sexual relations with Hosea, based on the carry over of the negative idea from the previous clause. There seems to be an allowance that the messianic terminology of "David your king" in 3:5 could exist in the northern nation of Israel, but Dearman also would accept the view that this is an editorial addition in the time of Hezekiah.

The book of Hosea is filled with obscure metaphors, so the commentary includes many insightful explanations of ancient metaphorical expressions. At other times Dearman struggles with some metaphors—especially harlotry. For example, was the harlotry in Hosea 4:11–14 sexual or was it just a metaphor for faithlessness? He urges great caution, but in the end he very hesitantly allows that there may have been a sexual component in some cases. Then, in 5:3–4 harlotry is defined with the rather bland generality, "faithless activity toward God," removing all connection with the sexual perversions of Baalism (read his essay on this topic, pp. 363–68). The contrite words in 6:1–3 are a confession by the people, but the people seeking God failed to maintain their loyalty to God (6:4–6). Hosea 6:11–7:1 includes later editorial influences and the "harvest" in Judah in 6:11a is a negative judgment. The political assassination in 7:3–7 probably refers to Hoshea's murder of Pekah. The nation's refusal to trust God led to political intrigue with Egypt and Assyria during the reign of Hoshea the last king of Israel (7:8–16; 8:7–14). Dearman interprets 9:4c as Ephraim not being able to enter God's "household" or land, rather than God's house (the temple) in Jerusalem. The difficult text in 9:7b–8 is understood as Hosea's criticism of other false prophets, not the criticism of the prophet Hosea. Dearman does a good job of explaining the difficult plant and animal imagery in chapter 10 and makes good use of the household metaphors of a son, a father, deep emotions, and God's freedom to be compassionate in chapter 11.

The last section, Hos 11:12–14:8, begins another case against Israel for deceit (religious and political), for the nation followed the deceptive ways of Jacob (at birth, taking the birthright, struggling with an angel, meeting Esau, fleeing to Haran, serving to get a wife). Israel's idol worship will lead to God attacking them like a lion or bear, so 13:14 is viewed as a question indicating that God will not redeem the nation, which differs strongly with the way the verse is used in 1 Cor 15:54–55. The final call to repentance in 14:1–8 reverses Israel's hopeless situation by offering forgiveness for those who confess their sins, for God still loves them. Dearman understands the final proverbial instruction in 14:9 as editorial addition by a disciple.

Within the commentary are many insightful excurses (e.g. sowing; wordplay on names; God's goodness; David their king; Hosea and the Decalogue; sacrifices; strangers; Gibeah; return to YHWH; the third day) and there is an appendix that discusses ten topics (Baal; the Song of Moses; metaphors; love; Psalm 106; sexual infidelity; election; Transjordan; worship centers; and YHWH's self definition). Because the Hebrew is difficult, Dearman accepts numerous emendations (4:4, 10–11a, 18; 5:2, 11; 6:6; 7:4, 6, 14, 16; 8:10; 9:1, 13; 11:2; 12:4[5]; 13:1, 2, 15). This commentary is well written, well informed, and deals seriously with the theology of the book. It is highly recommended and should become a standard resource for those studying Hosea.

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The Eerdmans Dictionary of Early Judaism. Edited by John J. Collins and Daniel C. Harlow. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010, xxxvii + 1360 pp., \$95.00.

In their preface, Collins and Harlow note the lacuna of a major reference work devoted specifically to the Second Temple period (p. vi). Their concern is to cover material (literary and nonliterary) primarily from Alexander the Great (late fourth century BC) to Hadrian and the Bar Kokhba Revolt (early second century AD). There is no conscious attempt to treat the Hebrew Bible or Rabbinic Judaism. The dictionary has two parts: the first containing 13 major essays that synthesize significant aspects of Judaism from this period and the second containing 520 alphabetical entries with cross-references and select bibliographies. It is intended for scholars and students but is also accessible to the general reader. Contributors include Jews, Christians, and people of no religious affiliation at all. They number 270 people from 20 countries, many of whom are well-established names in the field. The volume contains 130 illustrations, including photos, drawings, and plans, as well as 24 maps.

The 13 essays in part 1 are a collective *tour de force* in their own right. These include essays on "Early Judaism in Modern Scholarship" (J. J. Collins); "Jewish History from Alexander to Hadrian" (C. Seeman and A. K. Marshak); "Judaism in the Land of Israel" (J. C. VanderKam); "Judaism in the Diaspora" (E. S. Gruen); "The Jewish Scriptures: Texts, Versions, Canons" (E. Ulrich); "Early Jewish Biblical Interpretation" (J. L. Kugel); "Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha" (L. T. Stuckenbruck); "Dead Sea Scrolls" (E. Tigchelaar); "Early Jewish Literature Written in Greek" (K. Berthelot); "Archaeology, Papyri, and Inscriptions" (J. K. Zangenberg); "Jews among Greeks and Romans" (M. P. Ben Zeev); "Early Judaism and Christianity" (D. C. Harlow); and "Early Judaism and Rabbinic Judaism" (L. H. Schiffman).

An overview of a select few essays will suffice to illustrate the value of the whole. Collins's essay on "Early Judaism in Modern Scholarship" begins with a brief description

of terminology and the scope of the volume with respect to the dates of the material addressed. He also traces the advent of so-called pseudepigraphic writings in scholarly discourse and their role in the field in general, such as the recent analysis of their provenance (Davila) and the problems unique to the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*. Collins also surveys discussion regarding the place and relevance of rabbinic writings, apocalypticism, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and finally Judaism and Hellenism.

Loren T. Stuckenbruck provides a stimulating review of "Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha," underscoring the problematic designations of both labels (pp. 143–61). Beginning with the apocrypha, Stuckenbruck traces the largely Christian and mostly religious value ascribed to the books. He notes the diversity in genre, language of composition and preservation, and dating of the apocrypha. The so-called pseudepigrapha are likewise problematic. Stuckenbruck notes the difficulty in scholarly discussion is the ascription of pseudonymity to some books but not others, although the category is increasingly used today for "an ever-growing and fluid corpus of documents preserved from antiquity" (p. 153). It seems curious that Stuckenbruck finds receptivity in both Jewish and Christians circles to the practice of pseudonymity (cf. Eusebius, *H. E.* 2.25.4–7; 6.12.3; Cyril of Jerusalem, *Cat.* 4.36; for an excellent discussion, see especially D. A. Carson, "Pseudonymity and Pseudepigraphy," in *Dictionary of New Testament Background* [ed. S. Porter and C. Evans; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000] 857–64), though he offers several reasons for the practice as a whole. Of these he includes the value libraries placed on collecting writings by well-known authors; the ability of the method for an otherwise unknown writer to gain a hearing for his views; the potential for ethical suspicion of authors writing in their own name when in fact they were connoting the views of a school or circle of thought; and the weight the ascription of a work to a particular name bears in refuting undesirable views. Stuckenbruck makes the important observation that scholarly discussion no longer assumes a Jewish origin to documents that are subsequently reworked by Christians, but assumes a "default view" (p. 159) that regards them as Christian inspired by Jewish traditions. This means (as Kraft has repeatedly noted) that they should be studied first in the Christian contexts that preserved them. This reader would value Stuckenbruck's reflections on the reception history of various pseudepigrapha as he does for the apocrypha. He mentions the forthcoming *More Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* volume (ed. J. Davila and R. Bauckham), which will inevitably add to the collection of documents and likely the confusion surrounding them. To this discussion could be added de Gruyter's commentary series, *Commentaries on Early Jewish Literature* (ed. L. Stuckenbruck, et al.); T & T Clark's *Jewish and Christian Texts in Context and Related Studies Series* (ed. James H. Charlesworth); and Brill's *Septuagint Commentary Series* (ed. S. Porter).

Daniel C. Harlow's essay is "Early Judaism and Early Christianity" (pp. 257–78). Some readers may find difficulty with a number of features here, such as his dating of NT documents as late as AD 120 and his seemingly uncontested adoption of "common Judaism" in the Sanders tradition, to name but two matters. Yet the contribution here is primarily to draw readers' attention to the interface between earliest Christianity and early Judaism. So his attention to the NT relates to matters such as the temple, the designation of "sinners," views of the Torah, and so forth. His assessment of matters such as the parting of the ways seems to attend more to the author's assessment of historical evidence than scholarly discussion.

The second major section of the dictionary consists of 520 entries, from "Aaron" to "Zerubbabel" and everything in between. I cannot find a subject that is not addressed here by an expert in the field concisely yet thoroughly. An example is the entry on the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice by Carol A. Newsom. Newsom provides a brief introduction, summary of theories on its date and provenance, followed by an analysis of its

contents, structure, and (liturgical) function. She concludes with a few paragraphs on angelology and the heavenly temple before a bibliography of the most recent and important secondary literature. Michael O. Wise's article on crucifixion discusses both historical and literary aspects. An extensive article on architecture (by Rachel Hachlili) reviews Hasmonean and Herodian architecture, with particular attention to palaces in Jericho, Herodium, Masada, Hebron, and Caesarea. She also discusses fortresses, entertainment structures, Jerusalem, Second Temple synagogues, and architecture distinct to the Bar Kokhba period. The article has five figures with an extensive bibliography and numerous cross-references. There are articles on Early Jewish biblical interpretation, the book of Tobit, women, tithing, Elijah, ossuaries, Josephus, and figures from George Foote Moore to R. Hillel. All the major names of contributors are present: George Brooke, James H. Charlesworth, John Collins, Martin Abegg, Shaye Cohen, Craig Evans, Jodi Magness, Steve Mason, George Nickelsburg, Lawrence Schiffman, E. P. Sanders, James VanderKam, even Günter Stemberger and many more.

The only comparable volume that comes to mind is InterVarsity's *Dictionary of New Testament Background* (ed. C. Evans and S. Porter; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000). Yet the present volume is distinct in that its scope is to examine the field for its own sake. This is an important step forward, since the careful analysis of Second Temple Judaism, even for "background," must first be understood on its own terms prior to use for other purposes. The Collins/Harlow volume is an important resource toward that end. The articles are coherent, concise, balanced, and written by respected scholars in the respective subjects. The introductory articles provide valuable distillations of classic and current scholarship on some of the more pertinent issues. Most trace the history of the development of their subject in its various permutations and address key current issues and debates. Shorter dictionary entries provide sufficient data and bibliography for the curious reader to enter complicated discussions and pursue further study. This is a groundbreaking work that is an essential reference tool that takes its place among the select few secondary sources that serve as points of entry for serious study of Early Judaism.

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Constructing Jesus: Memory, Imagination, and History. By Dale C. Allison Jr. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010, xxix + 588 pp., \$54.99.

Dale Allison is one of the most erudite, well-informed, and widely read scholars working in the area of Gospels and historical Jesus scholarship today. His latest work, *Constructing Jesus*, is evidence of all of these areas of strength. Allison approaches the Gospels as a historian and, using the historian's tools, seeks to find what is historically reliable. This work is an attempt to find out what, in the Jesus tradition, can be verified by historical means. This is his fourth (and he hopes his last) book on the historical Jesus (p. ix).

The book is divided into six chapters. The first chapter deals with Allison's approach to this study as well as a somewhat skeptical view of the value of memory and testimony from memory. The chapter offers justification for the method that Allison adopts as well as arguing that recent studies on memories have shown that human memory is frail and far from dependable, even if one grants that the Gospels were written by eyewitnesses (here Allison is less than convinced by the recent work of Bauckham).

Allison grants that both era and culture play a part in the trustworthiness of memory; however, even granting this, Allison is still somewhat skeptical about the historical accuracy of many of the pericopes in the Gospels, in part because "human memory leaks and disassociates" (p. 2).

The second chapter deals with Allison's case for Jesus as an apocalyptic prophet. In this section, his arguments are strong, though at times they feel as if they go on for too long (this is by far the longest section of the book and includes two excursions: "The Kingdom of God and the World to Come" and "The Continuity between John the Baptist and Jesus") and border on beating a dead horse. Some may disagree with the implications that follow from the argument for an eschatological Jesus (e.g. Jesus might have been mistaken as to the time of the parousia and that the coming of the kingdom was thought, at least by some, to equal the end of the world).

Chapter 3 is one of the most interesting chapters, as Allison deals with Christology. Here he examines some of the most common names for Jesus, perhaps the most controversial being the "Son of Man." Allison begins this section on the "Son of Man" with the oft raised question of whether or not Jesus was speaking of himself in the third person as the "Son of Man" or might he have actually been speaking of someone else (p. 293). Allison makes six cogent points to nullify the thesis that Jesus was speaking of someone else, the last of which is the most interesting. Allison points out that "some ancient texts attest to the idea of celestial doubles or heavenly alter egos" (p. 296). He goes on to show that this idea occurs in Jewish literature and that although speculative, this idea of a celestial double does help to explain some of the problematic issues in the "Son of Man" sayings. While I am not convinced, Allison is to be applauded for dealing with a highly controversial issue and adding a creative possible solution.

Chapter 4 deals with the sayings of Jesus from a historical standpoint. If Jesus is seen as an aphorist, how are exegetes to understand the longer speeches in Matthew and Luke? Here Allison uses his historian's tools to ask again the question of what Jesus actually said and what can be attributed to the writers (both of the Gospels and Paul). As one might expect, the results are that Allison believes Jesus said much less than what has been "placed in his mouth" by the writers.

Chapter 5 deals with historical questions about the passion of Jesus. He begins with Crossan's distinction between "history remembered" and "prophecy historicized" (p. 387). While Allison helpfully points out that "to biblicize is not necessarily to invent" (p. 389), he still is skeptical of a number of events that the Gospel writers report. While Allison's point that all history is reconstructed through "the socioeconomic world of the rememberer" (p. 423), this bifurcation of history and theology is a complex one. Simply because an action or saying benefits the agenda of seeing Jesus as "the Christ" does not need to imply that the action or saying is non-historical.

It is this distinction that drives chapter 6 of the book in which Allison asks how much of the Gospels are history and how much did the Gospel writers intend to be taken as history. Allison points out that scholars across the spectrum have attempted to show that the evangelists thought of some of their stories as "purely metaphorical narratives" (here he cites Gundry and Crossan). He then argues that it is difficult if not impossible to find solid evidence that the Gospel writers thought that they were writing anything but history. Thus, Allison argues, Matthew was not writing Midrash nor was Luke knowingly concocting stories to fit into earlier prophecies. That said, the question still remains as to how much of the writings were historical. This is particularly significant for Allison, given the problems with the memories of eyewitnesses that Allison has pointed out earlier.

What then is one to think of the book? First, one should look at exactly what it is that Allison is trying to prove. The main thesis of the book is well stated (p. 10). Allison

says that he desires “to explicate my conviction that we can learn some important things about the historical Jesus without resorting to the standard criteria and without, for the most part, trying to decide whether he authored this or that saying or whether this or that particular event happened as narrated.” His most important criterion (though he would not call it such) is what he calls “‘recurrent attestation’ by which I mean that a topic or type of story reappears again and again throughout the tradition” (p. 20). Of course, one might ask why this criterion is better than the others, and Allison admits that this is not “sufficient unto itself” but that it supplies a “minimalist foundation” (p. 20).

A sense of the sort of problems that occur when one begins to distrust written history is shown in several ways in this first chapter. First, Allison cannot stop himself from trusting historical testimony, citing the works of Plutarch (p. 12) and Augustine (p. 29). Second, while admitting it, he downplays the influence that culture has on memory and how important memory was in the time before the proliferation of written material. Third, Allison realizes that if eyewitness testimony is not trustworthy, the entire modern judicial system must be overhauled. All of this serves to mitigate against the moderate skepticism of Allison.

It cannot be denied that Allison is one of the stellar scholars in Gospel scholarship today. He is perfectly willing to question the work of other scholars, and the bibliography of the book shows just how well read he is in this area. This does not mean, however, that we should take his conclusions as “Gospel.” Allison is a historian and as such feels that the theological decisions are beyond his grasp and beyond the scope of the book. As a result of this distinction between history and theology, Allison feels that seeing the Gospels in places as non-historical and yet still trusting in the Jesus of the Gospels is not at all problematic. In fact, he sees questions of historicity as relatively unimportant for theological belief, even stating, “fictions may convey facts” (p. 13).

This bifurcation is most clear in Allison’s interesting closing to the book. He compares the task of understanding the Gospels to the task of determining the workings of a closed watch (p. 461). This leads to his repudiation of the quests, arguing that the third quest is a “mistake best forgotten” (p. 463). However, Allison’s last statement shows that his hope is for more than history. He states that, although he is a historian, history is not what matters most. “If my deathbed finds me alert and not overly racked with pain, I will then be preoccupied with how I have witnessed and embodied faith, hope, and charity. I will not be fretting over the historicity of this or that part of the Bible” (p. 462).

With this statement we see the Allison of faith rather than the historical Allison. While his hesitancy to accept parts of the Gospel accounts as historical will be troubling to evangelicals, they cannot help but learn from this book. Though this is not a book that I would use for a seminary class (I would prefer a less skeptical tome), it is well worth the time that the scholar will invest in reading it.

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The Resurrection of Jesus: A New Historiographical Approach. By Michael R. Licona. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2010, 718 pp., \$40.00 paper.

Michael Licona is Research Professor of New Testament at Southern Evangelical Seminary and served as Apologetics Coordinator for the North American Mission Board

of the Southern Baptist Convention. He is well qualified to make a significant contribution to the study of the resurrection of Jesus. His dissertation at the University of Pretoria focused on the historicity of Jesus' resurrection. He has also authored several other books, essays, and journal articles on the topic. Furthermore, Jesus' resurrection was the topic of Licona's public debates with figures such as Bart Ehrman.

With several recent and significant contributions to the study of the resurrection such as N. T. Wright's *The Resurrection of the Son of God*, potential readers may be tempted to greet yet another massive tome on the resurrection with a sigh and roll of the eyes. By Licona's own admission, the fate of Jesus after his crucifixion has been the focus of at least 3,400 academic books and articles written since 1975. In light of the enormous amount of literature dedicated to the topic in the last thirty-five years, potential readers may view the author's claim in the subtitle to apply a "new approach" as bordering on audacity. Though these reactions are understandable, they are unfortunate. Licona's work does differ in important ways from previous treatments. The author claims to investigate the question of the historicity of Jesus' resurrection while "providing unprecedented interaction with the literature of professional historians outside of the community of biblical scholars on both hermeneutical and methodological considerations" (p. 20). A careful reading of the first chapter of the book will be sufficient to persuade most that Licona has fulfilled his intentions.

Chapter 1 contains a discussion of issues related to the philosophy of history and historical method. Licona examines a vast array of historians and philosophers of history to see how they proceed in constructing nonreligious histories and adopts this approach in his investigation of the historicity of Jesus' resurrection. He rightly observes that many biblical scholars approach such investigations using methods foreign to those utilized by professional historians or recommended by philosophers of history. Despite the influence of postmodernism, the large majority of historians who focus their research on nonreligious materials are realists who hold that the past is knowable to some extent and may be reconstructed with varying degrees of probability. Licona argues that historians should exercise a methodical neutrality that makes no presumption about the reliability of a source, but instead fairly evaluates the evidence for and against the source's reliability.

Licona observes that most historians attempt to reconstruct the past by entertaining several hypotheses and determining how well each hypothesis fits specified criteria. According to the criterion of explanatory scope, the hypothesis that explains the most relevant data is superior. According to the criterion of explanatory power, the hypothesis that explains the data "with the least amount of effort, vagueness, and ambiguity" is superior. According to the criterion of plausibility, the hypothesis supported by the greater degree and variety of accepted truths or background information is superior. According to the criterion of "less ad hoc," the hypothesis requiring the fewest non-evidenced assumptions is superior. Finally, according to the criterion of illumination, the hypothesis that provides a solution to other problems without creating new problems is superior. Licona adopts these widely-accepted criteria for his evaluation of hypotheses regarding the fate of Jesus.

Chapter 2 seeks to justify an investigation of the historicity of Jesus' resurrection by responding to the claim that queries regarding miracle-claims are not a legitimate exercise for historians. In particular, Licona responds to objections from David Hume, C. B. McCullough, John Meier, Bart Ehrman, A. J. M. Wedderburn, and James D. G. Dunn intended to bar historians from the examination of miracle claims. Licona observes that most objections are based on secular metaphysics rather than historiographical considerations. He argues that miracles, properly understood, are events that are extremely unlikely given the circumstances and/or natural law and that occur in

a context charged with religious significance. Historians may weigh in on discussions about whether miracles have occurred based on particular evidence, although they may not go so far as to insist that the Judeo-Christian God was (or was not) responsible for the event. Consequently, historians may appropriately adjudicate on the historicity of Jesus' resurrection.

Chapter 3 contains a survey and evaluation of primary sources that may assist scholars in examining the historicity of the resurrection. Licona focuses on sources that explicitly mention the death and resurrection of Jesus and were written during the first two centuries following Jesus' crucifixion. He identifies Paul's letters and the traditions that underlie Paul's statements (1 Cor 15:3–7) as excellent sources. He also favorably views the canonical Gospels, 1 Clement, Polycarp's letter to the Philippians, the speeches in Acts, and a few ancient secular sources.

In chapter 4, Licona examines the most helpful sources that were identified in the previous chapter in order to compose a list of facts that are supported by such convincing evidence as to enjoy nearly universal consensus from scholars: (1) "Jesus died by crucifixion"; (2) "Very shortly after Jesus' death, the disciples had experiences that led them to believe and proclaim that Jesus had been resurrected and had appeared to them"; and (3) "Within a few years after Jesus' death, Paul converted after experiencing what he interpreted as a postresurrection appearance of Jesus to him" (p. 463). These facts form the "historical bedrock" that Licona uses to test various hypotheses related to Jesus' fate. Licona commits himself to refraining from using any other evidence to test hypotheses except in situations in which an evaluation using only the "historical bedrock" results in an impasse.

In chapter 5, Licona uses this prescribed methodology to examine six hypotheses that were offered at the beginning of the twenty-first century regarding Jesus' resurrection. Licona selects the hypotheses offered by Geza Vermes, Michael Goulder, Gerd Lüdemann, John Dominic Crossan, and Pieter Craffert. He reserves a treatment of the view of Dale Allison for an appendix. The author describes the view of each scholar, then analyzes and evaluates each hypothesis. Finally, Licona analyzes and evaluates the resurrection hypothesis. He concludes, "Jesus' resurrection from the dead is the best historical explanation of the relevant historical bedrock. Since it fulfills all five of the criteria for the best explanation and outdistances competing hypotheses by a significant margin in their ability to fulfill the same criteria, the historian is warranted in regarding Jesus' resurrection as an event that occurred in the past" (p. 610).

Licona's work makes a number of significant contributions to the field. Licona makes a significant contribution to the historical study of Jesus' resurrection by his extensive discussion of the question as to whether investigation of miracle-claims is within the purview of work for the professional historian. His treatment of the question contains the most extensive interaction with historians and philosophers of history of any work devoted to the investigation of Jesus' resurrection, and perhaps, historical Jesus research in general. The first chapter of the book is such a rich resource for both historians and biblical scholars that it alone is worth the cost of the book.

Licona's most important and lasting contribution to the study of Jesus' resurrection is likely his treatment of the nature of the resurrection in 1 Cor 15:44. Advancing his research that first appeared as an essay in *Buried Hope or Risen Savior: The Search for the Jesus Tomb* (Nashville: B & H, 2008), Licona conducts an exhaustive survey of the uses of ψυχικόν (846 occurrences) and πνευματικόν (1131 occurrences) in all extant Greek literature from the eighth century BC through the third century AD. He discovers that although the former term often described something as ethereal or immaterial, the latter term never referred to something as physical or material. Since πνευματικόν functions as the opposite of ψυχικόν in the series of contrasts in 1 Cor 15:43–44, πνευματικόν

does not mean “immaterial” in this context. In other words, the use of ψυχικόν and πνευματικόν in this passage does not set up a contrast between what is physical and what is immaterial. Furthermore, with the possible exception of Eph 6:12, all of the usages of the term πνευματικόν in the Pauline corpus have a meaning other than “ethereal” or “immaterial.” Licona rightly concludes that the interpretation of 1 Corinthians 15 that assumes that a Christian’s physical body is buried but a nonphysical or immaterial body is raised “is no longer sustainable” (p. 621).

Unfortunately, the contribution of the book has been hampered by Licona’s adoption of the increasingly popular view that the phenomena in Matt 27:52–53 did not literally occur but were “‘special effects’ with eschatological Jewish texts and thought in mind” (p. 552; see pp. 185–86, 548–53). This position is not unique to Licona. Catholic scholars Donald Senior and Raymond Brown as well as evangelical scholar Donald Hagner, to name only a few, have proposed similar views. Although the text certainly raises several puzzling questions, the claim that a historical narrative suddenly shifts to a non-historical genre (whether one calls this fiction, midrash, poetry, apocalyptic, or “special effects”) without the author clearly signaling a change in genre may well create more problems than it solves.

The claim is especially perplexing in light of the immediately preceding section titled “Metaphor” in which Licona chides Crossan for arguing that modern historians can never know whether a report was intended to be interpreted literally or metaphorically. The suggested interpretation of Matt 27:52–53 seems to support Crossan’s position quite well. If Matthew switched so freely from recording history to creating “special effects” without clear indication of a genre shift (apart from interpretive difficulties, possible OT allusions, and alleged parallels in pagan literature), identifying the genre of the Gospel at a given point quickly becomes a difficult, if not impossible, task.

Licona has anticipated this concern and attempted to mitigate it by: (1) pointing out that no evidence exists suggesting that early Christians viewed Jesus’ resurrection as metaphorical; and (2) noting that no early opponents of the faith criticized Christians for understanding poetry as history. These arguments do not fully satisfy, however, since neither is there evidence that early Christians regarded Matt 27:52–53 as metaphorical nor that ancient opponents argued along those lines. The arguments that Licona musters to support the literal nature of Jesus’ resurrection also seem to confirm the literal nature of the phenomena in Matt 27:52–53. Furthermore, Ignatius in *Mgn.* 9:2 clearly refers to the resurrection of the prophets during Jesus’ incarnate ministry as a past event and thus offers early support for the historical reading of these verses.

Scholars like Raymond Brown have pointed to objective features of Matt 27:52–53 to argue that the verses constitute a poetic quatrain consisting of two couplets. Although one can make a good case that Matthew has here adopted and adapted a preexisting Christian hymn about Jesus’ death, I am not convinced that the original readers would have regarded the verses in their present form as poetic, since verses 51a, 52b, and especially 53 break the symmetry of the sequence “καί plus definite noun plus passive verb” by adding genitive modifiers, participles, adjectives, prepositional phrases, etc. However, even if one believes that Matthew intended to present poetry here, poetic features do not automatically preclude historicity. Several descriptions of Jesus’ resurrection in the NT have a poetic or hymnic arrangement (1 Pet 3:18–19; Eph 4:8; 1 Tim 3:16), but this does not preclude the historicity of Jesus’ resurrection. It demonstrates nothing more than that the resurrection of Jesus was one of the inspirations for early Christian worship of Jesus. Similarly, poetic or hymnic features in Matthew’s account of the portents accompanying Jesus’ death do not automatically preclude historicity, but may only demonstrate that Jesus’ death and its significance moved believers to worship him.

The text admittedly contains what some have classified as apocalyptic features in that its wording is influenced by OT eschatological texts such as Ezek 37:12–13 (LXX). This does not preclude historicity either. The well-known fulfillment motif in Matthew's Gospel presents Jesus as the actual historical fulfillment of OT expectations; thus the influence of Ezek 37:12–13 on Matthew's wording in no way suggests the fictional character of the portents.

Perhaps the greatest problem with denying the text's historicity is the one clause for which no one to my knowledge has suggested an OT, apocalyptic, or poetic influence, the clause "they appeared to many." Verses 52b and 53 break the rhythm of what initially appears to be a hymnic structure. If the verses contained a pre-Matthean hymn, Matthew disrupts its structure by adding these clarifications. This suggests that Matthew saw these statements as extremely important, important enough to prompt him to sacrifice some of the artistry of the hymn. This statement that the resurrected saints "appeared to many" in the city of Jerusalem seems to express rather clearly that the portents, including particularly the resurrection of the saints, did actually occur and that post-resurrection appearances were observed by eyewitnesses. The clearest parallel to this statement in ancient literature appears to be, not some extrabiblical source, but 1 Cor 15:6 in which Paul appeals to an unnamed group of witnesses of Jesus' resurrection to confirm his gospel about the resurrected Savior. One wonders how Matthew could have more adamantly insisted on the historical nature of his claim than by saying that the resurrected saints "appeared to many."

Licona entertains the possibility that the resurrection narratives are mixed with legend or laced with poetic language at certain points earlier in the book (pp. 185–86) but argues these would not detract from the ability to identify a historical core in the resurrection narratives. However, since Matthew claims that many saw the saints after their resurrection using language very similar to Luke's description of Jesus' own post-resurrection appearances (Acts 10:40–41), it is difficult to see how treatment of the post-resurrection appearances of the saints as non-historical would not detract from the ability to identify a historical core in the resurrection narratives.

The appeal to parallels in ancient literature to suggest the fictional character of the verses is incautious at best. Some of the portents in ancient literature (particularly in Josephus and Philo) may support the historicity of the portents in Matthew by verisimilitude, rather than suggesting that Matthew's portents were legend. Especially problematic is the appeal to Lucian's *The Passing of Peregrinus*. This ancient satire dates to a century and a half after the time of Christ and was a mocking polemic against both Christianity and Cynicism. In the satire, Lucian embellished the account of Peregrinus's suicide in order to "thicken the plot" and to "ridicule fools and dullards." Lucian found it entertaining that a gullible elderly man further embellished the account and reported it as fact. When Licona presents the portents of Matt 27:52–53 as "special effects" two pages later, he makes no attempt to distinguish Matthew's literary work from Lucian's. Readers, like myself, who know the author personally will not suspect that he intends to associate Matthew's work with Lucian's satirical mockery of the gullible. However, readers less familiar with the author could easily draw this conclusion. At the very least, the author should have clearly distinguished Matthew's intentions from Lucian's intention to deceive. Overall, this section seems to exceed appropriate appeal to potential parallels and is vulnerable to the charge of parallelomania about which Sandmel warned.

Recently, Licona's position on these two verses has stirred considerable controversy, necessitating a more extensive treatment of his discussion of Matt 27:52–53 than a typical review would warrant. My hope, however, is that a treatment of two verses that amounts to only 6 pages out of the 641 pages of text in the book will not prevent

conservative evangelicals from carefully reading and digesting the author's many fine arguments for the historicity of Jesus' resurrection.

All scholars who are interested in the historical evidence for Jesus' resurrection will profit from this book. Although the book is lengthy, dense, and thoroughly documented, the author is a gifted communicator and the book is an enjoyable read. No other work matches its thoroughness, depth of research, or rigor in applying a clear and responsible historical method to the question of Jesus' resurrection.

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Matthew. By Grant R. Osborne. Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010, 1154 pp., \$49.99.

The objective of Zondervan's Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament series is to serve pastors and Bible teachers by presenting the NT books in the light of their biblical setting. Seven components structure the discussion of each passage: (1) literary context; (2) main idea; (3) translation; (4) structure; (5) exegetical outline; (6) explanation of the text; and (7) theology in application. Grant Osborne's commentary on Matthew's Gospel is the second volume in the series.

Osborne begins with a fifty-six page introduction and bibliography. He concludes that Matthew, the apostle, wrote the book as a theological biography (Gospel) around AD 65–67 intended for an audience of Christian Jews. Matthew wrote with four purposes: (1) to tell the story of Jesus; (2) to address Jewish issues and evangelize Jewish readers; (3) to explain the meaning of the kingdom inaugurated by Jesus; and (4) to present Jesus' teaching and its ethical implications. He composed his Gospel using Mark, Q, and special material (M), and he organized it into seven sections based on a narrative-discourse pattern (with Matt 1:1–4:11 serving as an introduction and the passion and resurrection narratives of 26:1–28:20 as a conclusion). His record of Jesus' life and ministry is historically reliable, and his use of the OT is primarily typological (or "analogical fulfillment").

In his introduction, Osborne also highlights the need to recognize the elements of narrative for studying and preaching Matthew. In addition to the basic hermeneutical principles of grammatical-historical exegesis, he suggests studying four aspects of the way in which Matthew tells his story: (1) plot (at the macro- and micro-levels); (2) redactional (editorial) changes; (3) characters and dialogue; and (4) implied reader and reader identification. Of those four aspects, Osborne tends to rely most heavily on redaction criticism. His discussion of plot, character, dialogue, and the reader is much less evident in the body of the commentary.

Rather than a detailed interaction with Osborne's interpretive decisions, it will perhaps be more helpful to provide a somewhat broader review using the seven headings that structure his comments on each passage. Each "Literary Context" section locates the passage nicely in the overall outline of the Gospel and helps the reader understand how it fits into Matthew's narrative. The "Main Idea" sections provide a good preview of the discussion to come; they might possibly have been strengthened by incorporating a one-sentence summary of the passage's message. The "Translation" sections set out Osborne's own translation of the passage and include a graphical layout of the passage. The translations are good, but the graphical layouts are somewhat less helpful than might be hoped. The series editors note that they deliberately have avoided "technical linguistic jargon," which is a worthy approach, but the result is a somewhat generic set

of labels. It might have been possible to find a middle ground, and it definitely would have been helpful to see some reflection of the rhetorical features within the passages, especially the longer discourses that characterize Matthew's Gospel.

The "Structure" sections strongly reflect Osborne's interest in and use of redaction criticism. They also tend to highlight form-critical aspects of the passage (e.g. miracle story, controversy story, pronouncement story). Readers who share Osborne's commitment to and/or interest in Markan priority, the Q source, Matthew's special material (M), and the changes Matthew has made to Mark's narrative will find these sections particularly useful. Readers who gravitate to other methods might find the information provided in them less helpful. It might have been advantageous to include comments on the other aspects of narrative analysis that Osborne highlights in the introduction. The "Exegetical Outline" sections are detailed and set out the organization of the passage well. They represent a good expansion of the brief overview provided in the "Structure" sections.

The sections setting out the "Explanation of the Text" are the heart of the commentary. In these sections, Osborne's handling of the text is even-handed and concise, but it is also focused and explores various interpretive options where appropriate. He includes excellent historical background and pointed extrabiblical references. His comments show excellent bibliographic control and full interaction with what other scholars have written (through 2007). In that regard, there is a good balance between what is included in the body of the commentary and what is discussed in footnotes. Osborne's work in the "Theology in Application" sections represents a particularly strong point of the commentary. Those sections go beyond exegesis of the text to highlight major themes of each passage and ways in which each passage connects with everyday thought and life. They make this commentary an excellent source for preaching and teaching Matthew's message.

In addition to commentary on individual passages, Osborne provides helpful introductions to the main sections of the text (chapters 5–7, 8–9, 10, 11–13, 14–18, 19–25, and 26–28) and useful excursuses on the Son of Man, the interpretation of parables, the chronology of the Last Supper, the Sanhedrin trial, and the ancient practice of crucifixion. The volume closes with a twenty-two-page overview of the theology of Matthew, which uses biblical theology to summarize six major themes that run through the Gospel (Christology, the Jewishness of Matthew, the Gentile mission, eschatology, the church, and discipleship). This section is particularly well done. His summary of the Gentile mission, for example, brings together in one place a major motif that Osborne has tracked well throughout the body of the commentary. In that regard and given his recognition of the Jewishness of Matthew's Gospel, it is a bit surprising that he does not include motivation for the Gentile mission as one of Matthew's purposes in writing.

Osborne's strong bibliographic control (through 2007) means that he interacts with all the major recent commentaries on Matthew except Turner's (2008) and invites comparison with them. His work is a technical commentary based on the Greek text, which places it on a level with the International Critical Commentary, New International Greek Testament Commentary, Word Biblical Commentary, and Baker Exegetical Commentary series. In that regard, it is a step above exegetical commentary series that are based on the English Bible (e.g. Pillar, New International Commentary, Expositors). One example from each level—France (NICNT, 2007) and Turner (BECNT, 2008)—will serve for the purposes of comparison. Osborne provides somewhat more interaction on textual issues than France but considerably less than Turner. He gives greater attention to the Greek text than either France or Turner. His focus on redaction criticism sets him apart from both France and Turner, who focus more on analysis of the Gospels' narrative flow. In general, Turner's volume in the Baker Exegetical Commentary is probably the closest parallel, in that Osborne and Turner have both written technical

commentaries that are somewhat less detailed than Davies and Allison (ICC), Nolland (NIGTC), and Hagner (WBC).

In summary, Osborne's commentary deals with the Greek text but is accessible to readers whose primary point of reference is the English Bible. His treatment of each passage is concise (if 1100 pages can be considered "concise") but appropriately detailed. He interacts with the world of scholarship in a balanced way but does not let that interaction overshadow Matthew's text. His commentary does not introduce any novel interpretations or new methods but is a solid evangelical work using the time-tested grammatical-historical method. It provides a special service in its attention to application and biblical theology and, therefore, is a solid contribution to the world of Matthean scholarship.

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The Gospel of John. By J. Ramsey Michaels. NICNT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010, xxvi + 1094 pp., \$65.00.

J. Ramsey Michaels finds himself in the difficult position of contributing a volume to the NICNT series that replaces the much-loved commentary on the Gospel of John by Leon Morris, first published in 1971 and then revised in 1995. Morris's work in Johannine studies represented not merely the best of conservative Australian Anglicanism, but the best of international evangelical scholarship. His reputation as an internationally respected evangelical NT scholar was perhaps surpassed only by F. F. Bruce in the late twentieth century. Many of the so-called younger evangelical scholars and pastors cut their proverbial Johannine teeth on Morris's fine commentary, and then continued to return to it time and again because of its wealth of observation. Morris's death in 2006 brought an end to a long, respectable career, and more importantly, a long life of service for the kingdom. It is clear, however, that no matter how much loved Morris's commentary is, at some point there is need for a replacement commentary that brings the reader up to date with the scholarly conversation.

A major variable that ought to drive this review of Michaels's *The Gospel of John* replacement volume is the degree to which it updates the scholarly conversation that has taken place since the publication of its predecessor volume in 1995. It is on just this point that some deficiencies in Michaels's commentary come to light.

Michaels confesses that his commentary does not interact closely with recent scholarly developments. As he states in the "Author's Preface," "I have not begun to monitor all the publications on the Gospel in the seventeen years that have passed since I first signed the contract with Eerdmans" (p. x). Rather than monitoring "all the publications on the Gospel in the seventeen years," Michaels instead suggests that he has tried to immerse himself in the actual text "while interacting repeatedly with the major commentators, past and present" (p. x).

Because of this approach, Michaels has missed the opportunity to interact with some of the significant, recent studies that have illuminated key aspects of the Gospel of John. For example, it is a hard pill to swallow that not one of the scholarly contributions of Andreas Köstenberger to the study of the Fourth Gospel is cited in the commentary—a significant *faux pas* given that Köstenberger is perhaps one of the most significant younger evangelical Johannine scholars of our day. Likewise, it is hard to imagine a commentary on the Fourth Gospel discussing the temple theme without interacting with

Paul M. Hoskins's excellent *Jesus as the Fulfillment of the Temple in the Gospel of John* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2007). It is also hard to imagine a commentary on John's Gospel discussing the significance of Moses in John's Gospel without some interaction with John Lierman's *New Testament Moses: Christian Perceptions of Moses & Israel in the Setting of Jewish Religion* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2004).

Other recent trends in Johannine studies are not drawn into the discussion either. For example, there is a growing shift away from viewing the Fourth Gospel as the product of a Johannine community struggling to maintain its identity in the midst of the *birkat ha-minim* (i.e. J. Louis Martyn, et al.) to a more nuanced "traditional" authorship view that places the writing of John's Gospel some ten years after the destruction of the temple as an apologetic for how Jesus fulfills all the hopes and dreams of a shattered first-century Judaism (i.e. Andreas Köstenberger, et al.). This growing shift in how scholarship views the setting and authorship of John's Gospel is documented in a volume of essays edited by John Lierman titled *Challenging Perspectives on the Gospel of John* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2006), which is another key source that Michaels could have used to bring an updated scholarly conversation to his commentary.

In addition, much work has been done over the last twenty years on the issue of the use of the OT in the Gospel of John. For example, Martin J. J. Menken has published a series of important journal articles focusing on technical analyses of the OT quotes in John's Gospel. None of these studies by Menken are drawn into Michaels's discussion. Not even E. D. Freed's classic 1965 study *Old Testament Quotations in the Gospel of John* (Leiden: Brill, 1965) makes Michaels's bibliography.

A somewhat troubling set of decisions made by Michaels also diminishes what has been a fairly conservative NICNT commentary series. Michaels made his mark in the 1970s and 1980s with his use of redaction-critical method in Synoptic studies (see, for example, his book titled *Servant and Son: Jesus in Parable and Gospel* [Atlanta: John Knox, 1981]). One dubious redaction analysis made by Michaels in his commentary on *The Gospel of John* begins with his equating the tradition of the healing of the paralytic at the pool of Bethesda in John 5 with the healing of the paralytic in Mark 2 (p. 298). While arguments have been made to differentiate these two healings as separate events—one in Jerusalem and one in Capernaum—Michaels simply assumes that they are one and, unfortunately, does not survey the possibilities posited by other scholars.

On the question of authorship, Michaels chooses to adopt the view, contrary to the traditional view, that the author of John's Gospel is unknown. Michaels concludes, "At the end of the day 'the disciple whom Jesus loved' remains anonymous" (p. 24), and again, "The modern reader can only guess as to who he [the author of the Fourth Gospel] was" (p. 20).

On a positive note, Michaels proves himself to be very adept at explaining the meaning of the Greek text. As has been stated earlier in this review, Michaels set out in this commentary to immerse himself in the actual text of John's Gospel (p. x). In this regard, he passes with flying colors. Most of the footnotes in the commentary are helpful elaborations of key aspects of the Greek. One example of Michaels's lucid explanation of the Greek text is his discussion of the difficult interaction between Jesus and his mother Mary in the marriage of Cana episode (John 2:1–11). His discussion of the difficult passage John 2:4 is perhaps the most lucid of any commentary that I have encountered. In addition, Michaels clearly demonstrates that he is a master of the text-critical issues in the Gospel of John. Again, the footnotes contain helpful discussion of key issues when variant readings demand analysis.

J. Ramsey Michaels's *The Gospel of John* is a tome at 1094 pages in length. The front matter includes a nice, but limited, twelve-page bibliography of primary sources,

commentaries, and other secondary sources cited in the commentary. The introductory section of the commentary is forty-two pages in length—a bit shorter than what one might expect in a major commentary—and includes some of the expected topics, such as authorship, structure, and Synoptic relationships. Unlike many commentaries, there is no extended discussion of the major theological themes found in John's Gospel. In fairness to Michaels, there is a four-page discussion of Christological themes that are prominent in the Fourth Gospel, but as one might expect, that discussion only scratches the surface. Helpful subject, author, Scripture, and extrabiblical indices follow the exposition of the text.

In conclusion, there is much to be disappointed with in this newest contribution to the NICNT series. If, indeed, the purpose of a replacement volume in a commentary series is to bring readers up to date with scholarly developments, Michaels's commentary misses the mark in its attempt to update Morris's volume. That said, Michaels's commentary may supersede Morris's in its wealth of exegetical observations on the Greek text as well as its contribution to text-critical issues in the study of John's Gospel.

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A Conclusion Unhindered: A Study of the Ending of Acts within Its Literary Environment. By Troy M. Troftgruben. WUNT 2/280. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010, xiii + 232 pp., €59.00 paper.

This excellent study focuses on the ending of Acts, particularly 28:16–31, and seeks to assess how far it brings closure to the narrative of Acts (or Luke-Acts) and how far it leaves openness. This revised doctoral thesis is limpidly clear, beautifully organized, and well written—and those are not always the features of revised doctoral theses. It is one of a string of excellent recently published Ph.D. theses supervised by Beverly R. Gaventa on Acts at Princeton Theological Seminary (those of David Downs and John B. F. Miller spring quickly to mind)—on this basis, may her tribe increase!

Troftgruben begins by laying out in the introduction the issue he will explore, identifying it as an exploration of the way in which the final scene of Acts (28:16–31) brings closure to the story of (Luke-)Acts. This is an issue to which a number of answers have been given, and they hinge on a proper understanding of the nature of closure and openness in the ending of a narrative. Thus the study is organized around these questions, and the latter part of the introduction lays out the shape of the monograph with model clarity. I shall certainly be referring my doctoral students to this study as an example of how to write and organize material well.

Chapter 1 then provides a masterly survey of scholarship on this topic, noticing that there has been a shift from understanding the ending of Acts as bringing closure to recognizing elements of openness. Troftgruben notes four main explanations of the ending of Acts: (1) that Luke knew no more than he wrote; (2) that Luke was prevented from finishing his projected longer work; (3) that Luke was deliberately rather abrupt in the way he ended Acts; and (4) that the ending provides a fitting and intentional conclusion. Each is explained clearly—and grouping them in this way itself provides considerable clarity of analysis. He then considers two recent areas of study of the ending of Acts. First, he gives good attention to the idea of narrative closure since the “literary turn” in biblical studies, focusing on the work of Dupont, Hauser, and Puskas. Second, he notes the value of considering other endings in ancient literature, noting the work of Moessner

and Marguerat (with whom, by the end of the book, he will disagree). He thus concludes that the study of the ending of Acts requires a response informed by narrative criticism, by ancient and modern literary theory on closure, by immersion in the endings of other ancient writings, and by engagement with the last two thousand years of study of Acts.

Chapter 2 thus turns to consider narrative closure and engages with methodological issues. Troftgruben sketches a now-standard approach to narrative criticism before turning to consider narrative closure. He notes three ways in which closure can happen: *resolution*, where conflicts or complexities within the narrative are ended; *completeness*, where the narrative includes a full account of all that is important on its topic; and *terminal devices*, such as closing scenes (e.g. funerals, weddings), images (death), or closing lines ("That ends my story"). Openness, by contrast, can happen by the opposites: irresolution and incompleteness. He notes two key ways in which endings can generate openness: by a tangent, which introduces a new topic unprecedented in the earlier narrative; and by linkage, where the story refers to features of another story outside itself, which often takes place later in time. A helpful table (p. 59) summarizes his findings in this chapter. He thus observes astutely that the question should be framed in terms of the *kinds and degrees* of closure and openness that are present in the ending of a narrative, rather than the absolute question of whether there is closure or openness.

Chapter 3 moves from theory to practice, as Troftgruben studies a range of ancient narratives to see how they end. He considers: prose fiction, giving particular attention to Chariton's *Chaereas and Callirhoe*; biography, focusing on Plutarch and his *Cato Minor* in particular; epic, considering Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and Virgil's *Aeneid*; and historiography, giving attention to Herodotus's *Histories*, Thucydides's *History of the Peloponnesian War*, and Sallust's *War with Jugurtha*, before turning to 1–4 Kingdoms in the Greek Bible and Josephus's *Antiquities*. Unsurprisingly, he finds a wide variety of approaches to closure and openness in these endings: some seek to end with a "happily ever after" ending (often the romantic novels), whereas others leave key issues unresolved or indicate that there is more to come (particularly some of the histories). Nevertheless, this is a useful study, for it shows the kind of literary environment in which Luke wrote and in which his readers heard the ending of Acts.

The heart of the study is then in chapters 4 and 5, which consider the ending of Acts itself in the light of all that we have seen so far. Chapter 4 first seeks to clarify that 28:16–31 really is the ending of Acts by showing several key literary features that mark it off from the preceding narrative. A careful and thoughtful exegesis of the passage follows, considering how each part of the ending (vv. 16–22, 23–28, 30–31—note that v. 29 is not found in our earliest and best manuscripts) contributes to closure and openness. Paul's first meeting with the Jews of Rome (vv. 16–22) summarizes earlier events, especially Paul's trial, and recalls key emphases of Paul's ministry, notably his concern to bring the gospel to Jewish people. These features set the scene for the next encounter (vv. 23–28), which fulfills the expectation that Paul will testify about Jesus in Rome (23:11) and portrays Paul at his characteristic activity of testimony to the gospel, echoing key terms from earlier in Acts, notably the opening chapter (kingdom of God, testify, witness; note especially 1:3, 8). Paul's closing word (vv. 25b–28)—much debated—Troftgruben argues has three functions: (1) to convey a message to the Jews within the narrative, offering a rebuke that is intended to bring about repentance (he fruitfully compares the prophetic critique of Israel, such as in Jer 18:11; 1 Kgs 21:17–29; Jonah 3:4, 10), and thus to reach out to Luke's readers and invite a penitent, believing response; (2) to echo three earlier speeches that each begin a new phase of gospel ministry (13:14–52; 2:14–40 and 3:12–26; and Luke 4:16–30) and include both an invitation to the Jews to respond and a warning of the consequences of not responding; and (3) to close the circle begun in the early chapters of Luke, where Isaianic prophecy is also

prominent (Luke 3:4–6). Finally, verses 30–31 portray Paul continuing to witness “unhindered” in Rome for at least two years, using a series of durative verbs (imperfects and present participles predominate) and adverbial phrases that connote ongoing actions.

Chapter 5 goes on to consider these findings in the light of narrative closure theory and the other ancient literature studied in chapter 3. Troftgruben finds strong elements of closure in Acts 28:16–31, since there are expectations fulfilled, events summarized, previous scenes reprised, opening themes echoed, and characteristic activities painted in. However, he also finds evidence of openness, and here he critiques the proposals of Moessner and Marguerat (who argue that all that is present is closure). In response, he notes that there is little conclusion regarding the mission to the Jews, that the gospel has not yet reached “the end of the earth” (1:8; which Troftgruben rightly argues is not Rome, for that is the *center* of the ancient world), and that we do not learn about Paul’s death, which Troftgruben (with many others) sees as foreshadowed in Acts. He also takes up the cudgels mightily against Marguerat, arguing that the purpose of Acts is precisely not to call on readers to imitate Paul; instead, he argues (again rightly, in my view) that the real driver of the story of Acts is God and that it is not human-led activity that will drive forward the gospel’s expansion in Luke’s day. Rather, he argues that the ending of Acts provides linkage to the story of what God is continuing to do. While I am utterly persuaded by Troftgruben’s argument that Acts is a narrative driven forward by God and not by human initiative, I did find myself wondering at this point whether Acts might nonetheless be inviting its readers to join in with the story, but seeing themselves as participants in God’s project. In other words, I fear he may be over-polarizing between his and Marguerat’s views.

A brief conclusion brings the whole to a very satisfying closure (!), recapitulating the key themes of the study and concluding that there are elements of both closure and openness in the ending of Acts. He sketches (with nice openness to the future!) implications that might be followed up in the study of closure in ancient literature and in the interpretation of the ending of Acts. A bibliography and a valuable set of indices close the book.

There are a few typos and errors in Greek accentuation, but they are indeed few. The presentation of the book is generally excellent, and this reflects well on Troftgruben, since the WUNT series requires the author to provide typeset copy.

Let me conclude in similar vein to the way I began: this is a cracking piece of work that has put all future interpreters of Acts in its debt, and I include myself as a commentator in that number. Troftgruben has produced a study that will stand for a generation and (I would think) much longer as *the* study to read first on this section of Acts. We thank God and take courage to participate in God’s growing gospel ministry portrayed by Luke.

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The First Letter to the Corinthians. By Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner. PNTC. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010, liv + 922 pp., \$65.00.

Ciampa and Rosner have crafted a nearly exhaustive compendium of significant ancient and modern perspectives on the text of 1 Corinthians. An extensive bibliography of 33 pages (pp. xxii–liv) demonstrates their knowledge and interaction with a broad range of secondary literature. The commentary is interspersed with numerous quota-

tions including a 28-line indented quote from Menenius Agrippa (p. 597) and a running interaction with the commentaries of Thiselton, Fee, Garland, Hays, and Chrysostom. After a discussion of love's eternal endurance, for example, we are informed about the thoughts of Calvin, Spicq, Ambrosiaster, Carson, and Garland (pp. 665–66).

Rather than focusing on standard introductory issues such as date and authorship, the introduction concentrates more on the cause of the problems at Corinth, the background and goals of Paul, and various interpretative issues. The latter includes an extended discussion on verbal aspect, which is developed in footnotes throughout the commentary (eight uses of the perfect tense in 1 Corinthians 1 generate seven footnote comments on the perfect tense).

Introductions to larger sections are comprehensive. The following elements are addressed in the introduction to the section condemning idolatrous practices in 8:1–11:1: (1) the ABA structure of the section; (2) suggestions for relevance to modern Western readers; (3) a suggested 19-line mirror reading of the Corinthian correspondence to Paul; (4) three contexts in which people ate food that had been offered to idols; (5) a helpful distinction between “subjective idolatry” and “objective idolatry”; (6) possible social distinctions between the “knowledgeable” and the “weak”; (7) brief references to literature on the subject; (8) the OT teaching on idolatry; (9) a list of six disputed issues in chapter 8; (10) the relationship to Romans 14 and the Jerusalem council; and (11) an overview of Paul's writing (a) in relation to fellow Christians (8:1–13); (b) in relation to God (9:24–10:22); and (c) in relation to neighbors (10:23–11:1).

Especially helpful is the development of the structure and argument of 1 Corinthians. The authors argue that Paul views the predominately Gentile church in Corinth as part of the eschatological fulfillment of promises made to Israel concerning the worldwide worship of God. Influenced by Mal 1:11 LXX, the ultimate goal of Paul is for the Corinthians to fulfill their part in God's inaugurated eschatological plan to be glorified among the Gentiles “in every place” (1:2). As they embrace the true wisdom of the cross of Christ, they must reject the factionalism of their culture and live in harmony with their new identity in Christ (1:10–4:17). The Corinthians must also reject the archetypal Gentile sins of immorality and idolatry (as well as greed, 6:1–11). The discussion condemning immorality begins with 4:18, reaches its climax in the command to flee immorality (6:18a), and is followed by a command to glorify God with their physical bodies (6:20b)—a command that serves as a hinge to a positive discussion of morality in chapter 7. A similar pattern addresses idolatry negatively in 8:1–11:1, reaches its climax in the command to flee idolatry (10:14), and is followed by a desire positively to glorify God in worship (10:31b)—a command that is worked out in 11:2–14:40. The full realization of this eschatological vision, however, will take place only when God raises believers from the dead (15:1–58).

The authors reject numerous religious and philosophical parallels as well as the popular concept of an over-realized eschatology to conclude that the problems in Corinth reflect the “infiltration of Corinthian social values into the church” (p. 4). The commentary achieves its self-imposed goal of consistently identifying the problems in the Corinthian church in light of the influence of Roman culture and values: (1) in light of Roman law, the main motivation for the incestuous relationship of 5:1 may have been financial; (2) 1 Cor 6:1–11 must be interpreted in the context of a Roman legal system that could not be relied upon to administer justice impartially; and (3) knowledge of the patronage system in ancient Roman society explains why Paul refused his right to be compensated by the Corinthians (9:12–18).

This hermeneutical guideline creates a paradigm shift in the interpretation of 1 Corinthians 7. Rather than postulating an abrupt shift from libertinism in 6:12–21 to asceticism in 7:1–40 that promoted abstinence from sexual relations within marriage, the

authors argue that Paul writes to “red-blooded” Corinthians who wanted to get married and have sex. Based on their reconstruction of Roman culture, they conclude that the euphemism “to touch” in the Corinthian slogan of 7:1 refers not to a broad range of sexual relations but to the specific types of activities rejected by Greco-Roman moralists (e.g. Plato’s *Leges* 8.837b-d; 8.840a where using certain types of people such as slaves or defenseless woman for sexual gratification was referred to as “touching” the object of one’s desire). The slogan, therefore, reflects a struggle to avoid certain acts, and this is why they were considering marriage or remarriage. It hardly makes sense, according to the commentary, for Paul to counsel a wife not to divorce her husband on the penalty of remaining unmarried when, on the ascetic view, this would be her goal in the divorce! Paul, it turns out, was more inclined to celibacy than the Corinthians were.

The authors likewise challenge the majority view of evangelical commentators that 14:34–35 refers to a prohibition against the evaluation of prophetic speech by women. After thirteen pages of discussion, they conclude that these verses are connected with the broader theme of maintaining order rather than a specific connection with tongues or prophecy. Paul’s point (a summarizing statement repeated throughout the commentary) is that women should show respect for order in the way it works out culturally with others and their husbands (perhaps women were breaking a cultural norm by asking questions of men rather than directing them to their husbands). Since this sort of silence would be inappropriate in our modern Western society, the point needs to be applied differently.

Although the Corinthians were shaped by the current culture of Roman Corinth, Paul’s response is informed by his OT (especially Deuteronomy and Isaiah) and Jewish roots (not the Greco-Roman categories of rhetoric): (1) Paul proclaims that human wisdom is under eschatological judgment based on the woe oracles in Isaiah 28–33; (2) even though there are not explicit OT indicators, Paul draws on Exodus 18, Deuteronomy, and related passages to achieve his goal of obedience to the Torah as he encounters a new situation in 6:5–6; and (3) the argument of 8:7 finds its background in an extended discussion of 4 Macc 5:2–3.

Theological discussions are evenhanded and often presented with wit and clarity: (1) the irresistible call to salvation is not like the gangster’s “offer you cannot refuse,” but like the wooing by a lover of his beloved (1:9); and (2) to embrace human wisdom is bad eschatology (2:6a).

The contemporary relevance of the text to modern society, though often brief, is nonetheless compelling: (1) the key theme of the letter that the Corinthians do not belong to themselves (6:19–20) “strikes at the heart of the modern and postmodern notions that we establish our own identities and prize autonomous freedom” (p. 265); (2) we should live differently because the future has broken into the present (7:29–31), so that “even if we live out our lives without seeing the impact of global warming, we are not exempt from the need to live differently in light of these concerns” (p. 345); (3) the right to be compensated for gospel ministry (9:7–14) does not justify the opulent lifestyle of certain Christian leaders (p. 402); and (4) although the gospel remains the same, its “look and feel” may be different (9:20), but too many “nonethnic churches of the West may seem more like the Borg of the *Star Trek* films” in their desire for assimilation (p. 426).

Although the comprehensive nature of the commentary makes it difficult to identify weaknesses, readers will find some areas that could be addressed in greater detail. Rather than an extensive 3½ pages on the meaning of a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal, more attention could have been given to textual variants. Rather than a full-page discussion of ancient views concerning the frequency of sexual relations between a husband and a wife, more attention could have been given to exegetical difficulties and syntactical relationships. Rather than a certain ambivalence toward Corinthian

slogans, more attention could have been directed to the various slogan debates in 1 Corinthians 6–8.

The commentary is certainly a valuable resource for a broad range of pastors, students, and scholars. Although the size of the commentary might be restrictive for some classroom settings, assignment of introductory sections might provide an excellent foundation for classroom discussion (p. 47). This commentary deserves to be one of the first commentaries consulted for the interpretation of this significant book.

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The Tongues of Angels: The Concept of Angelic Languages in Classical Jewish and Christian Texts. By John C. Poirier. WUNT 2/287. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010, xi + 224 pp., €59.00 paper.

Noting that “[t]he topic of angelic languages has never before received a book-length treatment” (p. 2), John C. Poirier seeks to fill this lacuna with this entry in the WUNT second series. Beginning with *Jubilees*, written in the mid-second century BCE and the earliest text to comment on the matter, and extending through the main redaction of the Babylonian Talmud, ca. AD 550–650, Poirier examines Jewish and Christian references to two principal positions regarding “angeloglossy” (the term Poirier uses to denote angelic language), Hebrew, and an esoteric language.

The book is laid out in six chapters. In the introductory chapter, after identifying the purpose and organization of the study, Poirier addresses two methodological concerns pertinent to the study: the identification of a pseudepigraphon as of primarily Jewish or Christian origin and the reliability of rabbinic writings as historiography. As for the first concern, the author bucks the recent trend of assuming a pseudepigraphical writing preserved solely by the church to be of Christian origin unless compelling evidence suggests otherwise, opting for a position that, after making every effort to identify the provenance of a writing and attempting to discuss the document without reference to its provenance, gives “a slight, tentative, and qualified favor to a position of Jewish provenance with respect to those questions where it might make a difference” (p. 5). As for the question of historiography, Poirier adopts a position that takes seriously the redactional shaping of a rabbinic document while employing critical methods to identify strata of historical recollection not homogenized in the editorial process (pp. 7–8). At first glance, these prolegomena appear simply to be matters of methodological transparency. However, they figure significantly into one aspect of this study, the author’s conjecture as to why Hebrew arose as one of the angeloglossic options.

The next four chapters betray the strategy of the study. The bulk of the study consists of a survey of references to angeloglossy in both Jewish and Christian sources within the stated chronological range. Chapter 2 surveys the documentary evidence asserting that Hebrew was the language of angels. The chapter focuses most heavily on two Jewish sources (*Jubilees* and 4Q464) and a twice-occurring dictum from the third-century Amora R. Yochanan (*b. Sotah* 33a; *b. Sabb.* 12b), with two Christian sources receiving brief treatment, the fourth-century *Vision of Paul* and the fourth- through seventh-centuries compilation *The Coptic Wizard’s Hoard*. While Poirier notes that it is impossible to know whether the hebraeophone view held ascendancy among Jews in the Second Temple period, the earliest reference to angeloglossy is found in *Jubilees*, where Hebrew is identified not only as the language of heaven but also the language

of creation and all humanity up to the Babel episode. In addition, 4Q464 affirms this connection (probably in dependence upon *Jubilees*). The reference probably serves to cement a sense of Jewish identity and exceptionalism by connecting its language with that of heaven and of creation, while in Qumran it functions similarly in a sectarian sense. By the third century, however, the hebraeophone view of angeloglossy became predominant among Jews. R. Yochanan's dictum, "the ministering angels do not understand Aramaic," appeals to the widespread belief that angels mediate prayers and can only function in this role if prayers are offered in Hebrew. The Christian sources also identify Hebrew as the language of heaven and creation, but do so out of an antiquarian interest or to affirm the authority of the OT, although interestingly not to ascribe to Hebrew any sort of liturgical significance for the church. Moreover, the missionary zeal of early Christians led to a multiplicity of languages within the church and the diminution of the liturgical value of Hebrew.

Chapter 3 may be the most intriguing chapter in the book. Here the author departs from cataloging references to angeloglossy to explaining why the hebraeophone view gained ascendancy in the Tannaitic tradition. R. Yochanan's dictum may have addressed a specific linguistic context in the third century (here is where the historiographical issue surrounding rabbinic writings comes into play), where prayers offered in Aramaic outside the synagogue are proscribed. Poirier suggests that this proscription "restrict[ed] the highest exercise of Jewish piety to rabbinic-controlled contexts, and/or it may have amounted to a more direct empowering of the rabbis through their ability to read and speak Hebrews (i.e. by making society more dependent on them)" (p. 31). Poirier offers a plausible reconstruction of how this came about but cautions that it is heavily reliant upon a hermeneutic of suspicion and may not finally correspond to what actually happened.

Chapters 4 and 5 turn attention to texts affirming that angels speak esoteric languages. Chapter 4 surveys texts in which a reference to esoteric languages is relatively certain. The list includes references that are certainly Christian in origin (1 Cor 13:1; 2 Cor 12:1-7; *Book of the Resurrection*; Ephrem Syrus's *Hymn 11*; the *Ascension of Isaiah*), certainly Jewish (a saying attributed to R. Hama b. Hanina in *Gen. Rab.* 74:7), and probably Jewish (*Testament of Job*; *Apocalypse of Zephaniah*; *Apocalypse of Abraham*). Notable in this survey are the breadth of references across Jewish and Christian sources and a tendency in several of them to envision human participation in angelic speech (1 Cor 13:1; *Ascension of Isaiah*; *Testament of Job*; *Apocalypse of Zephaniah*), including glossolalia. Chapter 5 surveys four less certain references to esoteric angeloglossy: the Qumran *Songs of the Sabbath*; R. Yochanan's mastery of the conversation of angels, demons, and palm trees (*b. B. Bat.* 134a // *b. Suk.* 28a); the fourth-century Nanas inscription; and the Christian liturgical jubilus. The most intriguing discussion of this chapter is an examination of the posited connections between the liturgical jubilus, angeloglossy, and glossolalia, which, if credible, "points to a time when human participation in angeloglossy was understood to be normal" (p. 141).

Chapter 6 is a summary of the preceding chapters. The book concludes with two appendices, one identifying other interpretations of "the speech of palm trees" (*b. B. Bat.* 134a // *b. Suk.* 28a) and another responding to Christopher Forbes on the nature of NT glossolalia, an extensive bibliography, and ancient source, modern author, and subject indices.

Assessing this volume is relatively straightforward given its self-granted status as the first book-length treatment of the topic. In this respect, it truly is groundbreaking work, assembling in one place several texts that speak to a topic that has largely been overlooked. The dialectic between Hebrew and esoteric languages helps place the matter in a linguistic crucible that examines motivations both within and between Jewish and Christian circles. Indeed, the more sociological implications suggested by the data make

for the most interesting, and most controversial, reading in the book. One result of the study may be more investigation and discovery of texts that might address angeloglossy as well as more reflection on the social contexts giving rise to these texts.

One quibble I have relates to one of the methodological issues raised in the introduction. The identification of pseudepigraphical sources as Jewish or Christian is noted, along with some discussion of the current state of the question among scholars. In chapters that survey the references, however, the matter of provenance often receives extensive discussion, only to come to the conclusion that the text is probably Jewish, a conclusion identified in the introduction as the default position. I found these discussions, interesting in their own right, to be distracting at times due to their length. Perhaps simple references to other literature that discusses this issue would have streamlined the discussion and kept it more focused to the topic at hand.

This book admirably succeeds in addressing the identified lacuna in the scholarly literature. Moreover, I believe it may serve as a catalyst for further reflection for Pentecostal readers for whom this topic addresses a significant issue of group identification.

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Ephesians. By Frank Thielman. BECNT. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2010, xxii + 520 pp., \$44.99.

Frank Thielman (Ph.D., Duke University) is Presbyterian Professor of Divinity at Beeson Divinity School, Samford University, in Birmingham, Alabama. He previously wrote a commentary on Philippians and a full-scale theology of the NT. He has also written in the area of the relationship of the Law and the NT. This commentary will only add to his stature as a NT scholar.

The layout of the commentary is pleasing and useful. Thielman's commentary on each section of the letter begins by identifying its location in its literary context (and Thielman's outline), an overview of the section, his exegesis and exposition, a summary, and finally, additional notes, where readers find the more technical discussions, including further elaboration on word meanings or text critical matters, for example. This helps the commentary keep moving without becoming bogged down on some details that many readers may want to overlook. He intersperses helpful tables to illustrate various features. Thielman cites many sources within the body of the text but also elaborates some matters in footnotes. In fact, compared to their overuse in some commentaries, the footnotes are kept to a reasonable number. That said, one cannot fault Thielman for lack of interaction with the major scholars and resources or for arriving at conclusions without sufficient interaction. More than many recent critical commentaries on Ephesians (and there are several excellent ones), Thielman's work painstakingly and sympathetically considers the alternatives for interpretive problems—from the Church fathers to the modern era. He does not, like some, survey the options and simply assert his own. Readers see not merely Thielman's conclusions, but they learn valuable lessons in how to interpret—using the relevant data from the historical background, literary context, word analyses, and grammar. This is particularly useful for students learning the skills of exegesis as well as seasoned pastors and teachers to see what makes a cogent defense.

As to introductory issues, Thielman concludes that Paul authored the letter to the Ephesians (pp. 1–5). At the same time, Thielman is not oblivious to the places within the letter where those opting for pseudonymity find evidence for their positions. He carefully

considers each feature that some employ to argue that Paul did not write the letter and shows how, in his mind, Pauline authorship better accounts for the data (e.g. see his comments at 2:5–6 [p. 136] and 3:8 [pp. 210–11] among many others). Those who tend to see pseudonymity as an open-and-shut-case (e.g. Best, Mitton, Talbert, Muddiman, Yoder Neufeld, and Perkins) will find that Thielman challenges their views persuasively and compellingly, in my mind.

As to the recipients of the letter, against the grain Thielman sides with Hoehner and a few others who adopt the minority view that the words “in Ephesus” were in the original copy of Paul’s letter. While he acknowledges that Ephesians is the most general letter in the Pauline corpus (which, for many, militates against Pauline authorship), he concludes that the text-critical evidence and the grammatical difficulties attendant when the phrase ἐν Ἐφεσῶν is omitted (pp. 11–16) support including the phrase that identifies the destination of the epistle. Thielman gives no concrete answers as to why a letter to churches in a city in which Paul spent two to three years would be so impersonal. His only reply: “The answer lies in understanding the circumstances of Paul and the Ephesians at the time of the letter’s composition,” which is hardly an explanation. He concludes that Paul sent his letter to the Ephesians (along with the letters to the Colossians and to Philemon) toward the end of his two-year Roman imprisonment, roughly in AD 62. In addition to the common consensus of situating Ephesians against the backdrop of the practice of magic, the Artemis cult, and “power,” Thielman argues that the Roman imperial cult must also play a significant role in understanding the letter’s setting. In “Wrightian” terms, Jesus is Lord and Caesar is not. Summing up this point of background, Thielman concludes: “The most useful approaches to the letter, then, will place its interpretation within the context of popular Greco-Roman religion, the imperial cult, and Judaism that formed the background of Christian life in Ephesus in the first century” (p. 24).

What follows are some very selective comments on Thielman’s exegesis. I found it surprising that in his discussion of 1:3–6 he made no reference to any possible corporate understandings of election (“he chose *us* in him [Christ]”), as most commentators now do. One is left to wonder, when Thielman speaks of “God’s choice of his people” (p. 51), whether he means particular or corporate election here. Perhaps he wishes to avoid this debate, but it seems that so much hinges on this distinction that it would merit at least some mention (even in a footnote). Also in this section, I found it strange and unconvincing that Thielman concludes that προορίσας ἡμᾶς is a restatement (synonymous to) ἐξελέξατο ἡμᾶς when Paul arguably distinguishes these concepts elsewhere (Rom 8:29, 33). I think that predestination identifies those outcomes that God has predetermined for his people: adoption in this context (cf. conformity to Christ in Rom 8:29; God’s wisdom in 1 Cor 2:7).

Concerning the debated meaning of “we who hope beforehand in Christ” (1:12), Thielman, correctly I believe, rejects the common view that this refers to Jewish believers, in contrast to subsequent Gentile Christians. Thielman argues that this refers to all Christians who are the recipients of the blessings Paul describes here in this section. All Christians *now* hope in Christ in anticipation of his summing up all things in the future. As to the grammatically tortuous, many-optioned meaning of 1:23, Thielman concludes “that the church, as Christ’s body, is filled by Christ who is himself continually and completely filled (by God)” (p. 115). While the first part of this is very likely—the church is filled by Christ—I think Thielman’s construal of the second part (that Christ is continually filled by God) is less likely in the context of Ephesians. I wonder whether Paul’s use of the middle voice should be taken in an active sense: Christ is the one who fills everything completely. This corresponds to what Paul says later at 4:10: Christ descended and ascended so that *he might fill* all things, though there Paul actually uses the active voice form, not the middle. But perhaps this is nitpicking.

In his discussion of 2:10, Thielman avers that, while God has prepared *people* “for glory,” here Paul says that God has planned *all the good works* that his people perform. This seems strange in light of the numerous appeals in the latter half of the letter for the readers to act ethically: why the appeals if all works have been predetermined? It is better, I think, to see that, as he has prepared a people for glory, God has prepared his people for good works, the relative pronoun *οἷς* being a true dative, not a dative of attraction: thus “good works *for which* God previously prepared [his people].” Thielman does not consider this option for the dative case here. Correctly, he sees the “middle wall of partition” as the Jewish regulations, not the Jerusalem temple balustrade, as some surmise. What about the four-dimensional nature of divine love (3:18)? That encompasses its vastness, God’s administrative plan, his mystery, and his complex wisdom. Can believers be filled with all the fullness of God (3:19)? Yes, in the sense that they can become all that God created them to be (pp. 237–38). Thielman’s discussion of the problem of Paul’s quotation (it seems) of Ps 68:19 in Eph 4:8 is carefully considered. He concludes that while Paul himself changed the Greek rendering of the text to meet his own concerns, the changes “are consistent with the overall theological direction of Ps. 68” (p. 268). Eschewing the common understanding of τὰ κατώτερα [μέρη] τῆς γῆς (Eph 4:9; “the lower [regions] of the earth”) that takes “of the earth” as appositional, Thielman mounts a formidable case (though in my view unsuccessful) that Christ descended to the underworld (i.e. Hades). As to 4:11, he argues that the evidence is not clear enough to conclude that “pastors” and “teachers” constitute a single group (i.e. teaching pastors). The entire group of Christian leaders has the task to prepare God’s people for the work of ministry. Not issuing a command to be angry (4:26), as some recently have argued, rather, Paul urges that when anger is present, the readers must not allow it to lead them into sin.

As to 5:12, I find E. Best and H. Hoehner more convincing that errant *believers* are in view when Paul refers to the unmentionable deeds done in secret, rather than the Gentile outsiders in Thielman’s estimation. What makes this so problematic for Paul is that *believers* do these things in secret; they are to be avoided at all costs. It would hardly be noteworthy that unbelievers are guilty of such sins.

As to the filling of the Spirit (5:18), after careful consideration of options Thielman concludes that believers live within the dynamic realm or sphere established by God’s Spirit. To be filled with the Spirit implies that believers allow God to fill them with all the fullness of Christ’s stature. This makes a lot of sense, more so than the popular view that the Spirit is the “content” of the filling for which Christians are to pray.

Coming to the *Haustafel*, Thielman understands “mutual submission” (5:21) to imply that there is a sense in which even those in the more authoritative role submit to their subordinates. Every believer is involved in serving others. While the sense of κεφαλή (“head”) carries clear overtones of authority (and there is a hierarchical element in Paul’s advice), Paul clearly equates the husband’s role with Christ’s work in saving the church—even to the extent that a husband would expend his life for his wife. Is a wife’s submission “in everything” without qualification? Thielman says, no; the audience would have known that exceptions existed and that the command would need to be qualified in hard cases. Given that husband and wife are “one flesh,” when a husband loves his wife, he is loving himself, “because she *is* himself” (p. 387; italics his).

Finally, the armor of God section (6:10–17) is another place where Thielman fails to acknowledge any corporate perspective in Paul’s discussion. Given Paul’s emphasis on the church’s unity, Jew and Gentile composing “one new person” (2:14–15), and the numerous other places where Paul emphasizes the church as a body using corporate metaphors, it is surprising that Thielman does not consider that Paul’s appeal here is to the church as a body to take up these implements that God has given so that the church can survive, thrive, and prevail over her spiritual enemies in the heavenly realms.

Certainly, readers of this review will find Thielman's positions more or less convincing at various points, just as I myself have. I have had to select a small sample of issues—often because I agree with what he has done and sometimes because I have come to different conclusions. In places, readers will side with Thielman despite his adoption of minority positions. This shows how careful and convincing Thielman's work is. Majority views deserve to be challenged even if they reflect some scholars' conclusions as to "assured results." No one will read this commentary and go away disappointed in Thielman's overall accomplishment, even if there is room for disagreement here or there. It is a model of fairness, clarity, and precision. The biggest liability that some readers may find is a lack of any application to the modern readers or world. Yet the commentary is already over 500 pages long, and application is not the objective of this commentary series.

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Lukan Authorship of Hebrews. By David L. Allen. NAC Studies in Bible & Theology 8. Nashville: B & H, 2010, xiv + 416 pp., \$24.99.

For at least the past half-century, the question of Hebrews' authorship has fallen on hard times, languishing at the fringes of Hebrews scholarship. Yet, David L. Allen, Dean of the School of Theology and Professor of Preaching at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, TX, attempts to revive the question, adding a few new twists to an old proposal that Luke was the book's independent author. In this revision and expansion of his 1987 doctoral dissertation, Allen wishes to move beyond the modest suggestions of the past, positing a holistic theory (p. 3) that includes the following: (1) Luke, a Hellenistic Jew, was a companion to Paul and a physician; (2) Luke wrote Luke-Acts from AD 60–63; (3) he wrote to the former Jewish high priest, Theophilus, who served in Jerusalem from AD 37–41; (4) this same Luke wrote Hebrews from Rome in about AD 67–69; (5) he wrote Hebrews to former priests of the Jerusalem temple, who had been converted in the early days of the Christian movement and had been dispersed by persecution, settling in Syrian Antioch; and (6) Luke well may have been Paul's amanuensis on the Pastoral Epistles (p. 324, 344–45).

Having introduced his topic and approach in the introduction, along with various cautions the reader should keep in mind (p. 2), the author takes up a history of investigation in chapter 1. Reviewing discussions about Hebrews' authorship from the Church fathers onward, he provides a nice summary of the suggestions on page 13. Then Allen turns to focus on various proposals on Luke's involvement in Hebrews' production (pp. 22–39).

Chapter 2 reviews scholarly discussions on three of the alternate candidates for Hebrews' authorship in the modern era—Barnabas, Apollos, and Paul—with the bulk of the chapter examining the arguments for Pauline authorship of Hebrews. By this point, Allen has already removed Barnabas and Apollos from serious consideration, since they have no extant writings to examine (p. 2). So their inclusion at this point seems rather odd.

With chapters 3–5 we come to the heart of the book, since Allen's argument stands or falls primarily on positing similarities between Luke-Acts and Hebrews. In chapter 3, he explores "The Linguistic Argument," evaluating lexical, stylistic, and textlinguistic data, drawing comparisons between Luke-Acts, Hebrews, and other NT works. He gives

extensive attention to the lexical and conceptual links between Luke-Acts and Hebrews (pp. 84–109). The balance of the chapter takes up similarities in style (e.g. OT introductory formulae) and finally broader discourse features that seem to be shared by these works (e.g. use of chiasmic macrostructures).

Allen examines the purposes of Luke-Acts and Hebrews in chapter 4, concluding that both documents were crafted to bolster those wavering in the faith (pp. 181, 195). Chapter 5 then carries out a similar program, offering an extensive comparison of the theologies of these two extended discourses. Not surprisingly, the two have a great deal in common in terms of Christology, eschatology, and prophecy/fulfillment, as well as numerous other theological concepts.

In the book's sixth chapter, Allen argues vigorously against the view that Luke was a Gentile, a position he suggests has always been "the greatest objection" to the Lukan authorship of Hebrews (p. 261). Running for 62 pages, this sustained argument should give those who have tacitly assumed Luke's Gentile identity reason for pause. Allen's seventh and final chapter sets forth a historical reconstruction, the holistic theory presented at the beginning of this review. The *Lukan Authorship of Hebrews* closes with a select bibliography and then name and subject indices.

As the far-ranging discussion suggests, David Allen has amassed a wealth of data in this monograph. His history of the investigation into Luke as the author of Hebrews perhaps is the most extensive to date and reveals a rich discussion that has been inaccessible to most students of the book. What is more, although I am not yet convinced of his position, Allen's probing of Luke's identity brings a helpful balance to the position that Luke's Gentile background stands as a foregone conclusion.

At the same time, there are numerous, and I think serious, problems with the monograph. Preeminently, Allen's program rests on pointing out the extensive similarities between Luke-Acts and Hebrews. His logic, as embodied in the book's outline, seems to run as follows: "There are numerous linguistic similarities, similarities of purpose, and theological similarities between Luke-Acts and Hebrews. Therefore, Luke wrote Hebrews." Yet at least two critical steps are missing from this approach for a thorough treatment of the data. In a more comprehensive and balanced process, Allen also would need to track significant dissimilarities between Luke-Acts and Hebrews. What are the glaring divergences, if any? And if there are divergences, what explanation might be offered for them? Allen winks at this need (p. 109), never engaging it thoroughly. Even more important, once the data has been gathered, what are the various possible explanations for the data? This is a key research question. Could the similarities between Luke-Acts and Hebrews be due to a common milieu? Might both authors have been part of the Pauline mission? Might one author have had access to the other's work? And the list could go on and on. The question of whether Luke wrote Hebrews is an appropriate one, but the researcher must assess the question by probing the data from various vantage points. Otherwise the approach to the data ends up sounding like special pleading, the details favorable to the thesis receiving all the attention.

Consider, for example, Allen's treatment of the linguistic connections between Luke-Acts and Hebrews, which he celebrates as "the strongest evidence to support or deny theories of authorship" (p. 78); among these connections, pride of place goes to lexical data. On pp. 84–86 Allen charts the 53 words shared by Luke-Acts and Hebrews, words found nowhere else in the NT, and he states, "[T]his lexical evidence argues strongly for common authorship" (p. 84). In fact, Allen suggests, when *all* the words used by both Luke-Acts and Hebrews are assessed (adding the words also used by other NT authors), 67.6% of Hebrews' vocabulary occurs in Luke-Acts. This sounds impressive at first blush.

Yet, two points help put this lexical data into perspective. First, those 53 terms unique to Luke-Acts and Hebrews are only about 5% of Hebrews' vocabulary, and the

percentage is miniscule for Luke-Acts. Second, the words found in the table on pp. 84–86 actually were quite common in other literary works of the first century. For instance, taking just the first 15 words in Allen's table as a sample, all but 1 (μέτοχος) are found in the writings of Philo—some extensively—and μέτοχος occurs 7 times in the pseudepigrapha. For instance, ἐκλείπω (misspelled in the transliteration) is found 32 times in Philo, ἀπαλλάσσω 46 times, καίτοι 151 times, and αἰτίος a whopping 277 times. Could it be, then, that these terms forging lexical connections between Hebrews and Luke-Acts might be explained on a basis other than common authorship (unless Philo also should be considered as a candidate for Hebrews' authorship!)? Perhaps they exist because our authors were especially well educated and widely read among the writers of the NT, sharing a common cultural context. This possibility must at least be considered. Similarly, one must probe various explanations for the similarities of style, purpose, and theology.

Unfortunately, other problems detract from the generous gathering of data in the monograph. At points, Allen misses common aspects of contemporary Hebrews research. For example, in his discussion of Hebrews' introductory formulae (pp. 132–33) he seems oblivious to the rich research of recent years on the use of the OT in the book. He finds the lack of γέγραπται as an introductory formula in Hebrews "inexplicable" and suggests it might be due to the author's theology of the OT. Allen also makes numerous logical jumps in the book. On p. 45, he takes the fact that "there are no extant works of Apollos to which we may compare Hebrews" as a "major reason" militating against Apollos as the author of the book. The lack of extant works certainly makes it all but impossible to *prove* that Apollos wrote Hebrews, but that fact does not militate against him being *considered as a candidate*, as Allen himself notes on page 2.

At the end of the day, Allen is at his best when he is reviewing the history of investigation or gathering data, and most of the data in this monograph is helpful in various ways. Yet, due to the weakness of his theoretical framework, Allen's historical reconstruction, while interesting and even stimulating at points, seems to be a network of speculations grounded in inferences. Consequently, Origen's comment on the book's authorship still stands.

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The Letter of James. By Scot McKnight. NICNT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010, xxx + 497 pp., \$55.00.

One of the happier developments in NT scholarship during the last forty years is that the long neglected book of James is finally getting the attention it deserves. This welcome contribution to the NICNT, which replaces the volume by James Adamson, is sure to become a standard tool in the toolkit of both teachers and preachers.

McKnight's treatment of matters of introduction is brief and to the point. The paucity of external evidence and the ambiguity of internal indications make almost all judgments of James's original audience, date, location, and specific circumstances extremely tentative, and thus McKnight wisely refrains from basing too much of his exegesis on any particular theory. He does locate the author in Jerusalem and posits that it is reasonable to suppose it was written in the 50s (p. 38), but he does not give an extended defense of this early date, nor does he spend much time arguing against the dominant critical view of a much later dating. McKnight does see the whole of James

as to some degree interactive with or responsive to Paul's teaching. Unlike most, however, he sees James as written not in direct opposition to Paul, nor in reaction to a *late* Paulinism, but against a very *early* (prior to Romans) misconstrual of Paul's teaching. Yet McKnight admits that these conclusions, too, must be tentative.

Admittedly, sometimes McKnight's caution leaves the reader wishing that at least he would state a definite preference and make a case. Given the difficulties of achieving any level of certainty higher than "possible," however, it is commendable that he keeps his commentary focused on simply what the text says. As James is characterized by a highly practical bent, influenced by Jewish and possibly Greek wisdom traditions, the particular background of the author and audience is less crucial than for many biblical texts, and the letter's self-designation as a circular or "general" epistle means the advice is also less audience-specific than, say, 2 Corinthians.

There is very little discussion of the various rhetorical approaches that have been common of late. McKnight concurs with Bauckham's general classification of James as a "paraenetic encyclical" (p. 13) and commends K.-W. Niebuhr's comparison with other Jewish "diaspora letters." He also sets forth several examples of proposed outlines (p. 49), but he is dubious of the value of identifying any more precise rhetorical structural patterns. In a footnote on p. 403, he again broaches the matter briefly, pointing out that, while undoubtedly some rhetorical devices and techniques were employed by James (as would any paraenetic literature), there is little to support the notion that the author of James is intentionally or even subconsciously conforming to a recognized Greco-Roman rhetorical form. All the attempts at analyzing James in terms of specific rhetorical forms inevitably do some "squeezing" to make the data fit the theory, and as different analysts come up with such different suggestions it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the suggested forms are being *imposed* rather than exposed. This is not at all to say James was not influenced by Hellenistic rhetoric, only that James was not deliberately patterned after an established rhetorical form.

Most other introductory questions receive brief but adequate coverage. McKnight understands the audience to be non-Palestinian Jews who have embraced Jesus as Messiah (p. 68), but he also acknowledges the audience may have included some Gentile Christians (p. 38, n. 150). On the commonly raised question of James's filial relationship to Jesus (whether he was half-brother, adopted half-brother, or cousin) there is but one brief footnote (p. 16).

Commendably, McKnight includes in his introduction something seldom seen in a commentary on James—he attempts to show how James fits within the overall story of God's redemption of his people (Israel). James is seen as a representative of the broader (non-Pauline) texture of the Jesus movement, focused on eschatologically driven ethics and wisdom (as over against soteriology and Christology). Though many students of James have observed the high degree of correspondence of James's teachings and wisdom with that of Jesus, McKnight puts both into the context of the larger biblical story.

On one matter, though, McKnight apparently takes a definitive position where I am not sure evidence can support it. McKnight often sees James's concerns effectively *defined* by the audience's experience of economic oppression. Thus the testing that produces joy, the warning against anger, the problem of favoritism and deference to the wealthy, the presumptiveness of merchants, the landowners' withholding of wages, and even the life difficulties that should elicit prayer, are all understood primarily as responses to "economic oppression." A corollary of this assumption is that the "rich" person in 1:10–11 and even the merchant being rebuked in 4:13–17 are definitively understood to be non-believers who will be judged, not believers being called to repentance.

This leads in the latter case to what seems to me to be an exegetical stretch. Jas 4:15–16 is normally rendered something like: “Instead, you ought to say ‘if the Lord wills . . .’; as it is, however, you now boast.” McKnight questions whether ἀντί with the infinitive can be rendered “instead you ought to say . . .” and offers: “instead of your saying ‘if the Lord wills’ . . . you are now boasting.” Thus the passage is not instructing merchants to be humble but is simply describing them as an example of non-believers who are not humble. It is not a real warning but a denunciation for the benefit of the (poor) audience, to remind them that merchants will receive their come-uppance. This construction may suit ἀντί with genitive articular infinitive better, and it does make 4:13–17 more parallel to 5:1–6. But the rub is the presence of the conjunction δέ in 4:16. Is it not simpler to acknowledge that James’s implied audience could have included in it followers of Jesus who had financial means but were not always using their wealth in a godly way, rather than to suppose that James could not envision any wealthy person as a genuine Christian? After all, that James exhorts his audience to *provide for* the poor would suggest some of them had the means to do so. What is more, James’s assumption that some people in the audience could read his letter suggests at least some of that audience were educated, and education does not usually go with poverty in the ancient world. It is probably a good thing, however, for our own wealthy western Christian culture to be reminded that there is a degree of oddity, not to mention peril, with being both Christian and rich.

Of course, there should be no doubt at all that “economic oppression” was *one* of the issues facing James’s hearers. James 5:1–5 is manifestly a denunciation of a particular economic injustice, and the rich hauling people into court (2:6) is clearly also a manifestation of that evil. However, economic injustice was only one of an array of evils faced by first-century Christians. One begins to wonder if McKnight is not occasionally reading James too much through modern lenses that see “economic oppression” as the defining evil of every age.

Some other miscellaneous observations include the following: (1) McKnight typically not only refers to similar or contextually informative texts in Jewish and early Christian literature (and even some Greek moral paraenesis); he usually includes significant portions of such texts, even other biblical texts. This does take up space, but also has the considerable advantage of letting the reader see the matter quickly without relying on previous knowledge or the time-consuming task of looking up the passage in question. Most users of this commentary may very well appreciate this feature, especially when the quoted material might not be readily available in a pastor’s library. (2) McKnight takes all of Jas 3:1–4:12 as impliedly addressed to teachers. This makes for an interesting unified perspective on the tongue warnings, the contrast of true and false wisdom, and James’s analysis of the origin of strife. While the connection of teaching, tongue control, and wisdom throughout chapter 3 is somewhat convincing, the tie in with 4:1–12 is less so. (3) Occasionally idiosyncracies creep in. For example, McKnight prefers the term *eikon* to “image of God” or “*imago Dei*,” presumably because of overuse of the latter. I would have thought the word *eikon* would have as much or more baggage than *imago Dei*.

On the whole, this excellent commentary is both insightful and readable. The exegetical conundrums (and there are many in James) are handled judiciously, and McKnight generally avoids trying to resolve issues definitively when they probably cannot be resolved. Most importantly, he keeps the central message of James always firmly in focus, even when dealing with subordinate or tangential issues.

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Jesus, Gnosis & Dogma. By Riemer Roukema. Translated by Saskia Deventer-Metz. London: T & T Clark, 2010, xi + 231 pp., \$24.95 paper.

Problems of historical chronology and literary relationship are thorny issues in early Christian studies. Rarely does one read a work that is not controlled by a clear commitment to a particular reconstruction with its attending speculative conclusions. While in no wise claiming the mythical neutral ground of objectivity, Riemer Roukema proves himself a careful scholar, whose academic expertise, systematic analysis, and judicious judgment distinguish *Jesus, Gnosis & Dogma* as an important introduction to the conceptions of Jesus evidenced in the first four centuries of the Christian era.

Roukema, Professor of New Testament at the Protestant Theological University, Kampen, The Netherlands, has devoted his academic career to the study of the background and foreground of the NT with a special focus upon Gnosticism and early Christian history. An earlier monograph, *Gnosis and Faith in Early Christianity: An Introduction to Gnosticism* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999), established Roukema's voice in these academic disciplines. The present volume is considered by Roukema as a sequel to this earlier study.

From the outset, it is clear that a methodology grounded in historical analysis is critical to this work. Roukema's distinction between what can be said about Jesus *historically* versus *theologically* shapes the entire enterprise. While the author acknowledges that even this nuance is debated and requires further definition in scholarly analysis, he takes occasion in his introduction to demonstrate how this distinction is important in several key areas of Gospel studies (e.g. Jesus' baptism, Christ as "ransom," the *Gospel of Thomas*, and Jesus' announcement of God's kingdom) and further illustrates how a failure to observe it may yield skewed results (i.e. Elaine Pagels's *Beyond Belief* [New York: Random House, 2003]).

While not seeking to be comprehensive in his analysis, Roukema engages what he considers the most significant and representative voices of earliest Christianity related to the issues of (1) Jesus' origin and identity (chap. 2); (2) Jesus' teachings (chap. 3); and (3) Jesus' death, resurrection, and exaltation (chap 4). For each topic, he considers the seven "authentic" Pauline letters, the four canonical Gospels, the *Gospel of Thomas*, Cerinthus and the Ophites, the *Gospel of Judas*, Theodotus, and the *Tripartite Tractate*. In some cases, where one or more of these sources is not entirely relevant to the subject at hand (e.g. Paul's letters and Cerinthus on Jesus' teachings), it is ignored. In other cases, where an additional source is particularly pertinent (e.g. the *Gospel of Mary* on Jesus' teachings), it is added. Other significant resources (e.g. *Apocryphon of John*) are not considered because they are not highly concerned with the issues at hand or do not add significantly to what has already been uncovered in the selected materials.

Though some readers may disagree with his conclusions or find frustration with his admitted lack of completeness, most will find Roukema's analysis systematic, fair, and informed. He provides brief conclusions for each topic within each chapter; however, a more synthetic picture is provided in chapter 5 with the posing of new questions for consideration. One of his most important conclusions is the secondary nature of Gnostic materials and conceptions (see pp. 86–87 and 115–18). While some Gnostic thought may be traceable to first-century ideas about Jesus and salvation, much of it is defined in reaction to the faith of the "catholic" church, which is decidedly more dependent upon OT and Jewish conceptions and revealed in the most ancient and original sources. In particular, Gnostic conceptions of androgyny (i.e. original male-female unity), salvation as self-knowledge, the inferiority of the Jewish God, Jesus' affinity with the highest God, and the rejection of Jesus' passion are reactionary and later developments often in correspondence with Platonic ideals. In this analysis, Roukema includes the *Gospel*

of *Thomas*, which, though some of its ideas may be traced to the historical Jesus and beliefs of some early Jewish Christians, betrays second-century developments.

With these foundational conclusions established, Roukema pursues answers to several crucial questions that arose in his textual analysis. The first relates to the fact that even the NT reveals that some Jewish believers held to simpler views of Jesus than those developed by the “canonical” and later Christian authors. Roukema provides a valuable analysis of the nature of Jewish Christianity in chapter 6, giving special consideration to the Ebionites, Nazarenes (or Nazorenes), and other groups as revealed in early Christian writings up to the Pseudo-Clementine writings. While primary sources are not extant, Roukema concludes that many Jewish-Christian conceptions go back to earliest Christianity, including a special emphasis upon Christ’s baptism, a distinction between Christ’s preexistence and divinity, and alternative conceptions of salvation.

Other questions and issues discussed by Roukema include, “Did Jesus Have a Secret Teaching?” (chap. 7), “Does Jesus as LORD and Son of God Fit into Early Judaism?” (chap. 8), and “Jesus and the Dogma of God’s Trinity” (chap. 9). With regard to secret teaching, Roukema admits that Jesus did reserve some teachings and interpretations for his closest disciples, that not all that he taught was codified in the NT, and that even some “catholic” teachings and practices developed from oral traditions; however, it cannot be concluded historically that the early Christian authors deliberately suppressed essentially different or deeper teachings that were exclusively revealed to individual disciples (e.g. Thomas, Judas, or Mary). What is clear from the NT data is that, while Jesus did reserve some teachings for his immediate disciples, they intentionally revealed these insights in the writings that they produced and these writings essentially agree in what they reveal about Jesus.

With regard to the Jewish orientation of conceptions of Jesus as LORD and Son of God, Roukema provides an excellent review of Jewish literature and concludes that Second Temple Judaism did feature an “inclusive monotheism” (Horbury) with admitted secondary divine powers and language that was likely foundational to early Christian conceptions. While this background does not preclude Christian innovation (Hurtado), the Jewish context in which Christianity was born does provide the theological and linguistic framework for exalted conceptions of Jesus. In chapter 10, Roukema discusses the development of Trinitarian dogma up through the first ecumenical council of Nicaea. A valuable historical overview of authors, teachers, and beliefs is developed, and special attention is given to the origin, development, and engagement of ideas. Roukema is fair and even empathetic in his analysis (e.g. with Arius, pp. 182–85), provides some interesting historical data (e.g. Constantine’s regard of the debate as unimportant), and offers a clear and concise conclusion: “Aside from the terms they used, they [i.e. the Nicene Creed’s authors] stood in an old Jewish tradition of ‘logos theology’” (p. 189).

Roukema ends his monograph with a review of what can and cannot be concluded historically and theologically from his analysis. While some Jewish Christian conceptions of Jesus were deemed too simplistic and Gnostic conceptions were rejected as too complex and dissonant with Jewish ideals, what became orthodoxy defined a middle ground between the two. Roukema points out several examples of discontinuity between Jesus and Gnosticism, particularly the severing of Jesus from his OT and Jewish backgrounds and the adoption of Platonic conceptions (e.g. higher and lower gods) that were out of sorts with Jesus’ identity. With regard to the development of Trinitarian dogma, Roukema admits the vast distance between the naïve view of God’s Trinity in earliest Christianity and the exalted conceptions of the Nicene Creed. As church leaders responded to alternative beliefs and challenges, they utilized conceptual and philosophical tools that were unfamiliar to earlier Christian authors. Yet, Roukema defends these developments as understandable and justifiable, and he defines a “broken

continuity" (p. 195) between earliest Christianity and Nicaea. In the final analysis, Roukema embraces and recommends for the church a conception of Jesus that is not that of a Gnostic teacher and more than a Jewish rabbi; rather, he commends an image of Jesus as "Lord and God," an understanding that is obviously theological but solidly based upon the most ancient traditions of the Christian faith.

In all, *Jesus, Gnosis & Dogma* is an excellent resource and is a delight to have available in English. The translation is clear and tight, with a small number of errors (e.g. the conjunction "en" is untranslated in "Moses en Elijah" [p. 136], and adoptionism is consistently misspelled "adoptianism"). Despite this, Roukema's ability as a teacher shines through as difficult materials are summarized and explained clearly and concisely. A survey of the footnotes and bibliography reveals a good acquaintance with important works in English, German, Dutch, and French, a significant consideration given the breadth of the global conversation about the subjects discussed. I would commend this resource as a solid introduction for students engaging the written materials of earliest Christianity and their implications for the study of the NT, the historical Jesus, Christian origins, Gnosticism, and historical theology.

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Images of Salvation in the New Testament. By Brenda B. Colijn. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2010, 335 pp., \$25.00 paper.

In the introduction to *Images of Salvation in the New Testament*, Brenda Colijn asks a vital question: How do we avoid distorting the gospel? Her answer, "We must keep returning to the source, to the New Testament vision of what God has done in Christ and how we can participate in it" (p. 13). Due to the various controversies and modern cultural forces that have influenced Christians toward distorted conceptions of salvation, Colijn believes a return to the diverse images of salvation in the NT is needed. *Images of Salvation in the New Testament* is Colijn's response to this need.

The book is divided into 13 chapters and a brief conclusion. Chapter 1 introduces the reader to the book's method, which will center on what Colijn has labeled an intersection of NT theology, literary criticism, and theological hermeneutics. Chapter 2 explores the images of covenant and inheritance. The image of covenant is traced through the OT, the NT in general, Paul, and Hebrews. Chapter 3 surveys the kingdom of God, which is described as one of the most comprehensive images of salvation in the NT. The Synoptic Gospels, where this image is most evident, receive the most attention. Colijn highlights the Synoptics' emphasis on the kingdom of God as God's restoration of his creation.

Chapter 4 considers the image of eternal life. Colijn explains eternal life as God's solution to death, which came into the world through sin. Because eternal life is the central image of salvation in the Gospel of John, much of this chapter involves consideration of the Fourth Gospel. Chapter 5 discusses the concepts of regeneration and new birth. These two concepts are summarized as the activities of God in restoring the integrity of a creation that has been marred by sin (p. 103).

Chapter 6 explores the σωτηρία word group to argue that it has a much broader meaning than the typical equation of "salvation" by conservative Christians with conversion. She argues that σωτηρία does not simply mean the forgiveness of sins but extends to every dimension of life that was damaged by sin (p. 122). Chapter 7 discusses the images of redemption, ransom, and freedom. Christ redeems to set people free from sin,

self, pagan practices, death, and Satan. According to Colijn, "redemption and ransom thus show the costliness of human salvation," rather than paying the price demanded by God or Satan.

Chapter 8 surveys the images of reconciliation, adoption, and peace. Colijn emphasizes that, while salvation is personal, it is not simply individual. God has saved people into a relationship not only with himself but also with the entire creation. Chapter 9 largely follows the New Perspective on Paul, in particular N. T. Wright's brand of the New Perspective, in explaining justification: God's righteousness is defined as his covenant faithfulness; imputation of Christ's righteousness is refuted; justification is primarily relational and only secondarily forensic; and there is a final eschatological justification based on the faithful life lived.

Chapter 10 discusses the image of election. For Colijn, election is based upon God's knowledge of how people will respond to the gospel or God's knowledge of people before they enter his service (p. 226); when God predestines people, he is referring to the destiny of his people, not God's choice of certain people (p. 224); the church has been chosen in Christ but not the individual members (p. 233); and the emphasis is placed on election being corporate and covenantal (p. 227). Chapter 11 examines how believers are transformed through their union with Christ. Colijn describes being in Christ as transactional and relational; objective and experiential; and personal but not individualistic.

Chapter 12 turns to the images of sanctification and perfection. She argues the two terms should be understood as deriving from two different contexts: justification from a forensic context and sanctification from a cultic context. Chapter 13 focuses on the books of Hebrews and Revelation to examine pilgrimage, contest, and worship. Colijn observes that both of these books are written to encourage communities who are suffering to persevere to the end and thus are appropriate places to observe the NT call to endurance. In the conclusion, Colijn briefly explains how these images are a part of the grand narrative of Scripture and then describes various features of NT salvation.

This book has much in it to be commended. Colijn is a critical realist who has a high view of Scripture and finds meaning in the text, but also understands that readers are affected by their own cultural situation and biases. She believes theological, historical, and literary considerations are important factors in interpretation. Many of her conclusions helpfully draw attention to the dangers of over-systematizing Scripture, and her desire to apply Scripture practically to the life of the church is refreshing.

Nevertheless, there are areas where some readers will likely be dissatisfied. Colijn argues salvation can be lost once someone has attained it, though she fails to address adequately certain key passages relevant to the discussion, such as 1 John 2:19, Rom 8:30, and John 10:28–29. In a somewhat confusing section, she appears to affirm that 1 John teaches that sinlessness is possible for believers (p. 284).

At a few points, opposing views are presented in ways that tend to make them untenable, though the representative of such views would hardly lay claim to the description. For instance, no matter one's view of election, it is not quite fair for Colijn to argue her position "stands in stark contrast to theological views that limit God's love to the elect" (p. 236). Who would want to be in the camp that limits God's love? Yet it appears the same critique could be made of her understanding of election. For if salvation is only for those who respond positively to the gospel, it appears that God's love for those who do not respond positively to the gospel is also limited. In other words, for all Christians, in some sense, God's love is limited (excluding universalists). At another point, she implies that those who have a different understanding of God's wrath see God as an "angry Zeus preparing thunderbolts for those who displease him" (p. 183). One wonders against whom exactly she is arguing.

Perhaps most controversial is her understanding of the purpose of the cross. She argues God did not take on the penalty of sin, but instead he has taken on the *consequences* of sin, a distinction Colijn herself stresses as not unimportant (pp. 149–50, 164). What is more, God does not need to be appeased by the cross because his wrath is not personal and should rather be understood as “giving people over to experience the consequences of their rejection of God (Rom 1:18–32)” (p. 183).

A full response to her treatment of the cross cannot be given here, but a few remarks are in order. A depersonalized view of God’s wrath is very difficult to square with the actual data of Scripture. It is difficult even on a cursory reading not to see numerous references in the Bible describing a God who is angry with both the sin and the sinner (e.g. Isa 13:4, 6, 9; Ezek 5:11–17; Revelation 14 to name only a few). Carson has noted that in the first fifty chapters of the Psalms alone there are 14 instances of God saying that he hates sinners, is against the wicked, or something similar (D. A. Carson, *The Difficult Doctrine of the Love of God* [Wheaton: Crossway, 1999] 69). Even as Colijn attempts to use Rom 1:18–32 in favor of her position, the text indicates it is God in his wrath who is giving the rebellious over to their sin as punishment, and then the next two chapters in Romans stresses God personal involvement in judgment. Moreover, while other models of the atonement should not be neglected, penal substitution remains an accurate description of what the NT teaches and has been defended competently against its proponents (e.g. Charles E. Hill and Frank A. James III, *The Glory of the Atonement: Biblical, Theological & Practical Perspectives* [Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2004] or Steve Jeffery, Michael Ovey, and Andrew Sach, *Pierced for Our Transgressions: Rediscovering the Glory of Penal Substitution* [Wheaton: Crossway, 2007]).

In conclusion, Colijn is accurate when she notes in the introduction that she is writing for seminary students, pastors, and educated lay-people; all of these groups will be able to comprehend the book, though not all will be able to engage with it critically. Although readers should be prepared to use critical discernment when reading, *Images of Salvation in the New Testament* offers a valuable contribution by providing an approach to the study of salvation that seeks to bridge the gap between the Bible and contemporary application, without falling into the trap of uncritically accepting traditional systematic categories.

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Jesus, Paul and the People of God: A Theological Dialogue with N. T. Wright. Edited by Nicholas Perrin and Richard B. Hays. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2011, 294 pp., \$24.00 paper.

This book represents the proceedings from the 2010 Wheaton Theology Conference. The meeting was held in honor of N. T. Wright (former Bishop of Durham and currently a Professor at St. Andrews University in Scotland). Audio and video of the conference is available online and is well worth checking out (<http://www.wheaton.edu/wetn/lectures-theology10.htm>). Wright is one of the most popular NT theologians of today. His various publications on Jesus, Paul, resurrection, and theology—in popular and academic forms—have stirred up much controversy and many conversations in evangelical and mainline Christian circles. It is fitting, then, to have a volume engaging with his work that is as celebratory as it is critical.

In the introductory essay by Nicholas Perrin ("Introduction"), Perrin compares Wright to Albert Schweitzer and notes a similarity between them in that both experienced a reception of silence to their work from professional theologians. The purpose of this book, then, is to speak theologically towards Wright's various writings in terms of their contribution to Christian thought. Each essay engages Wright on a given topic followed up with Wright's response.

The first essay is by Marianne Thompson, and it is titled "*Jesus and the Victory of God Meets the Gospel of John*." Thompson notes the relative absence of the Fourth Gospel from *Jesus and the Victory of God*, which is attributable to Wright's desire to engage historical critics on their own terms thereby assuming the relative lack of historicity in the Gospel of John. Yet she believes that there are points of contact between the Wrightian Jesus and the Johannine Jesus. This is seen particularly in the view that Jesus will be for Israel and for the world what Scripture says Yahweh alone would be. She recognizes that Wright's depiction of Jesus as replacing the temple is a distinctly Johannine idea. Yet she contests his view that the destruction of the temple indicates a time of restoration, when it should imply a further period of exile. In Wright's response, he attempts to show even more convergences between the Fourth Gospel and *Jesus and the Victory of God*, especially regarding the temple motif and the link between the kingdom and Jesus' death.

Richard B. Hays in "Knowing Jesus: Story, History and the Question of Truth" engages Wright on his preference for a reconstructed historical Jesus over the canonical Jesus. He takes issue with Wright for making his Jesus a virtual fifth Gospel and for regarding church interpretation as misleading and oppressive. Hays contends that it is hermeneutically significant whether or not one reads the story of Jesus in light of the resurrection and the high Christology of the Fourth Gospel, exactly what is missing from Wright's *Jesus and the Victory of God*. Wright's response is to justify his approach in temporarily sidelining John since that is how the game of critical scholarship is played in Jesus studies and we need to reflect on the presuppositions and intentions behind the Gospels to arrive at a proper view of their portrait of Jesus. On church tradition, Wright comments: "I believe in the creeds. But I believe in the Jesus of the Gospels a good deal more" (p. 64).

Sylvia C. Keesmaat and Brian J. Walsh engage Wright's view of economic justice in "'Outside a Small Circle of Friends': Jesus and the Justice of God," which presses Wright to consider that Jesus was concerned not only with violent nationalism but also with economic injustices. They provide a list of examples of economic injustice, ancient and modern, and wonder how Wright's Jesus would confront them. In response, Wright admits that if he were writing *Jesus and the Victory of God* today, he would stress economic issues more. He also appeals to an economic realism where it is not quite possible to turn western economics around in one big swoop without some realistic proposals.

Nick Perrin tackles the subject of "Jesus' Eschatology and Kingdom Ethics: Ever the Twain Shall Meet." Perrin proposes modifying Wright's conception of Jesus' kingdom ethics so that it allows for a more balanced retrieval of personal and corporate ethics. Wright is largely affirmative in his reply saying that he sees Jesus as urging his followers to be kingdom people in every part of their lives.

The historical Jesus section is closed with Wright's own essay on "Whence and Whither Historical Jesus Studies in the Life of the Church?" which provides the biographical background into Wright's foray into historical Jesus studies. He urges the necessity of historical Jesus study, since otherwise the church replaces Jesus with constructed versions of Jesus all too conducive to ideology and politics. Wright also advocates reading the Gospels for the big kingdom story, since it is the picture of Jesus as

kingdom-bringer that is the real focus of the evangelists. This enables readers to bring together the themes of kingdom, cross, and resurrection.

Coming to Paul, Edith Humphrey addresses the topic "Glimpsing the Glory: Paul's Gospel, Righteousness, and the Beautiful Feet of N. T. Wright," where she engages Wright on the issues of righteousness (especially Wright's take on 2 Cor 5:21), apocalypticism (especially Wright's take on the nature of apocalyptic language), and the ascension (a greater need for theosis). Wright responds by reaffirming his view of 2 Cor 5:21 that "righteousness" refers to Paul's own ministry, by expressing his openness to alternative ways of conceiving apocalyptic language, and by accepting some validity to Humphrey's view of the ascension (although he does not want to give open slather to everything that comes from tradition over the text).

Jeremy S. Begbie looks at Wright's ecclesiology in "The Shape of Things to Come? Wright Amidst Emerging Ecclesiologies," where Begbie asks why emerging church folk have been so attracted to Wright. He gives five attractive characteristics of Wright's thought; it is: (1) integral, where salvation means being part of the saved community; (2) eschatological, since the church moves forward towards the new creation; (3) cosmologically situated, thus providing grounds for ecological ethics; (4) material, insofar that Wright affirms the inherent goodness of embodied existence; and (5) improvisatory, as Wright promotes participation in the drama of redemption. Certain forgotten themes that Begbie thinks Wright is good at recovering include the ascension, Israel, and catholicity. In response, Wright is surprised that he had been operating with an implicit ecclesiology all along. He thinks it is perhaps his emphasis on kingdom work that makes him resonate with folks in the emergent church scene.

Markus Bockmuehl's essay, "*Did St. Paul Go to Heaven When He Died?*" questions Wright's point, apparently made in an interview in *Time* magazine, that Christians do not go to heaven when they die. Whereas Wright focuses on corporate eschatology in the new heavens and new earth as life-after-life-after-death, Bockmuehl surveys early Christian writers to show that heaven was very much on their minds. In a peculiar exchange, Wright claims that he does not recognize the presentation of himself in Bockmuehl's argument. He has never denied that the faithful "go to heaven when they die." His point has been, in fact, that heaven is not the final destination of the saints.

Most entertaining and stimulating was Kevin Vanhoozer's essay on "Wrighting the Wrongs of the Reformation: The State of the Union with Christ in St. Paul and Protestant Soteriology." Vanhoozer notes the problem of theological and historical readings of Paul as well as the issues that Wright has raised in his reading of Paul and justification. Vanhoozer suggests that a way beyond the impasse is to emphasize the theological element of adoption in Paul's soteriology so as to bring together the declarative and corporate elements of Paul's justification theology. An "incorporated righteousness" underscores the importance of union with Christ for justification. Vanhoozer also thinks that Wright needs to make less aggravated denials and try to win more allies for his theological project. Wright accepts the need to press in the direction that Vanhoozer suggests, but he is adamant not to surrender his historical interests to the concerns of subsequent theological (mis)readings of Paul.

The final essay, by Wright himself, is, "Whence and Whither Pauline Studies in the Life of the Church," which narrates his own journey into Paul beginning in childhood. Wright expositis what he thinks is Paul's most enduring contribution to ecclesiology: the united family. He then describes how Paul's theology took shape around the themes of monotheism revised, election revisited, and eschatology reimagined.

In sum, this is a fabulous, learned, and enjoyable cohort of essays in dialogue with one of the most influential Christian scholars of our time. It celebrates Wright's work,

but he does not receive a free run on any subject either. It is well worth reading for those interested in the interface between biblical studies and systematic theology.

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"Right Reason" and the Princeton Mind. By Paul Kjoss Helseth. Phillipsburg: P & R, 2010, xxxv + 257 pp., \$21.99 paper.

There has been a persistent stereotype of the Old Princeton men as a crew of stodgy, outdated intellectualists concerned only with the facts of Christianity and lacking its heart. Andrew Hofferger's fine book from 1981, *Piety and the Princeton Theologians*, blunted this stereotype and provided a needed correction to some misconceptions surrounding the Princeton theology. David Calhoun's two-volume history of Princeton Seminary furthered this reading. Now Paul Helseth has made a positive contribution to this modified interpretation by examining in detail the place and nature of reason in the Princeton mind, attacking head-on accusations that Princeton's epistemological base was bound up in Enlightenment rationalism.

Helseth has been addressing these issues in a number of articles dating back to the late 1990s; here, he brings his work together in a book-length treatment on Princeton's use of reason. The controversy surrounding how best to understand the supposed intellectualist tendencies of Old Princeton has on more than one occasion spilled onto the pages of *JETS*. In December 2003, Tim McConnel argued a position opposite what Helseth here asserts regarding Princeton's relation to Scottish common sense realism, perhaps in response to Helseth's own earlier article in *JETS* (September 2002) that reflected part of the contents of his current book. The "prevailing historiographical consensus" against which Helseth writes asserts that Princeton's theological position was in important respects grounded in a form of Enlightenment rationalism—especially as expressed via the Scottish common sense realism so widely influential in mid-nineteenth century thought—in such a way as to undermine Princeton's relation to classic Reformed theological and epistemological concerns. This view has been taken up among both Evangelical interpreters and broader historical scholarship for at least half a century dating back to the renowned American church historian Sydney Ahlstrom's seminal article of 1955, "The Scottish Philosophy and American Theology."

Against this consensus, the thesis of Helseth's book is that the theology of Old Princeton as represented by its major figures was not unduly influenced by the Enlightenment and Scottish common sense realism, but instead "stood in the epistemological mainstream of the Reformed tradition" (p. xxvii). As such, characterizations of this theology as somehow fundamentally grounded in Enlightenment rationalism are unjustified, because it was "focused much more on the heart" than on the head (p. xxvii). A proper view of the Princetonians' understanding of "right reason" indicates that they "conceived of reason in a fashion consistent with the assumptions of the Reformed tradition even if they were not always perfectly consistent in how they put this conception into practice" (p. xxxiv). This being the case, postconservative criticisms of conservative Evangelical theology that are based on this faulty view of an Old Princeton theology passed down in some form to them are mistaken.

Helseth divides the book into two parts. In Part One he considers the four leading representatives of Old Princeton theology: Archibald Alexander, Charles Hodge, Benjamin Warfield, and J. Gresham Machen. Helseth evaluates their epistemological assumptions and determines that they are wrongly accused of rationalism by the critical historiographical consensus. In Part Two he considers the postconservative critique

more directly, arguing that it wrongly criticizes conservative evangelical theology via assumptions that it brings regarding Old Princeton rationalism that is based on caricature and the above mistaken consensus.

The first chapter examines the epistemological context out of which Old Princeton came, then examines Alexander and Hodge's epistemology. Helseth does not deny that these Princetonians were influenced by Scottish common sense philosophy, but argues that their appropriation of it was "qualified and conditioned by their Reformed commitments" (p. 21), affecting the framework more than the substance of their theology. This point can be seen in how they understood the new birth. Although they, like Calvin, argued for the necessity of knowledge in faith, they denied that the intellect could comprehend properly the knowledge of God available in nature and revelation in its unregenerate state. True spiritual knowledge and saving faith is only possible when the Holy Spirit through his supernatural regenerating activity works a change in one's disposition (as Jonathan Edwards had also argued), opening one's mind to reason differently and to see the significance of objective truths as they really were—to know their beauty and sweetness. Without such a work of the Spirit, reason is biased and unreliable. Denying a tripartite psychology that separates the soul into independent faculties, they argued for a unitary soul. As such the "subjective and experiential factors play a critical role in Old Princeton's religious epistemology because Old Princeton's 'intellectualism' is moral, not merely rational" (p. 16). The capacity to know properly is impacted by the moral character of the knower from which the intellect could not be divorced. Helseth's references to various works of Alexander are particularly convincing on this point. Helseth argues that the Princetonians held to the classic Reformed distinction between a merely speculative and a spiritual understanding, only the latter of which allows one to see the beauty and taste the sweetness of the truths at hand.

In chapters 2 and 3, Helseth works to demonstrate that these Reformed epistemological assumptions take precedence over other philosophical commitments as he looks at the Princeton apologetics of B. B. Warfield. Although his apologetics stressed reasoning, "Warfield retained an important role for subjective and experiential factors in his evidentialist apologetic" (p. 51). Like his predecessors at Princeton, Warfield insisted that saving faith involves apprehension of knowledge or evidence. This saving apprehension does not occur via the power of an unregenerated intellectual faculty, or due to the quality of the evidence provided, but rather by God's sovereign and gracious work through the Holy Spirit. Perhaps more than Alexander and Hodge, Warfield emphasized that faith is brought about by evidence rather than a volitional act. He called faith a "forced consent" because a clear view of the evidence by the regenerated soul could not help but bring about trust, and this clear view was determined by subjective factors in the viewer. Sinners regenerated by God have by his gracious act "the moral ability to see revealed truth more or less for what it objectively is; namely glorious" (p. 59). Warfield did not believe that reason can save, but he did believe that the Christian faith is reasonable. Unlike Enlightenment rationalism, one only knows and "reasons rightly" by the work of the Holy Spirit. Through such right reasoning, and denying any divide between religious and scientific truth, Warfield believed regenerate Christians offer superior scholarship that should be used to reason the world toward greater truth. The Word of God, although not "a substitute for general revelation," prepares for "its proper assimilation" (p. 86) and is the Christian's highest authority in matters of truth. According to Helseth, for Warfield "assimilating modern learning to Christian truth does not merely sustain the task of apologetics; it *constitutes* the task of apologetics" (p. 88, emphasis his). Later in the third chapter, Helseth considers Warfield's relation to Kuyper, arguing that a supposed shift by Warfield to a presuppositionalist apologetic model akin to Kuyper's is based on a "misunderstood tension."

In the fourth and final chapter of the book's first part, Helseth considers Machen's critique of liberalism, arguing that it too is grounded in a similar set of concerns over

"right reason." Machen's charge that liberalism is "unscientific" related directly to his belief that proper and true scientific knowledge involves the whole soul, not merely an independent intellect. A moral aspect of the knower is thus involved. Liberalism is hence humanistic in its disregard of this (Reformed) truth, and Machen displayed in his critique "a theological commitment to epistemological assumptions that are consistently Reformed" (p. 106). Helseth illustrates Machen's continuity with Warfield's view of apologetic, noting that for Machen modern culture requires assimilation to Christianity in its every aspect, and thus culture requires study and exploration by Christian scholars so that "'Christ may rule, not only in all nations, but in every department of human life'" (p. 111). Like Warfield, Machen believed that the regenerate scholar, via the supernatural changes wrought by the Holy Spirit in the new birth, brings a superior, more comprehensive science to the world because the regenerate scholar can engage truths with greater clarity. Also like Warfield, Machen insisted that one not divide scientific from religious truths. Both are based on objective truths, and true "science" as Machen spoke of it is not limited to methods using ideas like physical causation. Helseth concludes that for Machen "theological liberalism is un-Christian precisely *because* it is unscientific" (p. 131, emphasis his), substituting subjective religious experience for biblical truths as the foundation for Christianity.

In Part Two, Helseth relates his argument to current debates between conservative and postconservative evangelicals. In chapter five he argues that postconservatives have signed on fully to an errant historiographical consensus, such that they view rationalism as implicit in Princeton's view of inerrancy and in its continuing influence on conservative evangelicalism today. Whatever the merits of postconservative arguments against evangelical propositionalism, he argues, they cannot be justified via these criticisms of the Princetonians because they were not the "naïve rationalists" that the critics claim that they were. These critics reject a "caricature of Old Princeton" and "are themselves guilty of some of the worst characteristics that they perceive in their conservative brethren" (p. 148). Helseth then repeats many of the arguments from the first portion of the book. Broadening the scope of these arguments, Helseth challenges Jack Rogers and Donald McKim's contention in their 1979 book, *The Authority and Interpretation of the Bible*, that Old Princeton "jettisoned" their Reformed commitments by their rationalist philosophical assumptions. Rogers and McKim failed to recognize the Princetonians as committed Augustinians. Helseth also critiques Robert Webber's book, *Ancient-Future Faith: Rethinking Evangelicalism for a Postmodern World*, as a sample paradigm for postconservative evangelical theology. He finds it lacking for its replacement of the "book-oriented" approach of Luther, Calvin, and Warfield with an approach that centers the faith on a mysterious, communal perception of God's presence that is captured not in propositions but a lived experience of faith in community.

Helseth argues in the sixth chapter that although a certain form of "dogmatic spirit" was, according to Warfield, appropriate to a Christian theologian standing under God's revelation, the characterization of Roger Olson and others that the Princetonians were rigid dogmatists is inaccurate. They did not demand conformity to every detail of the Westminster Standards (they "were 'system' rather than 'strict' subscriptionists," p. 190), distinguished between first-order revelation and second-order theological discourse, and exhibited openness to theological progress of the right kind (Warfield termed this "progressive orthodoxy"). Rather than appealing to universal Enlightenment reason or some naïve theological realism, the Princetonians used "a biblically informed kind of theological aesthetic" (p. 195) via the Holy Spirit's operation on "the whole soul" of the regenerated theologian to discern truth. As Christian anti-humanists in the tradition of Augustinian voluntarism, they saw the heart as the center of an integrated person in whom reason and feeling and acting are not easily divided.

The concluding chapter of the book provides a discussion of the role and function of doctrine. Helseth argues that there has been a shift in Evangelicalism. The postconser-

vative paradigm has broken a consensus that existed across the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in which “the objective truthfulness of God’s revelation along with our ability to know it” was championed (p. 213). Postconservatives consider such attempts to retain this objective element “misguided at best and destructive at worst” (p. 215). Believing this kind of objectivity impossible, they wish to tie doctrinal expressions to the living faith communities of particular socio-historical contexts, seeing doctrine in a functional role that binds the community together in authentic Christian living of the gospel story. Helseth is critical of this shift and of any justification for it based on a misunderstanding of Old Princeton. He sees it as akin to liberalism’s shift to an anthropocentric theology. As he puts it, postconservatives are “demonstrating remarkable affinity with progressives who drank the Kool-Aid of cultural accommodation more than a century ago” (p. 219). Old Princeton, on the other hand, together with “the best thinkers in the conservative mainstream” (p. 220), has always combined subjective and objective factors into a theological form that allows one to grasp God’s revealed truths without reducing it to rationalism.

Though generally well written, stylistically this book is marred somewhat by the repetition of several points throughout the text (perhaps due to the book’s origins in previously published articles). Identical phrases and sentences, especially on central points, appear countless times. On more than one occasion quotes are repeated, even longer block quotes. It is safe to say that the reader will not miss the central arguments of the book.

This is not a book afraid to pick a fight. Helseth takes on a myriad of opponents, from the most accomplished and seasoned past and present historians like Sydney Ahlstrom, Ernest Sandeen, George Marsden, Mark Noll, and E. Brooks Holifield, to leading figures of the postconservative evangelical movement—including Stanley Grenz, Robert Webber, John Franke, Carl Raschke, and especially Roger Olson. The book seems as much concerned to do battle with this postconservative movement as it does to make the historical case for its “unorthodox” interpretation of the Old Princeton theology. Although this adds to the book’s contemporary relevance for Evangelicals, it detracts somewhat from the historical discussion.

One of the features of a good work of history that lends confidence to a reader is the ability of its author to demonstrate a capacity to appreciate and assess fairly how alternate interpretations of various historical arguments arose. In spite of the breadth of original sources Helseth cites in this book, his selection and reading of those sources seems almost as one-sided as the caricatured rationalist interpretations of Princeton that he so opposes. For example, he writes that “it is altogether clear” (p. 15) that the Princetonians were *never* tools of Scottish common sense philosophy. There never seems to be any struggle with writings of the Princetonians that run counter to his thesis, or any explanation for how such a slew of fine historians might have been led so far astray in their considerable historical scholarship. This work, to my view, far from weakening the book’s argument would have strengthened it. Without it the reader is left somewhat suspicious that the author’s theological viewpoint controls and even distorts his historical reading.

Therefore, while I am sympathetic to the main historical arguments of the book, I would have appreciated a more balanced approach to the issues, with a more generous explanation for and discussion of those dominant views of Princeton that Helseth is determined to overturn. He spends considerable time defending the Princetonians against what he deems to be the many false charges against them. What he does not do is assess for himself any weaknesses in the Old Princeton theology. One is left with the impression that if only we all understood the Princetonians aright, then we would find a theology that we might all embrace without fault. The problem with the Princetonians in this area, especially Hodge and Warfield, is that while they make many statements that strongly support a more subjective and integrated head/heart religion, they also

both make other statements that might make one question how committed they are to such an integration, or at least wonder if they fail to be consistent in applying what they claim to believe. Hodge's introduction to his *Systematic Theology* is a prime example (though certainly not the only one) of this. Just where in his *magnum opus* and crowning achievement one would expect to find a balanced statement, one finds instead a stress on "just the facts" that would make an old TV detective proud. If there is a competing interpretation among scholarship for the Princetonians, it is because they have left themselves open to such a reading.

These criticisms should not leave one with the impression that this is not a valuable work. Although his book to my view overstates the case, I agree with most of Helseth's historical concerns regarding the Princetonians—especially in his expanding of their notion of reason to include moral and affectional aspects. He rightly criticizes a dismissive and overly rationalistic reading of the Princetonians. Certainly the book is required reading for anyone desiring to place Old Princeton outside of Reformed epistemology. Whatever ambiguities exist in Old Princeton, Helseth is correct in arguing for their central place in American Reformed thought. Furthermore, the book's emphasis on the role of the Holy Spirit and the role of regeneration for "right reason" is invaluable for a proper understanding of these figures. And the sheer mass of quotations and footnotes that Helseth brings are an education on Princeton in and of itself. Helseth offers extensive footnotes with references to a plethora of writings that touch on any given subject under consideration. An extensive bibliography and index add to the usefulness of the volume. Anyone with a serious interest in Old Princeton, the place of Scottish common sense realism in the nineteenth century, American Reformed thought, or the relation of nineteenth-century evangelicalism to its contemporary forms will want to read this book. It will also attract those interested in contemporary evangelical debates over foundationalism and the role of doctrine, although I fear that it will do more to fan the flames between respective parties than to provoke healthy dialogue.

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Jesus Christ and the Life of the Mind. By Mark A. Noll. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011, xii+ 180 pp., \$25.00.

Over twenty five years have passed since Mark Noll's indictment of the evangelical mind (*The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, Eerdmans, 1994). In his sequel, *Jesus Christ and the Life of the Mind*, Noll's purpose is more constructive than critical, and the prospect for a genuine renaissance in Christian thought is seen as more hopeful than bleak. Noll's thesis is straightforward: the reality of Jesus Christ is foundational to the "rationale, means, methods, paradigms, and telos" (pp. 148–49) of the Christian scholarly enterprise.

The book is divided into two parts. In chapters 1–3, Noll develops a Christ-centered framework for learning. In chapters 4–7, he applies this Christological framework to academic disciplines in general (chap. 4) and then specifically to history, science, and biblical studies (chaps. 5–7, respectively). Noll concludes with a postscript offering an updated and hopeful assessment of the evangelical mind today. A nice resource for those interested in Christian learning is Noll's bibliography of works published on the topic since his 1994 book. His prose, as always, is lucid and erudite, and the book, at 180 pages, should read quickly for the scholar and layperson alike.

"How is it possible," Noll asks in chapter 1, "to pursue goals defined by lofty phrases like 'first-rate Christian scholarship' or 'the Christian use of the mind'" (p. 22)? The answer, he says, "must come from considering Christ" (ibid.). And the Christian understanding of Christ is best found and summarized in the great creeds of the faith—the Apostolic, Nicean, and Chalcedonian proclamations of the divinity and humanity of Christ and his salvific work on the cross. Hence, the creeds about Christ are foundational to Christian scholarship: Christ is the source and *telos* of all things, including all truths that can be discovered.

In chapter 2, Noll provides seven motives for serious learning grounded in the person and work of Christ: because he is *Creator* and *Sustainer* of all things, (1) all study is study of what God has made and in principle this ought to lead us to Christ; because he is *Redeemer*, (2) study is justified in light of the priority of (together with God) meeting human needs; because he is *Sovereign*, (3) Christians can have confidence that God is attached (however difficult the connections) to anything they might study; because he is *Incarnate Lord*, the material realm in which God revealed himself most fully (4) is infused with an unusual dignity that invites investigation, (5) inspires delight, (6) dignifies the human study of personality, and (7) grounds our search for beauty in the reality of Christ.

In chapter 3, Noll provides four concrete principles detailing how scholarship might proceed along distinctly Christian lines. The first is what he calls *doubleness*: "the doubleness of Christ as divine and human, which undergirds the whole edifice of Christian life and thought, is a model for studying the spheres of existence;" thus, Christian scholars "should be predisposed to seek knowledge about particular matters from more than one angle" (p. 46). The second principle, called "contingency," arises from the surface implausibility of an incarnate deity and the reality that human salvation arose from such an incarnation. Culling from episodes within the Gospels, Noll shows that to all forms of unbelief, the response of Christ was always the same: come and see. Because of the reality of contingency, as scholars, we must "seek out as much evidence as possible about whatever we are studying" (p. 50) and allow "the evidence of experience [to] guide thinking" (p. 51). Regarding the third principle, particularity, Noll argues that because "God used the particular means of the incarnation to accomplish a universal redemption" (p. 58), Christianity offers mediation between "the perspectival and the universal" (p. 55). Thus, Christian scholars can calmly navigate through the modern/postmodern debate endorsing, on the one hand, universal truth, and on the other hand, a kind of perspectivalism that validates the reality that individual scholars each have a unique cognitive access point to the data set (of an academic discipline). Finally, the fourth principle is self-denial: Christological considerations provide an antidote to the moral diseases common to the intellectual life, namely, self-sufficiency and self-exaltation. "Knowing Christ," says Noll, "means learning humility" (p. 62). The genius of Noll's concrete suggestions is hardly in the articulation of the principles themselves—surely many scholars, Christian or otherwise, intuitively employ these principles as they go about their intellectual tasks. The genius, rather, is in showing how a distinctively Christian view of reality can ground these guiding principles, inspire confidence in the process of discovery for scholars, and avoid a kind of blind dogmatism derived from (justified or unjustified) philosophical or theological convictions. And the fourth principle, self-denial, is absolutely essential for Christian scholars as they navigate through the modern academy and its impulse toward hubris, self-advancement, and competition.

In chapter 4, Noll focuses on the doctrine of the atonement with the stated goal of asking "a theological principle to serve as a compass" (p. 65). He ably expounds the doctrine of the atonement and makes many valid connections between the atonement and various academic disciplines. A key insight I would like to see him press into

service is the idea of a “strong narrative movement” within the doctrine of the atonement: “the drama of salvation . . . must be narrated” (p. 69); thus, “scholarship about humanity must in some form reflect the narrative of God’s saving work in Christ” (p. 71). I think Noll is correct, of course, but the narrative movement is wider in scope, as he himself acknowledges—Creation-Fall-Redemption-Restoration—and it seems that it is this grand narrative, and not just the atonement, that *all* Christian scholarship must in some form reflect. I wonder if a foundation based on the metanarrative of Scripture, rather than the great Christological creeds, might better serve Christian scholars and the task of learning. Such a foundation reveals the missionary impulse of God most clearly and, by my lights, could have helped Noll surface a key Christological insight that he seemed to miss (or under appreciate), to be discussed below.

Chapter 5 applies the Christological framework to the nature of historical knowledge (where a “chastened realism” is advocated, p. 84) and the knotty issue of how to understand divine providence in historical writing (where one’s Christian convictions regarding divine providence can be legitimately explicit or implicit depending on the purpose and audience of the work). In Chapter 6, Noll shows how a Christological framework can shed light on the relationship between science and religion and, notably, how an appeal to “doubleness” and “contingency” provides a way to harmonize evolutionary theory with a high view of Scripture. In chapter 7, we are encouraged to realize afresh how important the Christ-centered message of Scripture is for understanding the Bible as a whole.

One potential worry I have after reading the second part of the book: Noll does not seem to be consistently aware of the fact that *all* scholarship is shaped and informed by the dominant norms, practices, and faith presuppositions within each academic discipline. He seems most aware of this in chapter 7, where he approvingly cites Peter Enns’s work, *Inspiration and Incarnation: Evangelicals and the Problem of the Old Testament* (Baker, 2005) and takes up Enns’s charge that modernism and its core assumptions guide contemporary biblical scholarship instead of principles taken from Scripture itself. On the other hand, in chapter 6, Noll seems unaware of the same modernist assumptions that guide much of contemporary science, including science conducted by Christians, in his (seemingly) quick and easy acceptance of “the full picture of human evolution now standard in many scientific disciplines” (p. 124). It could be the case, as Noll rightly points out, that this standard evolutionary story is correct. But it could also be the case that the methods employed in arriving at this standard evolutionary story are guided more by modernist assumptions than biblical principles, a possibility that Noll does not consider.

My main complaint with Noll’s masterful work is that he has not gone far enough in applying his Christological framework to the task of learning. Specifically, he does not consider how Christ’s mission informs the Christian scholarly task. If Christ is the “Christ of the Academic Road” (p. 22) as Noll states, where is this road headed? To what end the Christian scholarly enterprise? It seems to me that Christ’s mission—namely, to “seek and save the lost” (Luke 19:10)—ought to inform Christian scholarship just as much as the reality of Christ as Creator and Sustainer. As witnesses for Christ (Acts 1:8), our scholarship must always be conducted with the progress of the gospel uppermost in our minds. The work of Nicholas Wolterstorff and his key insight that Christian scholarship is justified in terms of justice-in-shalom is helpful on this point. I suggest that a Christological framework to scholarship, when considering Christ’s mission and the great mission of God as articulated from Genesis 12–Revelation 20, necessitates a missional impulse to the Christian scholarly task as follows: as Christian scholars, we ought to engage in research with one eye toward transforming our academic discipline (where it needs transformation) and one eye toward the (spiritual and physical) needs of the world. In doing so Christian scholars will present a beautiful and brilliant Christ to the academy and world *and* be faithful witnesses. With this concern stated,

I highly recommend Noll’s *Jesus Christ and the Life of the Mind* as a must-read for all Christian scholars.

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Christology and Science. By F. LeRon Shults. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008, x + 171 pp., \$30.00 paper.

F. LeRon Shults attempts a mammoth project of interdisciplinary engagement. His goal, as in an earlier work, *Reforming the Doctrine of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), is to refashion traditional Christian theology by bringing contemporary science to speak to doctrinal questions. Shults takes Christological themes and make them dialogue partners with contemporary science. Specifically, he addresses incarnation, atonement, and parousia, and interacts with various conversation partners, namely, evolutionary biology, cultural anthropology, and physical cosmology. The influence, as the writer hopes, will be in both directions so that theology will speak to science just as much as science will speak to theology.

Shults anticipates objections from both quarters so he goes to lengths in allaying fears about the role each discipline will have in the interactive process. He does this by drawing an analogy from marriage and insists that the disciplines respect each other as lovers. In love one takes risks, and so will adherents of both disciplines; hence, there appear to be common desires from both realms. Shults portrays this in a table (p. 14):

Incarnation & Biology	Atonement & Anthropology	Parousia & Cosmology
Shared Interest: Knowing	Shared Interest: Acting	Shared Interest: Being
Epistemology & Noetic Desire	Ethics & Moral desire	Metaphysics & Aesthetic Desire
Identity of Jesus Christ	Agency of Jesus Christ	Presence of Jesus Christ

Shults acknowledges some limitations because of the specific choices he has made but asks for patience while claiming that these concepts (identity, agency, and presence) commend themselves to the task of integration.

He proceeds in each subsequent chapter to deal with each of these particular ideas. His method is simple, in a sense. Turns in late modern philosophy, Shults argues, have created new conceptual space where the disciplines of theology and science do their work or operate. It is in the “shared space” that the commonalities of desire evince themselves in the specified realm of investigation and find potential enrichment and modification from the other discipline.

First, *knowing* is addressed as the epistemological starting point for both disciplines: both disciplines want to know. Three matters come under discussion: (1) sameness and difference; (2) body and soul; and (3) origin and goal. Shults claims, “Exploring these philosophical factors is a first step towards articulating the intuitions of the biblical tradition in a way that allows a liberal dose of scientific insight into their formulation, precisely in order to conserve their transformative power in our contemporary context” (p. 24). Here he addresses the question of Christ’s identity. A survey of patristic theology is utilized to show how fixed static categories shaped the endeavor; thus, he questions the “achievement” of Chalcedon. “Sameness” was the watchword during these early debates and formulations, but in late modern philosophy, claims Shults, “difference” has made a comeback. Specifically, Darwin’s evolutionary theory challenged the idea of human nature’s substantive sameness (p. 29).

Next, Shults moves to the question of body and soul. Again, he questions the ancient approaches that he believes have wreaked havoc on the theological attempts to understand the identity of Jesus Christ. Contemporary notions of holistic anthropology where mind is reduced to brain activity avoid perceived problems inherent the ancient methods, especially as this dualistic anthropology was projected back onto God. This is to be overcome.

Finally, Shults takes up the matter of origin and goal. Both evolution and theology share interest in humanity's emergence and destination. He explains that traditional conceptions of the incarnational theology need to be jettisoned as recent findings in paleobiology and contemporary genetics, in particular, render the biblical accounts of a literal Adam and Eve and a historical fall into sin as impossible.

Shults evidences a wide reading background as varied examples are brought to bear on the discussion. Exemplary proposals that merit attention are used to bolster the need for theological change. So on the incarnation we read of Arthur Peacocke, molecular biologist, who has critiqued the traditional notion of the virgin birth. Also, Denis Edwards, who uses evolution and relies on Karl Rahner, is hailed as an example. He believes that the process of divine grace bestowed in an abundant way in Jesus the man is still God himself acting.

In carefully scrutinizing these suggestions for how to understand Christ, one gets the impression that in Shults's project, science has trumped Scripture and in the end the theological proposals are only able to produce earthly constructs. Contemporary science will falter in addressing the metaphysical assumptions of NT Christology. To me, these proposals seem a far cry from Paul's claim that God was manifested in the flesh. Moreover, the Bible has more than just intuitions that may be molded in any way pertinent to the individual interpreter. Viewing Scripture as merely providing intuitions is a serious flaw in this entire project and as such the work undermines the meaning of the NT text concerning Jesus (for a similar critique of other contemporary Christologies, see Paul Molnar, *Incarnation and Resurrection: Toward a Contemporary Understanding* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007] 311–29).

The question as to whether Shults has successfully integrated science and theology in this endeavor needs to be answered with a yes and a no. First, he shows viable ways of making theological statements that are amenable to the twenty-first century scientific mindset with its naturalistic and uniformitarian assumptions. He expresses hope that using tools of contemporary science as a method for Christology can interpret biblical intuitions, and that these may yield welcome insights on Jesus. In this regard Shults's larger theological project will, I suspect, be seen as a major endeavor and a very welcome work. His text joins the plethora of proposals filling academic journals and bookstores with Jesus studies and Christologies that have recently been produced. These resulting theologies of Christ, however, are just that: contemporary versions of academic theology that are all too certain of the assured results of critical theory and the superiority of the modern. Consequently, they end up undermining the portrait of Christ presented in the NT. They resemble the attempts of the historical Jesus scholarship of the past where all too often Jesus was largely a reflection of the investigator himself clad in semi-biblical dress.

Also, the question concerning the success of Shults's integrative scheme must be rephrased. Is his work likely to result in a truly biblical Christology? I believe this is where the particular problem of Shults's work suffers most. The resulting Christ that will be the inevitable result of engagement and dialog with evolutionary biology, for example, will not approximate the reality of God the Son portrayed in the NT and in the creeds of early Christendom. For a more helpful approach to achieve the goal Shults seeks, see C. John Collins, *Science & Faith: Friends or Foes* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2003). The anemic Arian-like products that contemporary science can produce will not satisfy

those of us who take the Chalcedon definition not as a metaphysical alteration of Jesus with the use of philosophical apparatus and sophistication, but as a serious understanding of the intent of the New Testament (see Donald Gelpi, *Encountering Jesus Christ: Rethinking Christological Faith and Commitment* [Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2009] 11–51, where among other concerns Gelpi reveals the Arianizing of contemporary Christology). So, will the anticipated Christologies of Shults's methodological integration succeed in passing biblical muster? The answer, sadly, is no, they will not.

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To Change the World: The Irony, Tragedy, and Possibility of Christianity in the Late Modern World. By James Davison Hunter. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010, ix + 358 pp., \$27.95.

How should the church corporately and the individual Christian seek God's kingdom and engage the late modern world? James Davison Hunter, professor of religion, culture, and social theory at the University of Virginia and director of the Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture, provides his answer in *To Change the World*. Having addressed similar matters in *Culture Wars* and *The Death of Character*, Hunter clarifies through three related essays why the church, largely in exile, must practice "faithful presence" instead of Christianized forms of the Nietzschean ideology of power. He argues that the three most prevalent political theologies among American Christians are essentially in harmony with the will to power. In contrast, he advocates fidelity to covenantal obligations that seeks "to integrate the very order of the heavens within" the totality of life that creates relationships and institutions that are not just for Christians but everyone.

In Essay I: "Christianity and World-Changing," Hunter surveys the most popular views of both the culture and strategies for changing it. The creation mandate obliges Christians to "engage the world, pursuing God's restorative purposes over all of life, individual and corporate, public and private" (p. 4). The legacy of Christians regarding the mandate is ambivalent, and reveals that erroneous social science and suspect theology produce strategies that do not and cannot work. The worldview approach is the reigning view of culture and how to change it. It is practiced by Protestants and Roman Catholics, and popularized by Colson, Pearcey, and Dobson through an emphasis on changing people's thinking, and rallying them to act. He finds this approach "almost wholly mistaken" (p. 17). Despite nearly ninety percent of Americans holding a conscious faith commitment, the public culture is profoundly secular, while the Jewish and gay communities representing a small percentage of the total population exert a disproportionate influence. The issues of evolution and abortion demonstrate that the thoughts of the majority do not sway law and educational policy. Advocates of the worldview approach supposedly reject dualistic thinking, but still fall prey to it by failing to understand culture's institutional nature. Crouch's view that culture is constituted and changed by the things we make is also flawed, because it misconstrues the relationship between the cultural output of evangelicals and their "dramatic marginalization in American society" (p. 30).

Hunter expresses his view of culture and its change in a set of propositions summarized as follows. Culture is: (1) a system of truth claims and moral obligations; (2) a product of history; (3) intrinsically dialectical; (4) manufactured by institutions and the elites who lead them; (5) a resource and form of power, operating with a structure

of "center" and "periphery"; (6) generated within networks; (7) neither autonomous nor fully coherent; (8) changed from the top down typically by a network of overlapping elites and the institutions they lead that are outside the centermost positions of prestige; and (9) never changed without a fight.

He extends his argument through a general overview of church history. While acknowledging indebtedness to the secondary literature and noting the great complexity of the episodes he has chosen, he provides brief summaries of some of the general patterns that emerged in "important transitional moments" (p. 48). From the Constantinian hegemony the church's life is sketched through the conversion of the barbarians, the Carolingian renaissance, the Reformation, the awakenings, anti-slavery reform, and revivals. Such transitions are only rightly understood when various relationships marking a multitude of factors are discerned. For example, social, political, and economic factors that "were not exactly theological or spiritual in nature" aided the Reformation's success (p. 65). While sympathetic to the latter, he acknowledges some of the "stupefying contradiction and hypocrisy" of the Reformers as seen in Luther's anti-semitism and culpability in the Peasants' Revolt, along with Calvin's and Beza's guilt in the execution of Servetus and the "staggeringly oppressive" Genevan Consistory's "theocratic rule" (p. 70).

He reviews the cultural economy of American Christianity that wields its influence most visibly in the political realm, and notes the disparity between the monetary resources of self-described evangelical charitable foundations and the largest independent ones. Evangelical scholars are marginalized from the larger intellectual culture and within evangelicalism itself, because of the "community's long-standing tradition of anti-intellectualism" (p. 86). Because of their almost exclusive concern for internal needs and orientation toward the popular while operating at the margins of cultural production, evangelicals are not where they need to be to actually influence the culture. There is disarray in vision and leadership through disputes over titles and self-absorbed personalities, as well as accommodation to the spirit of the age in individualism, consumerism, and "therapeutic and managerial ideologies" (p. 92). Homeschooling and Alpha are "defensive actions" that seek "to create a protracted area free from the compromising effects of the larger world" (p. 92).

While the creation mandate leads "to a transformative engagement with the culture" that is not morally "neutral in character" (p. 94), it is not best identified as an attempt to change the world or win a culture war, but to have a "faithful presence" by bearing witness to the coming of God's kingdom, and embodying it. The first essay therefore reveals the lines through which Hunter assists the reader in his second discussion.

In Essay II: "Rethinking Power," Hunter asserts that the Christian's goal should not be to gain and hold power. This contrasts with the basic American Nietzschean approach to power through politics, and its putative moral neutrality. Coercion guided by "ressentiment" or "a narrative of injury" seeks revenge, domination, and condemnation of the culpable. Evangelicals are an ironic mirror image. Hunter notes three groups: the Christian Right tell of secularists taking over America and are used by the Republican party; the Christian Left are concerned for economic justice, demonstrate hostility toward the Christian Right, and are used by the Democrats; the neo-Anabaptists are separatists in retreat and renouncing any presence of God's work outside the church.

The politicizing of the church's public witness in harmony with power politics constitutes the illusion, irony, and tragedy. The illusion is that politics can only transcend power by relying upon a sphere independent of it; ironically the Christians most in position to emphasize this and engage the culture with it have politicized values, and thereby undermined their renewal; tragically, many Christians, churches, and denominations assist the disintegration of the culture they want to renew. Therefore, power must be

understood accurately. Hunter denies Nietzsche and Foucault's notion that power has ontology; thus, it cannot be the ground of social being. Power is a "facility" exercised in relation to others and the natural world (p. 179). The church and the world are not separated, and the creation mandate requires the use of power to "reflect God's intentions" (p. 183). The church's biblical exercise of power will require the disentangling of the church's life and identity from the life and identity of American society, as well as clearly distinguishing between the public and political. Jesus' wielding power that spurned status, reputation, and the privilege accompanying them, and compassion for those in and outside the community of faith in a "non-coercive way" (p. 190), must be the model for Christians and institutional church.

Essay III: "Towards a New City Commons: Reflections on a Theology of Faithful Presence," is Hunter's prescription for what ails. A faithful presence is difficult to discern because America has become "the first hyperpower" and globalization is "Americanization writ large" (p. 197). With all of its many strengths and weaknesses, America is filled with contradictions. While the three dominant political theologies understand some of the truth regarding faithful presence, modifications are needed that address two problems endemic to the culture.

The issues of "difference" and "dissolution" require immediate attention (pp. 199–200). The former relates to how Christians think about and relate to those who are different from them and to a world that is not theirs. The latter addresses one's "most basic assumptions about reality," and in particular how the "modern world, by its very nature, questions if not negates the trust that connects human discourse and the 'reality' of the world" (p. 205). Dissolution is experienced not simply through the verbal declaration of post-modern philosophy but also through one's engagement with a pluralistic and technological culture that exacerbates the role of the human will in determining, rather than just discerning, reality and truth.

Hunter clarifies how each of the three political theologies reflects and reinforces the dualism inherent to the challenges of difference and dissolution. The Christian Right are "defensive against" the culture, angry about losing status in it, and create institutions acting as "a parallel universe to the secular world" (p. 214). In their unreflective and enthusiastic assimilation of technology, they foster the plausibility of the dissolution they should seek to overcome. The Christian Left attempt "relevance to" the culture but instead capitulate to it; difference and dissolution do not seem even to register as problems. The neo-Anabaptists embrace "purity from" the culture, powerlessness, and an "implicit elitism" that marks the culture as irredeemable and fosters isolation from it. While not discounting God's presence and activity in the faithful preaching of his word, the administration of the sacraments, and faithful obedience to Scripture, Christians need leadership that "comprehends the nature of these challenges and offers a vision of formation" that addresses all aspects of life (p. 226).

Faithfulness means an "inevitable," "irresolvable," and "finally unsatisfying" tension with the unbelieving world, because it requires "a dialect of affirmation and antithesis" (pp. 230–31). The concept of common grace that "emanates from" God illumines this dialectic. Affirmation means culture-making is neither neutral nor salvific. Emphasizing presence and place to overcome difference and dissolution underlines the incarnation: "The way the Word became incarnate in Jesus Christ and the purpose to which the incarnation was directed" guides us in understanding faithful presence (p. 241). God's word becoming flesh in us, embodied by us, or "enacted through us" overcomes dissolution, because trust is developed "between the word spoken and the reality to which it speaks" (p. 241). God's pursuit of us, identifying with us, and offer of life through sacrificial love are to be demonstrated by his people in their presence to both those in and outside the church, in their work, and in areas of social influence in families and

neighborhoods. The narrow spiritual purposes to which the three political theologies work obviate this approach.

Leadership is an exercising of influence, possessed by all to some degree, and dependent on trust between leaders and those to whom the latter are accountable. Categorizing some as "leaders" and others as "followers" is a denial of reality and thereby useless. The Great Commission requires vocational, not merely geographical, infiltration of the gospel. The diverse demonstrations of vitality in life govern our measurement of success in using the influence we possess. Because of the implications of conquest, Christians must quit speaking of "'redeeming,' 'reforming,' or 'reclaiming' the culture, or 'advancing,' and 'building the kingdom' (p. 280): 'America was never, in any theologically serious way, a Christian nation' (p. 280). We are now a post-Christian culture in which the church is in exile. The schisms that have divided the church—East from West, and Protestants from Catholics—are matters on the periphery of the faith, not determining the faith's definition, and "functionally irrelevant" (p. 281). Thus, we need "unity around the core beliefs and practices of the Christian faith" in order to make disciples, not out of the intent to change the world, but to honor God.

Hunter's book should be read by undergraduates, seminarians, and pastors, although alongside Wells's works on American Evangelicalism, Carson's *Christ and Culture Revisited*, and Schlossberg's *Idols for Destruction*; I still finds these works unequaled. Hunter provides helpful insights regarding the nature of culture and the most prevalent ways of engaging it by confessing Christians in America. He is best when describing culture and our engagements with it. Biblical and theological scholars will probably be dissatisfied with his full analysis, however, because of faulty argumentation and questionable historical and theological judgments that lead to a deficient, if not incoherent, prescription.

While accurately identifying the three political theologies as Nietzschean, and providing rather devastating critiques of them, Hunter similarly roots his own prescription in particular theological beliefs while agreeing that law infers a moral judgment, that policy implies a worldview, and that the state cannot and should not be morally neutral. One then wonders how certain political, economic, and social factors affecting the success of the Reformation were not exactly theological or spiritual in nature, especially in light of Hunter's ultimate prescription that Christians are "to integrate the very order of the heavens within" the *totality* of life. It appears that some aspects of life are not theological in nature, yet the duty of Christians before God pertains to all of life. If there is a dependency of the political sphere on a realm that is in some sense independent of it, then one needs clarification regarding the nature of that dependency and an analysis that is consistent with it. Moreover, in the face of attempting to alter people's thinking on culture and how culture changes, it is not clear how Hunter avoids the worldview-changing approach that he denounces. It is also not clear how he can identify our culture as *post* Christian when he claims that it is dubious to identify it as *ever having been* Christian. One also questions whether Hunter accurately discerns the marginalization of evangelicals in general or laments the marginalization of a particular group of them. Furthermore, is it Christians that integrate the heavenly order within the totality of life, or has God already done this and called us to discern and live harmoniously with the existing integration?

Though qualifying his work in church history as inevitably limited because of the vast complexities of the subject and the scope of his own scholarly work, Hunter nonetheless renders historical and theological judgments that are too easily questioned based on the historical record. Some will likely regard the criticisms of Calvin and Beza as a clear example of failing to understand virtually any of the complexities of their situations, if not evaluating them by a template that fails in important ways to be bibli-

cal. The idea that the divide between Protestants and Roman Catholics is functionally irrelevant because the theological disputes that brought division between them are at “the margins of faith,” raises a bevy of questions regarding what innumerable theological scholars thought they were doing for centuries, and why so many have thought that polemicizing for their side is a matter of life and death. Moreover, that something “emanates” from God is perhaps a window into Hunter’s lack of theological precision. Such weaknesses, though, do not completely obscure some otherwise helpful insights regarding culture and how Christians individually, and the church institutionally, can best engage it.

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