

BOOK REVIEWS

A Reader of Ancient Near Eastern Texts: Sources for the Study of the Old Testament. By Michael D. Coogan. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013, xiv + 214 pp., \$29.95 paper.

Michael Coogan has provided an excellent service to students of the literary, social, and commercial environments that both precede and accompany the compilation of the OT. His anthology includes a fairly comprehensive list of primarily extrabiblical texts recently discovered among the archeological finds of ANE societies extant from the third until the mid first millennium BC. He collates his own translations with the works of several other translators of nearly a dozen or more ANE scripts. He then organizes them according to period, genre, subject matter, region, and language. While generally allowing the texts to speak for themselves, he prefaces many of the entries with a brief synopsis of their content and background.

Many of the myths and epics, whether of Ugaritic, Hittite, Egyptian, Akkadian, or Sumerian origins (e.g. the Enuma Elish and Gilgamesh epics), are drawn from the pre-Abraham era (i.e. the third millennium BC) and depict parallel creation and deluge accounts. While including alternate and highly embellished versions of almost all of the biblical narrative, they also add, in many cases, fascinating details. The vivid and terrifying descriptions of the all-enveloping and piercing blackness augmenting the burying shroud of storm clouds, the howling winds, and the persistently pounding downpour that ultimately swept away and extinguished every breath of life evokes emotions far more raw than the Noahic version. That these narratives were rationalized with polytheistic interpretations does not negate the factual possibility of some of their added incidentals. While even supporting a mythical rendition of the fall (p. 44), where the hope of attaining immortality through good works once existed, they fail, however, to acknowledge any sinful human culpability therein, for its loss.

The historiographic sources complement and affirm the accuracy of many of the biblical accounts, not only of numerous kings of Israel, Judah, and their surrounding nations, but also of many other officials and individuals (e.g. Shebna the scribe of 2 Kings 18, pp. 80–81). Coogan makes a fair effort at referencing parallel biblical citations in his footnotes. An index of biblical references with those citations is also provided. Of even potentially greater benefit would be a comprehensive index that included all of the biblical names and locations that were mentioned or alluded to within each of those citations. While a few may appear to be merely coincidental parallels (e.g. the comparison of a flattering letter to King Ashurbanipal [c. 640 BC] with Psalm 72 [p. 119]), others are clear corroborations of the biblical testimony (e.g. the stela unearthed at Tel Dan in 1994). The Tel Dan inscription contains the first known extrabiblical mention of King David. The author of that stela boasts responsibility for the deaths of both Joram, son of Ahab, king of Israel, and Ahaziah, son of Joram of the house of David. Second Kings 9 gives credit for

both assassinations to Jehu. However, other assertions made by this author indicate he is an Aramean king and most likely Hazael (c. 830 BC).

Another find of considerable note discovered in 1979 referenced (p. 158) were the two silver amulets from a tomb in Jerusalem having most of the Aaronic blessing (Num 6:24–26) inscribed in Hebrew and dated to the seventh century BC, making them the oldest extant biblical text found to date.

It can be challenging to find among so many of these sources every allusion that is tied to the biblical testimony. A thorough search will likely uncover many more than those listed in Coogan's index alone. In the letters found on shards at El Amarna from numerous kings and vassals to the Egyptian pharaoh of the Akhenaton dynasty who ruled during the 14th century BC, there are several requests for military assistance against the invading armies of the "Apiru" throughout the region of Palestine (p. 117). Coogan suggests, without providing the supporting evidence, that these do not refer to Israel but to some elements living on the fringes of society. But it seems utterly impossible that there could have been in existence such a heretofore completely unrecognized (in modern society) group of people, but which did have such a universal recognition at that time. The word "Apiru" is clearly an ancient vocalization of the very same word used in the Bible for the people group it describes as the "Hebrews." This has overwhelming biblical support (e.g. Gen 10:21; 43:32). This means that these documents offer undeniable evidence establishing the veracity of the early timing and the accuracy of the biblical accounts of the exodus of Israel from Egypt, their itinerant wanderings, and the manner of their initial entrance into, and conquests of, their present homeland.

Parallels of the Deuteronomic laws among the Mesopotamian and Hittite legal texts (pp. 87–92) precede the Mosaic version by a few centuries dating to the 1700s BC, and indicate that the gentile rulers of that period were not without moral scruples comparable in many instances to those laid down in the Torah, as Paul later describes (Rom 2:15). The genre of the early (fourteenth century BC) Hittite and Ugaritic treaties (pp. 90–100) also provides a clear format style from which the Mosaic covenant could be understood. The prolific use of this genre at that time also validates the early date for the inscription of the Torah.

Other genre included were prayers, hymns, laments, rituals, burial texts, prophetic texts, poetry, romantic, and wisdom literature. Many more biblical parallels can be found among these, which when taken together portray individuals, families, communities, and societies that were, as a whole, very religious, but who also are not unlike ourselves in many ways. The ability to relate to those living then is multiplied through these documents as is our understanding of the OT.

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The Textual World of the Bible. By Michael B. Shepherd. New York: Peter Lang, 2013, 130 pp., \$70.95.

“The Bible is the real world.” With this provocative claim, Michael Shepherd begins this volume. Shepherd understands biblical theology to be the “theology of the Bible and its representation of reality” (p. 1). The biblical authors are “in the business of world making,” Shepherd argues, and “they insist that theirs is the only real world” (p. 1). Shepherd’s aim in this work, then, is to grapple with the way in which the biblical authors themselves grapple with other “biblical authors’ representation of reality” (p. 1).

One of Shepherd’s primary contentions is that the theological freight of the Bible is a feature of the texts themselves. In this regard, “an explanation of the composition of the text in its present shape is at the same time an explanation of the Bible’s theology” (p. 1). Considering biblical theology to be “exegesis done faithfully” (p. 2), Shepherd seeks to uncover the compositional strategies the biblical authors use to communicate their theological message. To this end, Shepherd selects intertextually rich passages that include “biblical-theological summaries” of previous biblical narrative.

The structure of his book follows the canonical location of the texts he exposit. Shepherd identifies biblical-theological summaries from the Law (Deut 6:20–25; 11:1–17; 26:5–9), the Prophets (Josh 24:1–15; Judg 2:1–5; 6:7–10; 10:11–16; 1 Sam 12:6–17; Jer 2:1–13; Ezekiel 20; Amos 2:6–3:2; Mic 6:1–8), the Writings (Ps 78; Pss 105–106; Pss 135–36; Nehemiah 9), and the NT (Acts 7; 13:13–41; Hebrews 11). Though these passages have often been understood in terms of tradition history or “salvation history” (*Heilsgeschichte*), Shepherd argues that these texts present themselves as exegetical in nature.

In his succinct interaction with these strategically chosen passages, Shepherd highlights each author’s own highlighting of key events and texts in Israel’s past. The biblical writers, he argues, proclaim the Word of God by composing interpretive portrayals of significant events that have already been interpreted by previous biblical authors. For instance, Shepherd observes that when the prophets rehearse Israel’s history, they typically recount God’s faithfulness in the exodus and also the people’s unfaithfulness following the giving of the Law at Sinai (e.g. pp. 26–27). For Shepherd, this accords with the Pentateuch’s own interpretive commentary on these events. In this sense, the prophets and poets of Israel are providing an “exegesis of an exegesis” (see, e.g., pp. 1–2, 16–17, 28).

Shepherd argues that this textual feature is crucial because these strategic passages help shape the larger context of the biblical canon. In this way, the biblical *writers* provide guidance for biblical *readers* in understanding the nature and significance of the overarching storyline of the biblical *narratives*. This theological and text-immanent context, in turn, functions as “the framework of the real world into which the reader must fit” (p. 2). The specific shape of the biblical canon is therefore enduringly relevant to the life of readers seeking to affirm the authority of God’s word and submit to its claims on their lives (see pp. 87–94).

One strength of this volume is Shepherd's laser focus on the particular textual pattern of subsequent texts summarizing and interpreting previous biblical narrative. Shepherd's first chapter provides a helpful overview of the way images of specific events (e.g. creation, flood, exodus, exile) are interpreted and portrayed by the biblical authors in order to describe the past, present, and future of Israel and the nations. The biblical authors, in this sense, set their understanding of the world within the framework generated by the biblical narratives. More specifically, they represent reality through "a pattern of figuration based on the sequence of events narrated in Genesis-Kings" (p. 1). This feature, Shepherd posits, is "what makes the very fabric of biblical historiography and prophecy" (p. 5). Shepherd's work thus furthers the hermeneutical discussion regarding the nature of biblical narrative in general and the interpretive value of these intertextually rich biblical-theological summaries in particular.

This focus, though, also means that the volume is highly selective. For example, Shepherd's discussion of the NT is unfortunately abbreviated. In a volume that highlights the manner in which subsequent authors make use of the "textual world" generated by the narratives of the OT, the brevity of Shepherd's discussion of the Gospel narratives is disappointing. He notes that the Gospels are like "theologies of the Hebrew Bible in narrative form" (p. 83) but does not expand on this promising notion. Further, in the chapter on the NT, Shepherd devotes only four pages (pp. 83–86) to exposition of Acts 7, Acts 13:13–41, and Hebrews 11 (Paul's letters and Revelation are only mentioned in passing). Consequently, a more accurate title might be "The Textual World of the Hebrew Bible." In this vein, Shepherd's systematic reflections and "practical implications" (pp. 87–94) are insightful but take up more than half of the last chapter and would function better as a conclusion following an expanded section on the NT. Readers convinced of Shepherd's overall approach to the narratives of the OT will miss further development of these NT passages.

An important feature of Shepherd's end game in this volume is the training of "more textually-oriented church members" (p. 88) who recognize the hermeneutically rich terrain of the biblical narratives and read with eyes adjusted to this textual topography. Shepherd has clearly not mapped the bulk of the Bible's textual world, but he has successfully opened up a number of promising paths into this area of study that sojourners seeking to inhabit this world will heartily welcome.

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Invitation to Biblical Interpretation: Exploring the Hermeneutical Triad of History, Literature, and Theology. By Andreas J. Köstenberger and Richard D. Patterson. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2011, 891 pp., \$46.99.

We biblical scholars are fond of using geometric shapes to describe the process of interpreting the Bible. For example, we use the term "hermeneutical circle" to describe the paradoxical reality that when reading a text we must both under-

stand the smallest units in light of the entire text and understand the entire text in light of the smaller units. Almost twenty-five years ago in *The Hermeneutical Spiral* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1991), Grant Osborne likened the interpretation of the Bible unto another geometric shape, a spiral, in order to describe how an interpreter moves from text to context. Now, Andreas J. Köstenberger and Richard D. Patterson have collaborated to produce a very helpful hermeneutics text that describes the interpretive process as a triad.

Köstenberger and Patterson argue that in order to interpret a biblical text faithfully, one needs to interpret it according to a hermeneutical triad, “which consists of history, literature, and theology” (p. 23). The dominant geometric image used by the authors to explain the hermeneutical triad is, not surprisingly, a triangle. At each angle of the triangle stands one of the three elements of the triad. Proper interpretation of a given passage begins with exploring its historical-cultural background, followed by analyzing it as literature, and concluding with identifying its contribution to biblical theology.

What makes this text unique is its breadth and depth. At 891 pages, *Invitation to Biblical Interpretation* draws together into one massive text extremely helpful resources meant to guide the motivated interpreter through the three essential elements of the hermeneutical triad. Some texts whose subject is also biblical interpretation, like *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* by Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart, essentially jump right into the literature aspect of the triad without exploring with depth either the historical aspect or the biblical theological aspect. Similarly, the very popular 1990s Guides to New Testament Exegesis series, edited by Scot McKnight (which included texts like Thomas R. Schreiner’s *Interpreting the Pauline Epistles* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990]), while helpful at exploring the unique aspects of the various genres that make up the NT (i.e. the “literature” aspect of the hermeneutical triad) did not probe with depth either the historical or the biblical theological aspects of each genre.

As Köstenberger and Patterson indicate, texts like *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* and the series edited by McKnight “essentially jump right into interpreting the different genres of Scripture” at the expense of the other two aspects of the hermeneutical triad (p. 26). On the other hand, texts such as *The Ways of Our God: An Approach to Biblical Theology* by Charles H. H. Scobie jump right into the exploration of biblical theological themes, at the expense of dealing with the historical or literature aspects of the triad. While Fee and Stuart’s book, McKnight’s series, and Scobie’s book are helpful for their own intended audiences and purposes, Köstenberger and Patterson’s book is intended as a seminary-level, sophisticated but accessible, “how to” text that provides resources for the student who wants to move from text to sermon, all the while exploring the three aspects of the hermeneutical triad.

After an introductory chapter that defines and explains each of the three aspects of the hermeneutical triad and their relationship to each other in the interpretive process, Part 1 of the text explores the first aspect, namely history. Here, the authors walk the reader through the historical-cultural background of the Scriptures by surveying the key chronological periods of redemptive history. Included in this

section is a summary of key extrabiblical resources that are helpful for exploring the historical setting of the Scriptures.

Part 2 of Köstenberger and Patterson's text, which dominates the book in terms of length (twelve chapters and 537 pages), explores the second aspect of the hermeneutical triad, namely literature. Part 2 is divided into three units, which explore the Scriptures as canon, the various genres found in the Bible, and the basics of language study. This part of the book is a treasure trove of practical helps that guide the interpreter through the process of understanding the text. Every major genre found in the Bible, whether OT, NT, or both, is explained and a step-by-step process is laid out for the interpreter to follow. In addition, a discussion of exegetical fallacies (reminiscent of D. A. Carson's classic text by that same name published by Baker in 1984) is included. Finally, this part of the book includes discussion and examples of Greek linguistic concepts that seminary students need to understand, such as discourse analysis, important syntactical features of Koine Greek (such as *asyndeton*, *anacoluthon*, and more), verbal aspect theory, and the like. Unfortunately, there is very little focus on Hebrew linguistic concepts in this part of the book.

Part 3 of the text demonstrates how one moves from the previous two aspects of the triad (history and literature) to distilling theological truths from one's engagement of the Scriptures (theology). Here the authors supply a helpful summary of the development of biblical theology as an academic discipline from J. P. Gabler onward, a survey of the different approaches to biblical theology, as well as a brief but helpful overview of the use of the OT in the NT.

A concluding chapter titled "Getting Down to Earth: Using Tools, Preaching and Applying the Word" walks the reader through the process of moving from interpreting the Scriptures by means of the hermeneutical triad to developing a winsome and clearly articulated sermon or Bible lesson. An appendix titled "Building a Biblical Studies Library" (pp. 809–32) suggests resources that pastor-scholars ought to add to their collections, plus a glossary of terms. A Scripture index and a subject index round out the book.

This text is structured well for a formal classroom setting. Each chapter ends with the following thoughtful pieces that could be easily integrated into a course syllabus: (1) a text box that lists the interpretive principles covered in that chapter; (2) a helpful bibliography for further reading; (3) a glossary of key words introduced in the chapter; (4) study questions that could be utilized by the instructor for quizzing; (5) structured assignments that could be given to students as a follow-up to reading the chapter; and (6) even a sample exegetical write-up that integrates concepts presented in that chapter. With little adaptation, this text could easily serve as the centerpiece of an entry-level seminary hermeneutics course for students who have one year of Greek under their belts.

In personal correspondence with Köstenberger, I was delighted to learn that this volume is in the process of being revised with undergraduate students as the intended audience.

The theological perspective of the text is covenantal. Chapter 3 explores covenant as a unifying theme for Scripture and the Exodus as a pattern of redemption. One other item to note in terms of theological perspective is that the discussion of

John's Revelation on the one hand tends toward a futurist perspective; on the other hand, it recognizes, as per the work of G. K. Beale, that the Apocalypse is laden with rich symbolism driven primarily by OT realities.

If there is any criticism of the book, it can be found in some minor editorial anomalies and spelling errors that could be corrected in subsequent editions. At the end of the day, *Invitation to Biblical Interpretation* is a wealth of helpful material that is an excellent guide for the budding, motivated interpreter of God's word.

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Jesus on Every Page: 10 Simple Ways to Seek and Find Christ in the Old Testament. By David Murray. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2013, 246 pp., \$16.99 paper.

David Murray served as a pastor in Scotland before moving to the United States to become Professor of Old Testament and Practical Theology at Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He has authored other books and also serves as president of a small Christian film company. His book *Jesus on Every Page* contains a Table of Contents, a Preface, Part 1 (chaps. 1–6), Part 2 (chaps. 7–16), a Postscript, Study Questions, Acknowledgements, Notes, a Scripture Index, and a Subject Index.

Murray first describes what he experienced as a typical, modern, apathetic, or negative perspective on the OT in Christian contexts, then offers suggestions about why this situation exists and how to remedy it (chap. 1). The short answer for the remedy is “to find and enjoy Jesus ... That alone makes Old Testament study profitable and enjoyable” (p. 8). He then describes some of his own personal journey that led him to the “first gospel key on the Emmaus road” (p. 13). Murray's view is that Jesus preached an extensive sermon, taking a “big text—Moses, *all* the Prophets, and *all* the Scriptures.... [with] two main points—His sufferings and His glory” (15). In short, Jesus was saying, “The Old Testament is all about me” (p. 18). Murray then proceeds to argue that the NT writers all reflect the same perspective: Peter (chap. 4), Paul (chap. 5), and John (chap. 6). In Part II, Murray demonstrated his method of “finding Jesus” in ten groupings of texts (the 10 simple ways), reflective of various subject areas and the basic literary genres.

On the one hand, Murray certainly is to be commended for his concern that Christians give the OT its rightful place of importance. Failure in that regard is commonplace among believers. In addition, Murray's recognition of, and stress on, the fact that the OT is about grace as is the NT, and that the Law was given by God as a positive blessing for the Hebrew people, is refreshing. Sadly, that perspective is also far from commonplace. And of course, Murray's driving passion to honor Jesus is unimpeachable in itself.

On the other hand, I cannot commend the method of reading and interpreting the OT that the author recommends. My reservations are based on the following concerns (among others):

(1) A questionable use of key terminology: even though the name Jesus is not used in the OT to refer to the person of God or Messiah, Murray “decided to use *Jesus* as much as possible” in the book. He did so because he saw the term *Christ* as “less personal—more of an official title or role” (p. 7), the overuse of which creates a disconnect between people and the OT (p. 8). Is it fair to ask, “So the way God (Murray would say, Jesus) intended it to be written is deficient?”

(2) An overly literalistic reading and interpretation of texts: This issue is most significant in Murray’s interpretation of the Emmaus road texts since it serves as the foundation for the whole book. Essentially, the idea is, since the Emmaus text means *x*, then the OT must be read *y*. A good example of how this perspective plays out in practical terms is Murray’s comment on the Hebrews 11 reference to Moses: “We are specifically told that he had saving faith in Jesus” (p. 32).

(3) The implication that approaches to the OT different from his own are to be associated with such things as liberalism, Christless moralism, Christless academia, etc. (p. 8).

(4) The implication that the God of the OT (the Father) apparently is either inaccessible or inactive (a “non player?”). For example, I note many statements suggesting that Jesus saved David, Samson, and pardoned Rahab, begging the question, “not God?” Apparently not, since Murray asserted that when people were converted in the OT, they turned to the Messiah, “not to God in general, but to Christ in particular” (p. 66), because “God was made audible or visible only through the Son of God” (pp. 75, 78; similarly pp. 56, 101, 145, 171–72).

(5) The assertion that one either believes that ancients were “saved” by believing in a future, suffering, dying, and resurrected Christ (Jesus) or they were “saved” by ritual works because “no one comes to the Father except through the Son” (John 14:6), the Law being read as legalistic dictums serving as the basis for a works-based experience of salvation (pp. 28–29, 34–35), and “old covenant believers [being viewed as] moralists, ritualists, and legalists” (pp. 66–67, similarly 144–45, 190–94).

(6) Although Murray stressed reading and interpreting OT texts in their original contexts and in terms of what they meant to the original hearers/readers, his actual method does not demonstrate consistently that position (cf. study of Joseph, pp. 60–61, 70, and Ruth, pp. 62–63). Perhaps the matter could be placed in the category of unintended consequences—if the texts don’t really have the most significant meaning until we get to Jesus, then why wait? Why not just get to it, or get to him? Logic suggests one can’t really have it both ways. If it’s all about Jesus, then it’s not about what *God* was doing with/or saying to ancient peoples, even though the texts actually state the latter.

In my reading of the book, I could not escape the impression of loss of focus on the grand story of *God’s* grace-full work with undeserving people, beginning with creation, developing through the ages, and culminating in the person and work of Jesus. As I see it, Murray’s approach undermines appreciation of the revelation of *God* in power, love, mercy, judgment, the awesome God of all time, place, and space who chooses to come into specific time and take on specific human place, and live in specific limited space to accomplish, in history, full and final redemption,

which has always been in effect and available in the person and character of *God* (cf. pp. 100–101).

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Genesis. By Cornelis Vonk. Translated by Theodore Plantinga and Nelson D. Kloosterman. *Opening the Scriptures*. Edited by Jordan J. Ballor and Stephen J. Grabill. Grand Rapids: Christian's Library, 2013, xxiii + 294 pp., \$19.95 paper.

The present English version of the original 1991 Dutch edition inaugurates the first volume in the *Opening the Scripture* series, whose intention is not to publish history or commentaries (p. xv). According to the back cover, its purpose is not to publish “technical commentaries” or “sermons,” but “primers” for the “average churchgoer.” The late Cornelis Vonk (1904–1993) was a reformed preacher, who pastored in the Netherlands for forty years and authored *Exodus* that appears in the same series, as well as *Living and Dying in Joy: A Devotional Guide to the Heidelberg Catechism*.

Chapters 1–2 acquaint the readers with how Christ and the apostles viewed the Hebrew Bible (pp. 7–13), integrate the Jewish and Christian Scriptures to form one Bible (pp. 17–18), describe the arrangement of books in the Septuagint and the Vulgate (pp. 18–20), and define “Torah” and “Pentateuch” (pp. 20–28). Vonk reveals his first weakness when he claims that the “central theme” or the “Torah’s center of gravity” is neither creation, nor the fall, nor the flood, but the “covenants” mentioned in Genesis 12–50, based on 2 Chron 34:30 (pp. 28–31). Thus, he diminishes the significance of the Genesis 1–11 passage that forms the foundation of several critical evangelical issues and doctrines (e.g. the Trinity, the six-day creation, the age of the earth, the fall, God’s institution of marriage, and the flood). Vonk contradicts himself later, when he claims that the sections in Genesis 5–50 “are not all as important as” the earlier ones (p. 155).

Chapter 3 devotes a long section to explaining the structure of Genesis as based on the transitional statements known as the *Toledoth* (pp. 50–57). Vonk questions the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch and does not use any sources published after 1946. Echoing many minimalists, Vonk dates the Pentateuch to the postexilic period (c. 539 BC), although he does not rule out the “possibility” that Moses may have written “some parts” of Genesis (p. 43). Despite maintaining that Genesis has multiple sources, Vonk does not discuss source criticism until chapter 5, which he rejects (p. 84). He claims Moses could not have written the entire Pentateuch, because of the references to Dan (Gen 14:14; Judg 18:29; Deut 34:1), the kings of Edom (Gen 35:11; 36:31), the burial place of Jacob (Gen 50:11), and the death of Moses (Deuteronomy 34; pp. 39–41). Strangely, he critiques C. F. Keil’s “out-of-date” 1867 commentary for defending the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, yet ignores modern conservative scholars similar to Keil, thus signifying another weakness (pp. 41–43).

Chapter 4 outlines the Babylonian creation story and the Epic of Gilgamesh (pp. 68–69), remarks on the usage and significance of several pertinent keywords in Gen 1:1, 1:2, and 1:3–2:3, e.g. chaos, *‘erets*, (“universe, land, earth”), *bara* “create,” *Elohim* “God,” *tehom* “flood,” *mayim* “water,” “day,” the name Yahweh (pp. 70–81), and *raqia* (p. 102). Vonk explains this technical vocabulary in simple terms.

Chapters 5–7 concentrate on the first, transitional *Toledoth* section (Gen 2:4–4:26). Vonk opines that Genesis 1:1–2:3 is an introduction and that 2:4 really begins the book of Genesis; therefore, the so-called “second creation account” does not comprise a double tradition. Incorporating NT passages into the discussion, Vonk features the creation of Eve, the temptation, the fall, and the story of Cain and Abel (pp. 83–154).

Chapters 8–11 pick up from where the above chapters left off and encompass notes on Genesis 5–50 (pp. 155–248). What is inconceivable here is how Vonk reads the entity of the “Church” in the book of Genesis. Disregarding the integrity of the text, he forces the church on the discussion and mixes it up with “Israel.” He characterizes Cain as an “unrepentant persecutor of the church” and Abel as representing the church (p. 156). He moves on to interpret the “sons of God,” as representing the godly descendants of Seth, and the “daughters of men,” the ungodly descendants of Cain (Gen 6:1–8). He interprets their “union” as ungodly marriages between Christians and non-Christians (pp. 156–58). He explains the anthropomorphic expressions in Genesis, the flood, and the table of nations (pp. 168–211), God’s “worldwide promise” (pp. 213–22), the Abrahamic covenant (pp. 223–39), and the life of the patriarchs (pp. 241–48).

Perhaps due to his forty-year pastoral ministry, Vonk possesses a strong skill of an informal homiletic style, employing the first and second personal pronouns, giving the reader the impression of listening to a speaker rather than reading a book. I believe Vonk’s strongest points are his ability to simplify everything, give illustrations, provide applications, and utilize several diagrams as he does to explain the table of nations (pp. 183–96).

On the other hand, one sometimes detects repetitions, irrelevant topics, and unnecessary explanations that sometimes make the reading tedious. One of the obvious weaknesses is that Vonk dedicates 154 pages to discussing Genesis 1:1–4:26, but less than a hundred pages for Genesis 5–50. He seems to target a specific audience, not the “average” churchgoer as the series promises, because of his frequent mention of the Reformed Church and Reformed scholars, as well as including questions and answers from the “Heidelberg Catechism” that is not familiar to many Christians. Although he reiterates that the Gentile church has been “grafted into” Israel, he does not seem to separate Israel from the church. He could have reached a wider audience had he authored a book on the text of Genesis to make sense of its contents for all churchgoers.

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Impeccable Solomon? A Study on Solomon's Faults in Chronicles. By Yong Ho Jeon. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2013, 314 pp., \$37.00 paper.

Two great histories in the Hebrew canon take the reader from Adam to the end of the kingdom of Judah. Genesis through Deuteronomy is constituted as a continuous narrative, though the *tôrāh*, including Deuteronomy, is foundational to all the rest of the canon. The Deuteronomistic History, as it is commonly designated, leads the reader from settlement in the land of Canaan to the exile. Chronicles is a sequel to that history, bringing the reader from Adam to all Israel in the late Persian period. Chronicles is a necessary second history, written to extend the Davidic hope to all Israel during the difficult days of the second temple. To that end, the accounts differ markedly in many ways, notably in the presentation of the reigns of the monarchs.

It is an almost universal consensus (*pace* Auld) that the second history makes considerable use of the first history as a resource for its composition. The Chronicler also makes reference to almost all the sources named in Kings (the reigns of Joram and Amon are exceptions), frequently associating them with prophets. It would seem that both the Deuteronomist and the Chronicler had access to an extensive prophetic account from which they selected and developed their respective histories. Both may be regarded as pursuing particular *Tendenç* in pursuit of their individual goals. The Deuteronomist has eulogized Josiah, attributing to him reforms and a glory of the kingdom that was subverted by Manasseh and led inevitably to exile. The Chronicler has eulogized David and Solomon, presenting a glory of the kingdom that models the hope that he holds out for his people.

King Solomon, in the words of Jeon, is generally regarded as impeccable in Chronicles. His contention is that this is an incorrect reading of Chronicles, which fails to take into account knowledge of Solomon in Kings. In the post-exilic period, the sins of Solomon serve as a paradigm example to warn the post-exilic community against inter-marriage with foreigners, as stated in Neh 13:26. If Solomon had come to be as famous for his sins as for his wisdom, it would be impossible for the Chronicler to pass off his reign as flawless.

Jeon believes the Chronicler is quite clear about Solomon's faults, though they may not be stated explicitly. The Chronicler must take into account his audience, namely that his readers are fully familiar with the negative account of Solomon in Kings; indeed, various allusions in Chronicles are made with the supposition that Solomon is a flawed king. Kings, for its own purposes, presents the reign of Solomon as a progression from his acceptance of divine wisdom (1 Kgs 3:4–14) to his complete abandonment of the mandate for a king according to the Deuteronomistic requirement (1 Kgs 11:1–40). Solomon therefore receives a particularly negative evaluation in Kings. Chronicles, in contrast, is interested in the promise of the kingdom that was represented in Solomon's kingdom. The Chronicler can affirm Solomon as chosen by God and dedicated to the support of temple worship. But according to Jeon, Solomon is not presented in Chronicles as having the support of all Israel. In discreet ways, the Chronicler allows that this was not the case.

Jeon contends that the Chronicler lays the blame for the division of the kingdom on Solomon. He takes 2 Chr 10:15 to be the Chronicler's interpretation of the cause of the division of the kingdom under Rehoboam: "The king did not listen to the people; this turn of events was from God, so that he might bring into force his word which he had spoken through Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam the son of Nebat." Jeon concludes that the division was divine judgment on Solomon for his sins. The Chronicler accepts and affirms the verdict of his sources, which were well known to his readers. In defense of this position, Jeon must challenge the assertion that the Chronicler has laid the blame for the division of the kingdom on Rehoboam in the speech of Abijah in 2 Chr 12:6–7. He argues that the speech does not reflect the view of the Chronicler, but is the propaganda of Abijah, known to the readers from the *Vorlage* of the Chronicler as an unreliable character who does not meet with divine approval (pp. 43–48).

Jeon contends that the method of the Chronicler as a historian was to rely on the authority of the first history in order to make his history valid for his readers (p. 101). He further contends that this served the purposes of the Chronicler, whose negative depiction of Solomon emphasized the need of repentance and forgiveness to fulfill the hopes of the Davidic kingdom. His argument is that the Chronicler's method in dealing with the history of each king was more complex than Kings, presenting both positive and negative aspects of both good kings (Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, Josiah) and bad (Abijah, Manasseh). As these kings, Solomon is portrayed as having good and bad qualities.

Jeon proposes that the rule of Solomon in Chronicles is presented negatively as a kind of "return to Egypt" around the motifs of military activity (horses and chariots), inter-marriage with Pharaoh's daughter, and an oppressive Egyptian-style rule (pp. 214–69). Very few will regard his case as defensible. Reliance on Kings as an authoritative history necessarily affirmed in the presentation of Chronicles is simply not supported by the Chronicler's use of his sources. According to their records, Kings and Chronicles rely on a common prophetic source, but select from it in vastly diverse ways. The Chronicler extensively draws on Kings and does assume knowledge of Kings at times. While his allusions are important, they are hardly primary in characterizing a king. Chronicles is not based on the adoption of a previous presentation of each king; it is very self-consciously an alternate history written programmatically to demonstrate the truth of 2 Chr 7:14. The Chronicler may not present Solomon as impeccable, but along with Hezekiah, his reign is presented as a paradigm for the future.

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Job. By Daniel J. Estes. Teach the Text Commentary Series. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013, 271 pp., \$29.99.

This commentary is a recent installment in Baker's new Teach the Text Commentary Series and is one of five volumes currently published. Daniel Estes

teaches at Cedarville University and has specialized in Wisdom Literature, publishing four books in the field, with this commentary serving as his first book on Job.

After interviewing many pastors, the editors of the series discovered many commentaries are either too technical or too devotional. They therefore felt the need for “a commentary that utilizes the best of biblical scholarship but also presents the material in a clear, concise, attractive, and user-friendly format” (p. ix).

Each commentary is divided into six-page preaching units that produce a uniform amount of material. Each preaching unit contains a one-sentence “Big Idea,” followed by sections covering “Text in Context,” “Historical and Cultural Backgrounds,” “Theological Insights,” “Key Themes,” “Teaching the Text,” “Theological Insights,” and “Illustrating the Text.” Each preaching unit also contains two or three color photos of archaeological or culturally significant matters with accompanying description, and occasional shaded boxes of material on related topics.

The commentary proper treats each of Job’s forty-two chapters as six-page preaching units, thereby indicating that a preaching series on Job, which Estes rightly laments is neglected in the Church, could be done one chapter at a time. This is problematic because it privileges frequency over focus. For example, Elihu’s speeches would receive six sermons while Yahweh’s speeches would receive only four.

The reader is bombarded with an extraordinarily diverse amount of material in six scant pages and it is possible the strength of this ambitious approach is also its weakness. No commentary can accomplish everything, especially in a seemingly arbitrary commitment to six-page preaching units. The full text of Job is not reproduced, and it is not clear if the series commits to a particular version or if the texts referenced are the authors’ personal translations. In this commentary, less than half of each preaching unit is dedicated to verse-by-verse exegesis, which is unfortunate because Estes has much to offer.

In his prolegomena, Estes takes a traditional view in areas of authorship and historicity, and argues Job “addresses the age-old, universal issue of human suffering in the context of the infinite wisdom, authority and righteousness of Yahweh” (p. 2). Upholding the unity of Job, Estes rejects “hypothetical reconstructions,” claiming Job “does not fit any specific literary type,” while readily accepting Job as a comfortable member of Wisdom Literature (pp. 2–4). Estes emphasizes the influence and association of wisdom with Job; Estes, cites frequently, if not excessively, from Proverbs, and draws interesting, though sometimes strained, correlations from Mesopotamian wisdom sources. He also accepts that retribution theology and its critique, dominate the flow of the book (p. 5).

One of the more obvious shortcomings, which might owe to the series’ effort to temper technical analysis, is the absence of a substantive treatment of Job’s literary genre. Scholars continue to joust over this formative hermeneutical question, and it therefore merits more than Estes provides, if only because of its formative influence on one’s hermeneutical assumptions.

In Job’s prologue, Estes identifies as a central theme Satan’s assumption that Job will turn from worshipping God to cursing God if Job’s blessings are removed (p. 10), and he returns to this theme both in Job’s confrontation with his wife (p. 16)

and then in Job's soliloquy in chapter 3, noting, "He does not directly curse God, as the adversary has predicted" (p. 20). However, this theme is neglected when Job is given the opportunity to respond in the Yahweh speeches and his own concluding words in the epilogue.

Estes treats superbly the presence of the Satan—always a thorny issue (p. 9). Equally measured is his treatment of the problem of evil (pp. 15, 42), though he does not examine Job 42:11.

In one place, Estes' exegesis does seem a bit inconsistent when he writes regarding Job 16, "In what appear to be hopeless circumstances Job keeps hoping in God's justice," but then regarding Job 17 writes, "Thus, at this stage in the book Job finds no hope in God" (pp. 101, 107). Since both chapters represent one speech from Job, the interpreter may be confused, but I think the balance of Job's speech renders the former statement more accurate. Job has lost hope in life and in death, as Estes correctly conveys in his treatment of chapter 17, but he has not lost hope in God, the result of which would be to see Job curse God as the Satan predicted.

As a possible example of the challenge facing scholars who are limited by the series' restraint on technical pursuits, Estes seems to dismiss the question of Zophar's alleged "lost speech," stating, "Because Zophar has now spoken his final word, he remains silent when it is his time to reply to Job in the third cycle of speeches" (p. 125). In fact, Estes does examine this critical issue briefly in a highlighted block in chapter 27 (p. 167), but the reader is not alerted to that discussion in Job 20. Since the average pastor rarely reads through an entire commentary, many may miss this helpful reference.

At the same time, excellent scholarship is frequently on display. Estes concisely unpacks the complicated graded numerical saying in Job 5:19–26, providing readers just what they need to know, though they lose the benefit of observing the author's skillful use of this poetic device. A similar deft touch is offered in Job 31:1, where Estes suggests the Hebrew text indicates Job was avoiding courting women for power instead of lusting after them.

On balance, Estes takes a straightforward, careful approach to Job offering numerous insights. This commentary may best serve as a supplement to other specialized commentaries offering some fresh, contemporary ideas for practical applications and illustrations. Having taught at the college and seminary levels for several years, and now having preached for several more, I suggest laypersons are the ideal target group for this commentary.

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Invitation to the Psalms: A Reader's Guide for Discovery and Engagement. By Rolf A. Jacobson and Karl N. Jacobson. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013, vii + 184 pp., \$17.99 paper.

In this engaging book, Rolf Jacobson (associate professor of Old Testament at Luther Seminary) and Karl Jacobson (assistant professor of religion at Augsburg College) invite the reader to experience the psalms as poetry of faith that is meant to be prayed, sung, shouted, meditated upon, and lived. Their approach uses analysis as a “servant” (p. 1) to assist readers to interact with the poems with greater sensitivity and understanding. In targeting the “interested non-specialist student” (p. 3), the Jacobsons have given students a basic and accessible introduction to the Psalms by providing a framework for their reading and enactment.

The first chapter helps readers to recognize the governing logic of Hebrew poetry by describing parallelism, poetic structure and development of the psalms. The Jacobsons introduce parallelism between lines, verse sections and entire psalms, describing how it functions through echoing and extension (pp. 17–20). Structural features such as question-answer format, stanzas, and turning points in mood or concept (pp. 21–29) also aid the reader to understand the meaning of the psalms. In their discussion of structures, the authors focus on individual or groups of psalms, but stop short of exploring how the relation of these units to the shape of the Psalter as a whole impacts the meaning of individual psalms. Discussion on the shaping of the Psalter may have been useful at this point in the book or in the “Going Deeper” or “Further Reading” sections.

Chapters 2 and 3 equip the reader to understand different genres encountered in the psalms. They appropriately divide genres according to their forms in chapter 2 (lamentations, prayers for help, hymns, songs of thanksgiving, and songs of trust) and their themes in chapter 3 (royal, enthronement, wisdom, creation, historical, Zion, imprecatory, penitential, and liturgical) to help the reader to understand their meaning more accurately and completely (p. 34). Genres have defining elements and purposes, with specific speaker situations, target audience, and language (p. 38). The Jacobsons note points of entrance for the readers into these psalms such as commonalities between writer and reader situations that elicit cries for help. The reader in a similar situation can not only identify commonalities, but also follow the psalmist’s cathartic path toward praise in the psalm.

The strength of the book, in my opinion, is in chapters 4–6. The authors begin with an introduction in understanding the voice and life situations of the psalms. They note that the explicit first person voice occurs in 98 of the 150 psalms (pp. 89–90) and that imagining the “ancient voice” is a necessary part of understanding the psalm (p. 92). They suggest it helpful to think of the “psalmist” as a persona (as opposed to “narrator”), as the one who is praying, calling for help, confessing sin, and praising God. “Persona” refers to the aspect of someone’s character or person that is perceived by others (p. 97). The life situation in the psalms resonates with the highs and lows of daily life and “are very much the heart—felt and expressed—of biblical faith and religion” (p. 98). They reflect the psalmist’s

physical, social, emotional, communal, legal, or spiritual situations (pp. 101–102) and give expression to the life of faith in all its complexity (p. 112).

Chapter 5 deals with metaphors, imagery and symbolism. The Jacobsons note that metaphors become central in creating deeply theological, religious, and spiritual sustenance by engaging the imagination of the reader and communicating meaning (pp. 119–20). For example, the first psalm as an extended metaphor “invites the reader into the imagination of what life lived on the basis of God’s word might look like” (p. 125). The rest of the Psalter is then to be understood as a wellspring of water “which will help feed a spiritual life that bears fruit and flourishes even in tough times” (p. 126).

The final chapter continues to look more closely at the theology of the psalms. They are about the life of faith in relationship to God and about life in the midst of God’s good-but-fallen creation, God’s good-but-sinful people” (p. 149). The psalmists sing of lessons learned in their walk of faith with the God of Israel, who is characterized by *hesed* “loving faithfulness” in his internal character as well as his external actions” (p. 152). The authors aptly focus on *hesed* (pp. 151–67) to enrich the reader’s theological understanding of the life of faith in the God of Israel revealed in the Psalter. They then relate this concept to life paradoxes reflected in the psalms—how life is lived out between experiences of God’s faithfulness and human suffering (p. 168). The Psalter offers words for the faithful to take up between these two sets of experiences. This “lived theology” the Jacobsons conclude, is about “living out life with other broken people, in the midst of a broken world, and in relationship with a God of loving faithfulness” (p. 174).

By the end of the book, the reader is drawn into the rich tapestry of the psalms and is left with tools, questions, and readings for further exploration. I would highly recommend this book as a basic and practical introduction to the psalms.

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Toward an Interpretation of the Book of Proverbs: Selfishness and Secularity Reconsidered. By Zoltán S. Schwáb. Journal of Theological Interpretation Supplement 7. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2013, xv + 315 pp., \$37.95 paper.

The book of Proverbs poses two serious challenges to the interpreter. First, it exhibits a “secular” character in that there is little reference to God’s election of Israel, to his redeeming acts in history, or to his covenants. Indeed, many of the sayings in Proverbs were widely diffused in the ANE and possess meaning and application outside of the Israelite context. Second, Proverbs promotes “self-interest” in that its motivational system centers on doing right behavior to produce a desired, personal outcome—“Fear Yhwh...[and] it will be healing to your flesh” (Prov 3:7b–8a).

Zoltán Schwáb offers a new approach to answering these two problematic sides of Proverbs’ motivation system—“selfishness” and “secularity.” Schwáb is

not convinced that creation theology is the key to understanding these issues as many 19th- and 20th-century scholars have argued (part 1). And thus, in the rest of his book, he attempts to provide another possible reading, although he is careful to clarify that he is not offering *the* theology of the book (p. 67). His schema rests on having the right conceptual framework, that is, canonical theology (part 2), which achieves “a richer, more complex theological reading of Proverbs” (p. 69).

In part 3, Schwáb seeks to place his interpretation in the stream of Thomas Aquinas’s moral teaching, which helps explain Proverbs’ apparent selfishness. Thus, Schwáb seeks to use Thomas’s system heuristically for the interpretation of Proverbs. Self-interest and self-love occur often in Thomas’s moral theory, for self-preservation is accepted as a legitimate human end (p. 98). Far from being a book about success, Schwáb argues with Thomas that Proverbs has a prime emphasis on self-preservation (p. 126). Even as the book promotes success and material gains, these occur only in the context of godly virtue. Schwáb follows Thomas in summarizing all the goods that one can obtain by acquiring wisdom and integrity as “happiness ... a contented, peaceful, protected life furnished with necessary material resources” (p. 127). Self-interest, therefore, plays a crucial role in Proverbs. Even so, as Schwáb demonstrates in an analysis on Proverbs 2, the final end of all happiness is God (pp. 128–59).

If one accepts the Thomistic interpretation of Proverbs as Schwáb does, one will inevitably emphasize the God-human relationships in Proverbs, which is unusual in scholarly studies. This raises the question of the issue of secularity. How is the emphasis on God as the final end able to handle those parts of Proverbs that seem to be concerned with everyday mundane life (p. 159)? This is the question Schwáb discusses in part 4—that is, whether Proverbs really utilizes secular language in the non-Yhwhistic, universalistic sense. Schwáb first offers a theology of Proverbs through the lens of Proverbs 8. In his view, Proverbs 8 (or more precisely, Proverbs read *in light of* chap. 8), “depicts wisdom in/through which human beings can experience God’s *presence*” (p. 182), a theological concept that is applied strategically in the person of Lady Wisdom (pp. 180–88).

Schwáb then offers a canonical reading of Proverbs in the light of the vision of the Jerusalem temple (p. 177). In other words, wise living encompasses living in the temple—the light of Yhwh’s *presence*. In ancient times, the temple is where one could experience the presence of a deity, and Israel is no exception. A life lived every day in the temple provides the temple setting for the book of Proverbs. So in addressing the question of whether Proverbs is “secular” in the sense of providing common ground through which everyone experiences “wisdom” regardless of race, nationality, gender, and religion, Schwáb answers yes and no: “Yes, it speaks about everyday life and utilizes international wisdom language. Nevertheless, something more is going on than simply presenting a universal common ground: Proverbs not only *presents* the secular but at the same time *sanctifies* it” (p. 209).

At the end of part 4, Schwáb tests his theory against the work of Walter Brueggemann’s *Old Testament Theology*. The final chapter summarizes and concludes the work.

The book is engaging and satisfying, both in presentation and in argumentation. I note from the outset that Schwáb's attempt forward is refreshing in that he does not insist upon diachronical analysis as a presupposition to answering his two questions (part 2). Rather, his methodology focuses on the canonical/received form of Proverbs, the canonical context (intertextual allusions to other canonical texts), and the history of interpretation (pp. 72–73). This method is certainly a strength of Schwáb's book. The lasting value of Proverbs lies both within the book and *around it*. Proverbs' embeddedness in the OT wisdom literature means that its allusions to other biblical texts and typologies require a "thick" reading that is theologically rich. Even if one rejects intertextuality in Proverbs as a legitimate theological enterprise, the full potential of Proverbs can only be recognized "if the book is consciously read in its canonical context" (p. 67). I applaud, for instance, that Schwáb engages in a comparison between the topics of self-motivation and selfishness in Deuteronomy and Proverbs, noting points of congruence and contrast at the intertextual level (pp. 102–104).

Highlighting the emphasis in Proverbs on God as the final end of all happiness is another strength of Schwáb's work. Proverbs clearly presents a God-centered worldview, and speaks of a trust in God that rejects unethical, though seemingly effective tools (Schwáb so notes on 158), a point that goes back to the need for a canonical interpretation of Proverbs. If one extracts Proverbs from its biblical context, one could easily attribute its aphorisms solely to ANE ethics and virtues by unhelpfully focusing on Proverbs' deemphasis on "covenant" or the infrequency of "Yhwhisms" and the like. But Proverbs cannot be extracted from the biblical context, as Schwáb argues, and its content—although seemingly unordered at times—is in harmony with the God-centeredness of biblical corpus.

I offer only two points of dispute. First, Schwáb spends a great deal of time interacting with Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae*. In my judgment, although Schwáb's interaction with Thomas is interesting, it fails to move along his main thesis and leaves the reader with a sense of ambivalence as to Thomas's contribution. How does Thomas affirm or deny Schwáb's understanding of "selfishness" and "secularity" in Proverbs if the hermeneutical emphasis rests primarily on canonical theology? Schwáb often states that Proverbs' teaching is not dissimilar to the thinking of Thomas Aquinas in such matters (e.g. p. 109), yet this interaction could be relegated to footnotes instead of a full discussion. Further, there is no indication that Thomas is the be-all and end-all for virtuous/ethical teaching in post-biblical history.

Second, it is not entirely clear how the "fear of Yhwh" is integrated into Schwáb's schema. This is not to say Schwáb does not engage in the discussion of the fear of Yhwh from time to time (pp. 140–45), but any work that seeks to move toward an interpretation of the book of Proverbs, as the title suggests, must recognize, perhaps primarily, that the fear of Yhwh is Proverbs' most central theme. One crucial question to which I returned often is whether or not a reader of Proverbs would understand the "fear of Yhwh" as a motivator. Does the "fear of Yhwh" motivate one for "selfish" goals?

In the final analysis, *Toward an Interpretation of the Book of Proverbs* is a welcome contribution to the theological interpretation of Proverbs. This work especially deserves a wide readership among those seeking to engage in the variegated themes in biblical theology, or others arguing for a central theme. We have yet to see a biblical scholar integrate Proverbs satisfyingly into a whole Bible or OT theology. Perhaps Schwáb's book will help provide a way forward.

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Asceticism, Eschatology, Opposition to Philosophy: The Arabic Translation and Commentary of Salmon ben Yeroham on Qohelet (Ecclesiastes). By James T. Robinson. *Études sur le Judaïsme Médiéval*, Tome XLV. *Karaite Texts and Studies*, Volume 5. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012, 645 pp., \$299.00.

James T. Robinson, medievalist at Chicago University, has done a great service to biblical studies with his publication of *Asceticism, Eschatology, Opposition to Philosophy: The Arabic Translation and Commentary of Salmon ben Yeroham on Qohelet (Ecclesiastes)*. The work is part of a larger vision to make medieval Jewish commentaries on Ecclesiastes available to the scholarly world. Robinson originally began to write "a single-volume history of medieval Jewish Qohelet commentaries that would update, expand, and supplant the pioneering survey of C. D. Ginsberg [sic]" (p. xi). Indeed, Ginsburg himself lamented in his 1861 commentary that medieval commentaries on Ecclesiastes had been lost. He wrote, "Would that we at least had a history of the various views which those forgotten commentators entertained concerning Coheleth!" (C. D. Ginsburg, *Cobeleth, Commonly Called The Book of Ecclesiastes* [London: Longman, Green, Longman, & Roberts, 1861] 56). Robinson is making Ginsburg's wish come true.

Salmon ben Yeroham is in the tradition of Karaite Judaism, a movement that stressed the importance of the written word, rather than the oral tradition recorded in the Talmud (i.e. it is distinct from Rabbinic Judaism). Robinson begins with an introduction to the Karaite movement that "crystallized into a distinct form of Judaism" in the ninth century AD (p. 7). The movement was heavily influenced by the spread of Islam and its authors wrote in Arabic using Hebrew characters (Judeo-Arabic).

Part I is an introduction with the following chapter titles: "Qohelet in Karaism," "On Salmon's Arabic Translation of Qohelet," "Sources and Use of Sources," "Methods and Approaches," "Main Themes: Asceticism, Eschatology, Opposition to Philosophy," "Description of the Manuscripts and Method of Editing," and "Remarks on the English Translation." Part II of Robinson's book consists of a transcription of Salmon's commentary using Hebrew characters on the right pages and Robinson's translation into English on the left pages.

Salmon ben Yeroham was part of the Jerusalem school of Karaites. The most important manuscripts for his commentary on Ecclesiastes are found in the British Museum and in the Firkovitch collection in St. Petersburg. Only portions were

published until Robinson's critical edition appeared, except for a 1973 Ph.D. dissertation translated the complete commentary into Hebrew (p. 19, n. 57; by Moshe I. Riese). Robinson has therefore done a great service to make Salmon's commentary available and with English translation. The transcription alone must have been a mammoth task. Unfortunately, Robinson was unable to access another manuscript from Berkeley, CA while researching in Jerusalem (pp. 137, 153). Although this means his critical edition is not quite complete, the missing manuscript is relatively late (AD 1752) compared with the fourteen other manuscripts he accessed (the critical apparatus documents eleven manuscripts and fragments).

As well as publishing the first English translation of this commentary, and producing a critical edition accounting for most known manuscripts, Robinson has also identified fragments which were not previously known to be part of Salmon's commentary (pp. 142, 145–47, 149). Further, Robinson suggests that more than fifty anonymous Ecclesiastes fragments in the Cambridge Genizah collection require investigation (p. 153; some may be copies of Salmon's commentary). Indeed, Efraim Ben-Porat has already identified eleven of these as belonging to Salmon's commentary, as well as six more from Jewish Theological Seminary (from Cambridge: T-S Ar.21.61; T-S Ar.21.146; T-S Ar.23.9; T-S Ar.23.65; T-S Ar.21.28; T-S Ar.21.39; T-S As.69.135; T-S Misc.5.117; T-S Misc.5.144; T-S Misc.6.184; T-S Misc.7.120; from Jewish Theological Seminary: ENA 1269.58; ENA 2425.12; ENA 3047.15–16; ENA 3337.12–13; ENA 3859.5–6; ENA NS 67.1. My thanks to Efraim Ben-Porat of the Friedberg Genizah Project and to Ben Outhwaite and Gabriele Ferrario of the Taylor-Schechter Genizah Research Unit).

In general, the Karaite translators gave priority to the language of the biblical text rather than to Arabic, the target language. Salmon's translation of Ecclesiastes, then, is quite literal, although he abandons a literal translation when necessary (p. 58). This means the translation is "literal yet readable" (p. 38), a characteristic Robinson aims for and attains in his English translation of Salmon's Arabic (p. 159). This means readers with limited understanding of Arabic still have reasonable access to the literal wording, while the Arabic (in Hebrew characters) is there on the opposite page for readers who are fluent in Arabic. Robinson maintains Arabic terminology such as Salmon's frequent use of "Allah" for God (pp. 49–50) and "Sulaymān" for Solomon (p. 115, although not always consistently; see p. 405 line 10). Robinson's practice of completing most abbreviations and supplying biblical references is very helpful (p. 155). A knowledge of the Hebrew text of Ecclesiastes would still be important for readers of Robinson's book. He has included vowel pointing on the Hebrew text to help the reader distinguish the Hebrew from the Arabic.

Robinson notes that Salmon approaches Ecclesiastes as "a manual of instruction which aims to teach theology and inculcate divine service, to instruct in the ways of final reward and punishment, and to encourage renunciation of this material lower world" (p. 19). Salmon consciously identified major themes in the book of Ecclesiastes. The five main themes he offers are: (1) that humans were not created by God for this world, otherwise they would not perish; (2) that one ought to renounce this lower material world and its pleasures; (3) that wisdom is superior to

ignorance; (4) that the final purpose of humans in this world is fear of God and observance of the commandments; and (5) that reward and punishment is other-worldly (pp. 110–11, 170–72). The second of these aligns with Salmon's understanding of *hebel* ("vanity"), which he translates as *dust* in the sense of something that has no value (pp. 112, 184, 266, 362, 552).

The words in the book's title—*Asceticism, Eschatology, Opposition to Philosophy*—offer an indication of the main themes of Salmon's commentary. The asceticism is a recognition that the material world is dust, but still necessary. It is a rejection of the accumulation of wealth, but it is not a monastic asceticism in the extreme (pp. 57, 112–13, 123, 186, 222, 336–38, 368, 404). "Contentment" might be a better word to characterize Salmon's position in this regard (pp. 235 n. 3, 272, 276, 296, 300, 366, 374, 468, 498, 552–54). Salmon's view of eschatology focuses on justice in the next world (p. 600). He interprets Qoheleth's statements about the same fate awaiting the righteous and the wicked to refer to this lower world only, not to the next world (Eccl 2:14; 9:2; pp. 44, 74, 84, 86–87, 93–94, 118–20, 254–56). He emphasizes resurrection of the body, rather than a spiritualized afterlife (pp. 74, 572–78). Salmon's opposition to philosophy refers to his rejection of reading sources other than Scripture, although he does at times refer to other works (pp. 64, 59, 304, 364, 406, 586–90). A major support for this position comes from Eccl 1:8, which Salmon translates as "All discourse causes fatigue. No man can speak" (pp. 115, 124, 131). Because humans cannot know God, Salmon advocates a "pious resignation, ... renouncing philosophy and devoting one's life to good works and the study of Scripture" (p. 116).

Salmon offers a consciously literal reading of Ecclesiastes, and rejects an allegorizing approach (pp. 77–78, 88–95, 110, 166–68, 174); Salmon, does, however, find allegory in Proverbs and Song of Songs. An example of how Salmon deals with contradictions is found in his dual definition of wisdom. This allows Salmon to understand the wisdom of the material world to be rejected in Eccl 1:17–18 and the wisdom of religion to be praised in Eccl 2:12–14 (p. 90, 230–32, 248–54, 344). Salmon views Solomon as the author of Ecclesiastes but he only considers the biblical attributes of the king, not Rabbinic tradition such as the role of the demon Ashmedai (pp. 95, 240–41).

The critical apparatus documents nine manuscripts and two fragments. Robinson has supplied line numbers and in the margin he indicates the location in the two main manuscripts. (On p. 157, Robinson says he will use the format A 23b; L 55a, etc., but in the text, he makes use of Hebrew characters, e.g. p. 169). The bottom of each page has one apparatus showing different manuscript traditions, and another apparatus showing minor differences such as spelling (p. 155).

This book will be welcomed by scholars of medieval Judaism, the history of biblical interpretation, and Ecclesiastes.

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Esther and Daniel. By Samuel Wells and George Sumner. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2013, xvi + 239 pp., \$32.99.

This work is a new submission in the Brazos Theological Commentary series, which places an emphasis on dogma and doctrine for interpretation. This approach is understood as more fruitful than the “fantasy of pure exegesis” (p. xiii). While such a dichotomy between doctrine and exegesis is unnecessary, a theological commentary such as this is helpful. Scholars for this series are selected because of their support for and interacting ability with “Christian doctrinal tradition” (p. xii).

The two authors of this volume are well qualified in this regard. The portion on Esther is done by Dr. Samuel Wells, formally dean of Duke University Chapel and research professor of Christian Ethics at Duke Divinity School (until 2012) and current vicar of St Martin-in-the-Fields, London. The commentary on Daniel is by Dr. George Sumner, Principal and Helliwell Professor of World Mission at Wycliffe College (University of Toronto).

The format of the book is straightforward. Both Esther and Daniel contain brief introductions (18 pages for Esther, 23 pages for Daniel) followed by commentary. The commentary on Esther is organized around passages of varying length while commentary on Daniel follows biblical chapter divisions and comments on individual verses or verse groups.

It is important to note that many will disagree with how the authors speak of the biblical text in the introduction sections. While discussing Esther in light of the holocaust, Wells states clearly, “I take for granted that the text has no single, fixed meaning” (p. 8). Sumner holds a similar view. Having acknowledged the work of Hans-Georg Gadamer he states: “What a passage means is not encased in its original setting and intention, but possibilities are opened up by the ongoing history of interpretations” (p. 102).

Philosophical considerations aside, practically I did not find the authors asserting new meaning cut off from the biblical authors at every turn, but more often they simply apply the biblical text to modern issues. For instance, Sumner compares the refusal of Daniel to commit idolatry with Christians commanded to deny Christ more recently in communist China and Russia (pp. 139–40). This is an appropriate and valuable application of a principle in the text that speaks to a modern context. However, Sumner concludes his portion with a postscript that seems to imply not merely application but ongoing meaning of biblical texts.

Due to the heavy theological approach, this is not a volume to consult regarding matters of text criticism, historical backgrounds, or technical language issues. Nor does it exhibit extensive treatments on complex matters such as the 70 weeks in Dan 9:24–27. Readers who wish to research and access such material will need to look elsewhere. But this work does prove helpful for thinking about the text with sensitivity not always visible in more technical commentaries. For example, Sumner helpfully speaks on Dan 7:2 and the four beasts that arise from the chaotic sea. He sketches the various identities ascribed to the beasts by interpreters, and then observes the beasts are reminiscent of the opposing forces to Israel during the exodus (p. 162). Furthermore, he asserts,

The beasts are not simply a literary device to adorn a historical passage, but rather serve to deepen the mystery. Their beastliness continues as a theme in Daniel, in which evil entails the subhuman, the animal, in human, even articulate form—here we may compare Nebuchadnezzar’s descent into animality in Dan. 4 ... [the beasts] point us back to a disaster at the very outset of the world (p. 162).

The nature of this volume lends itself to be appreciated from a literary perspective, especially as it concerns the splendid story of Esther. This is exemplified when Wells astutely observes, “Vashti and Mordecai are in different ways complements to Esther” (p. 33). He further postulates that Queen Vashti refused to appear before the king and this refusal truncated her influence and position while Esther submitted to the king, which allowed her to save the Jews. Conversely, Mordecai stubbornly refused to honor Haman who was promoted by the King, setting Haman’s hatred for the Jews aflame to the point that he plotted mass genocide. Wells concludes that Mordecai highlights the “selflessness and nuance of Esther’s compliance with the Persian court” (p. 33).

I do not put this book in the “must have” category due to its overall lack of technical content. Also, readers will want to be aware of the authors’ stated philosophical position on Scripture. But the work does exhibit a thoughtful sensitivity that stimulates appreciation for the biblical books of Esther and Daniel and rightly affirms their place as a fixture in the landscape of God’s redemptive work. With these things in mind, this work will be of some benefit for most readers.

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Reading between the Lines: The Interlinear Paradigm for Septuagint Studies. By Cameron Boyd-Taylor. Biblical Tools and Studies 8. Leuven: Peeters, 2011, xv + 483 pp., €74.00.

The book under review is the revision of Cameron Boyd-Taylor’s 2005 doctoral dissertation undertaken at the University of Toronto under the supervision of Albert Pietersma. Already known for his contribution to LXX studies, especially those in conjunction with *A New English Translation of the Septuagint (NETS)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), Boyd-Taylor has secured for himself with this monograph a prominent place among distinguished LXX specialists. No one would expect anything less from someone whose apprenticeship was formed under such LXX luminaries as John William Wevers and Albert Pietersma.

A glance at the book’s table of contents and the number of pages immediately suggests that there is enough material here for not one, but two, possibly, even three dissertations, all related to the interlinear paradigm for Septuagint studies, the subtitle of the book. The interlinear paradigm (or interlinearity) is a concept developed to answer the fundamental question of “how best to conceptualize the relationship between a translation and its source” (p. vii), an ongoing interest of the author.

The book consists of three parts, each one developed within the span of four chapters. Part A, "Prolegomena to the Study of the Septuagint," sets interlinearity within the plethora of approaches and methodologies employed in Septuagint studies, which, as a conceptual framework, enjoys no consensus among Septuagintalists as to its legitimacy or usefulness. Part B, "The Case for Interlinearity," moves the concept from the theory to its application and assessment. The most voluminous among the parts, it presents the working out of the concept through an analysis of selected passages that allows for a textual comparison of the Old Greek with other known Greek textual traditions, Aquila's translation, and the *kaige* recension. Part C, "Interlinearity and Beyond," deals with the most important implications of the newly explored paradigm. The discussion moves beyond the perimeter of the Septuagint *qua* translation into the areas of interlanguage and interculture.

The present work resulted from wrestling with the issues that repeatedly emerged during the *NETS* project, none more pressing than: "To what extent is it legitimate to read a target text in light of its source?" (p. 2). Linking the resultant translation to the intentionality of the translator leads to "conceptual confusion" (p. 4), not dissimilar to the hermeneutical conundrum of attempting to unlock the intention of an author from the text itself. Boyd-Taylor contends that a more reasonable proposal is offered by the interlinear model. Perception of the LXX as a text derived from and dependent upon its parent text must be replaced with one that accounts for the web of relationships between the LXX, as a target text, and all the factors in the target culture that contributed to it. Boyd-Taylor contends that "the Septuagint *qua* translation would have originally lacked the status of an independent text within the target culture" (p. 5). Thus the model maintains a viable relationship between the Hebrew text and the Greek translation without reference or recourse to the translator's intention.

Chapter 1, "Theory and Practice in Septuagint Studies," amounts to a plea for establishing a theory of translation. "What is required then is a theory of translation" (p. 21), one that would maintain two fundamental distinctions: between production and reception, and between translational and non-translational discourse. Amidst a survey of present answers to perennial LXX questions, the reader finds ample proof for the evolution of LXX studies from the exclusive text-critical interests of the traditional approach to the establishment of the LXX as a document worthy of study in its own right. Chapter 2, "The Constitutive Character of the Text," unpacks the idea of treating the LXX as "a fact of the culture that produced it" (p. 33), taking into consideration a variety of aspects both socio-linguistic and institutional. The term "constitutive character" is introduced as a marker of the relationship between the text and its larger meta-textual aspects, including the translation's *Sitz im Leben*, the culture, and the institutions. Its usefulness is probed on the differences between the Hebrew and Greek texts of Exodus 25–40, explained as the outcome of two *Sitze im Leben*. Chapter 3, "Descriptive Translation Studies," is by far the most technically challenging section of the book, as Boyd-Taylor turns his attention to applied linguistics and interacts with the work of G. Toury, J. S. Holmes, C. Nord, and A. Chesterman. Not always clear in the argument's development and with a high density of specialized jargon, it deserves a

review of its own, presently an unaffordable luxury. Boyd-Taylor proposes a useful profile grid to assess the results of a descriptive study and lays the groundwork for a type of multipoint evaluation of interlinear translations that lies at the heart of the monograph in chapter 4, “The Interlinear Paradigm.” Only at this juncture is the interlinear paradigm formally introduced, with particular focus on establishing the implications of the model for LXX studies and on its adequacy as a paradigm. The *NETS* project continues to be the testing ground for the exploration of the model and the provider of pertinent examples, within the author’s constant dialogue with the main architects of *NETS*, Pietersma and Wright.

Part B takes the reader through an assessment of the interlinearity paradigm and its potency in providing a useful typology for the corpus of translated books in the Septuagint. Attention is given to a broad sampling of Septuagint texts, compared and contrasted with other established representatives of the interlinear-*esque* literature: Aquila’s version of 3 Reigns 21:7–17 (chap. 5), the *kaige* recension of 4 Reigns 23:12–20 (chap. 6), Psalm 29 [30 MT] from the highly literalistic translation evinced throughout the OG Psalter (chap. 7), and Gen 1:1–5, 11:1–9 as a sample of the OG Pentateuch (chap. 8). Each chapter begins with a useful presentation of the characteristics of the translations to be compared and proceeds with an insightful parallel analysis of the two Greek texts against the Masoretic text. The translations are then evaluated with the grid established earlier in the volume. The assessment of these translations would be too long to be fully presented here; a sample must suffice. The Aquila version is characterized by maximal accommodation and minimal assimilation (p. 171), the *kaige* version by strong accommodation and weak assimilation (p. 217), and the OG Psalter and Pentateuch passages by strong accommodation and weak assimilation (pp. 265, 309).

Part C, “Interlinearity and Beyond,” engages in a discussion of the broader implications of the paradigm for Septuagint studies, as each chapter probes broader concepts emerging from interlinearity. Chapter 9, “Interlinear Translation within the Literary Systems of Hellenistic Judaism,” introduces the notion of interculture, a potentially useful concept in identifying the ever-elusive origin of the LXX, which most likely should be traced to “a milieu quite literally at the cross-roads of the source and target cultures” (p. 313). An insightful analysis of Greek-speaking Judaism as a system, its gymnasium, its ethos of literacy cultivation, and the competing theories of professional translation in antiquity (foremost those of E. J. Bickerman and C. Rabin), allow for a return to the notion of translational adequacy: “an adequate translation is ... one that ... represents an acceptable substitute for the parent” (p. 338). The question of whether the LXX shares a targumic nature is given considerable attention. The options are explored in a comparison of the OG Deut 19:16–21 with the Targum Onkelos against the Masoretic text. Boyd-Taylor concludes that the “OG is ... a linguistically motivated translation. Textual and cultural norms may occasionally come to the fore but the argument that they play any kind of constitutive role in the translation has now been put in question” (p. 365). Chapter 10, “Interlinearity and Interlanguage,” enlarges even further the perimeter of the interlinearity’s implications into the debate over the nature of the Greek language in the Septuagint. After a cursory reminder of the main schools of thought and repre-

sentatives, Boyd-Taylor proposes a break of the impasse by looking at the Septuagint Greek as interlanguage. The starting point is Toury's axiomatic stance that "translation does not represent a straightforward use of language" (p. 371). This has implications on a range of issues, from which Boyd-Taylor focuses on those of word order, lexicography, features of discourse, and text reception. One nagging problem is left for chapter 11, "Literary Translation," in which the interlinear approach is applied to OG Job, a LXX translational book in which the interlinear model might not be readily applicable. Boyd-Taylor's grid assessment of this particular instance is "some accommodation of target literary conventions to source text and a relatively high degree of assimilation of source language to target conventions" (p. 425). Aptly enough, the last chapter, "Which Text? Whose Self-Understanding?" invites further research by considering the hermeneutics of translational literature. Two interrelated axioms are offered: "the basis of exegesis is the text *qua* translation" (the LXX as the outcome of a particular historical undertaking, the literary product of a certain time and place, located within a specific literary system) and "the basis of exegesis is the translation *qua* text" (the text to be understood in terms of its constitutive character and its relationship to the parent text) (pp. 432–33). These axioms are tentatively postulated as the framework for a proper exegetical approach and then applied to an exegetical study of Psalm 109 [110 MT]. The variety of exegetical stances is best reflected in the two LXX commentary series underway, that of M. Harl and the newly launched IOSCS project.

I cannot recall a more difficult book to read, understand, and review in the last decade. However, this is a *tour de force* as impressive in its argument as it is comprehensive in its goals. Too little space is left for interacting with the ideas presented, let alone for other considerations, such as formatting issues (extremely unhelpful display of the parallel texts) or the number, not negligible, of typos.

Two particularly important aspects, however, deserve to be raised. First, the study contains a significant number of statements that carry the flavor of pontificating discourse, ideas stated without proper explanation or support, evidential, logical, or otherwise. Boyd-Taylor claims, for example, that "[the translators'] cultural background, the milieu in which they were acculturated, whether Greek or Aramaic speaking, Egyptian or Palestinian, is methodologically irrelevant" (p. 324). One would beg to differ. Of course, in a study of such breadth, it would be an illegitimate expectation to have everything pedantically proven, explained, and documented. Yet, given the scope of the study and, perhaps, what is at stake, one would want to avoid as much as possible such instances. The second and more important aspect is a reflection on an opening statement: "the proposal that the study of the Septuagint is in need of a theoretical framework might at first blush appear an idle one, a donnish prank, clever but unworthy of serious attention" (p. 11). Unfortunately, in my opinion, this study has not put to rest convincingly the fear behind the above comment. Though extremely learned and informed, it does a disservice to its ultimate goal by being too dense, unnecessarily technical, overabundant in specialized jargon, and not always clear in the progress of the argument. This assessment might be due to the fact that I entered the arena of Septuagint studies on loan from NT studies and not as a LXX purist. Yet, this is perhaps the very audi-

ence that needs convincing, if Septuagintalists want to reach out to other disciplines within biblical studies.

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Theologisches Wörterbuch zu den Qumrantexten. Edited by Heinz-Josef Fabry and Ulrich Dahmen. 2 vols. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2011–2013, xxiv + 556 / xx + 573 pp., €248.00 + €329.00.

The first two volumes of the *Theologisches Wörterbuch zu den Qumrantexten* (abbreviated *TbWQ*; *Theological Dictionary of the Qumran Texts*) have appeared; the first volume treats the words from אָב to מִתְּהַלֵּךְ, the second volume the terms from מִתְּהַלֵּךְ to סֵתֶר. The third and final volume, which will also contain indexes, is due to appear in 2016. Fabry is Professor on the Catholic-Theological Faculty at the University of Bonn; he collaborated in the *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (TDOT) since 1972 and was co-publisher (with G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren) since 1981 (vol. 7). Dahmen is now Professor on the (Roman Catholic) Theological Faculty at the University of Freiburg. The editorial advisory board is a Who's Who of Qumran studies, consisting, among others, of G. J. Brooke, J. J. Collins, A. Lange, F. García Martínez, C. Newsom, L. H. Schiffman, E. J. C. Tigchelaar, J. C. VanderKam. The entries of English-speaking contributors were translated into German, and are being saved for a potential translation of *TbWQ* into English. The project has been funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft.

The succinct preface (vol. 1, p. v) states the goal of *TbWQ*: to promote research into the Qumran texts, to survey their theological message, and to describe the history of theology and of literature of this important corpus of texts of the so-called “intertestamental period.” This goal is elaborated in six points: *TbWQ* seeks to: (1) gather the vocabulary of the Qumran texts with the semantic valences and shifts of the individual terms; (2) analyze the development of the Hebrew and Aramaic languages on the lexical, semantic, and syntactical levels; (3) depict the meaning and reception of OT terms in early Judaism; (4) illuminate the roots of early Christianity and rabbinic Judaism; (5) facilitate the development of more precise profiles of the various theological movements of early Judaism; and (6) to establish a “theology of Qumran” in the context of the Hebrew Bible, the NT, and rabbinic Judaism.

Compared with the Hebrew Bible, the Qumran texts contain more material on subjects such as resurrection, the messiah, apocalyptic, and ecclesiology. New ideas are linked with OT persons—such as Noah, Melchizedek, Moses, Aaron, Zadok, Levi—leading to a deeper understanding of both Jewish and Christian matters. The editors hope that *TbWQ* will also contribute to a better understanding of the profile, the development, and the relationship between the larger Jewish movements of the time, in particular the OT and Jewish priesthood, as well as the Sadducees of the first century. Since many Qumran texts develop an alternative liturgy to the Second Temple in Jerusalem, the presentation of the semantics of

Qumran terms allows new insights into the history of piety and liturgy. The preface does not interact with the discussion, initiated by J. Barr, about the feasibility of describing theology via a dictionary that lists terms in alphabetical order, nor with the discussion about the feasibility of using all scrolls found in Qumran, not all of which were composed there, for a (re)construction of the common theological thinking of the community of people who lived there.

Each volume begins with a list of contributors, followed by a list of the Hebrew/Aramaic terms that are treated, and abbreviations (vol. 2 has Nachträge, and abbreviations for rabbinic literature); each volume ends with an index of German key words. The structure of the entries for the individual words generally follows *TDOT*, with some exceptions: the introductory bibliography appears after the outline of the entry in the main text (*TbWQ* has no footnotes) and the titles for the individual sections, listed in the outline at the beginning of the entry, are not repeated. The organization of each entry, printed in two (numbered) columns per page, is not uniform, but all contain information on word statistics and occurrence including a discussion of peculiar features of usage; diachronic presentation of word usage pre-Qumran, Qumran, and post-Qumran; comparison with OT, NT, and rabbinic usage; meaning in specific Qumran texts; synonyms and antonyms; discussion of profane, religious, and theological areas of meaning; and theological emphases.

A brief survey of four entries illustrates the rich content of *TbWQ*. The entry for אָב (H.-J. Fabry; 1:1–9) has three main sections: I. meaning and distribution: 1. in the OT, 2. in Qumran; II. “father” in profane usage: 1. in family contexts, 2. in legal contexts, 3. the “house of the father,” 4. as official designation and honorific title; III. “father” in theological contexts: 1. the “fathers” in covenant with God, 2. “the God of the fathers,” 3. God as “father,” 4. in the prayers of the synagogue and in the NT. Fabry shows that the direct address of God as “father,” which is found in the late post-exilic literature (e.g. Sir 23:1; 51:10; also in 4Q372 I,16 and 4Q460 9 i 6, which are pre-Qumran texts), also surfaces in Qumran, but sparingly (only 1QH XVII, 35), before finding its “bleibenden Ausdruck” in the Shemone Esreh (5.6) and in the Lord’s Prayer (Matt 6:9). The entry for בּוֹא (K. Schäfers; 1:379–407) has twelve main sections: I. etymology and meaning; II. OT: 1. distribution, 2. usage and contexts; III. Qumran: 1. distribution, 2. syntax, 3. usage and contexts; IV. Nomina; V. Divine subject: 1. to come, 2. to bring; VI. Cultic context: 1. to come to God, 2. purity stipulations, 3. conditions of access in 11QT, 4. to bring sacrifices; VII. as technical term for the membership and the organization of the community: 1. to come/enter into the covenant, 2. in connection with the term יָהָד, 3. other uses, 4. 1QS*a*, 5. to bring accusations; VIII. coming/bringing of abstract matters and emotions; IX. arrival of future and eschatological events and persons; X. military context; XI. usage in connection with the calendar; XII. spatial and geographical phrases in 11QT and 3Q15. Schäfers points out that in contrast to the OT, God appears surprisingly rarely in the Qumran texts as subject of בּוֹא. The entry for טָהַר (H. K. Harrington; 2:1–11) has three sections: I. meaning and distribution: 1. OT, 2. Qumran, 3. distribution, 4. forms; II. usage: 1. ritual purity, 2. moral purity, 3. טוהר; III. meaning: 1. Qumran, 2. Judaism of the Second Temple, 3. archae-

ology, 4. early Christianity, 5. rabbinic Judaism. Harrington points out that **מָשִׁיחַ** moves beyond OT meanings in contexts in which the texts endeavor to substitute the temple cult, in order to consolidate the boundaries between the community and outsiders and/or in order to establish greater holiness of the community with reference to atonement, revelation, or power. The entry for **מָשִׁיחַ** (J. J. Collins; 2:810–17) has six sections: I. usage in the Hebrew Bible; II. 1QH: 1. the verb, 2. the noun; III. the messiahs from Aaron and Israel: 1. one messiah or two messiahs? 2. priestly authority, 3. usage in the various scrolls, 4. references to a messiah; IV. the role of the messiah: 1. various titles, 2. the messianic profile, 3. son of God; V. the priestly messiah; VI. the messianic prophet: 1. use of **מָשִׁיחַ** with reference to prophets, 2. 4Q521, 3. teacher, servant, and prophet. Collins reiterates that the Qumran community expected two messianic figures, one of which will possess priestly authority, probably in protest against the Hasmoneans' combination of king and high priest in one person.

This new *Wörterbuch* is a major achievement and will be the standard source for discussions of terms, concepts, and convictions not only of the Qumran community but also of Second Temple Judaism more generally. It is to be hoped that *TbWQ* becomes available electronically soon and that an English translation will be published before long. The only drawback of *TbWQ* is the price: the *Wörterbuch* is unaffordable for students and for many scholars as well. Neither can afford to neglect *TbWQ*, even if they have to rely on their institutional libraries to buy this new publication.

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History of New Testament Research. Vol. 3: *From C. H. Dodd to Hans Dieter Betz*. By William Baird. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2013, xix + 775 pp., \$70.00.

This volume completes a trilogy that might be termed epochal on two counts. Volume 1 (1992) was subtitled from *Deism to Tübingen*, while volume 2 (2002) covered *From Jonathan Edwards to Rudolf Bultmann*. Together the volumes are epochal, first, because of the era they cover. Understanding of the Bible worldwide was transformed by the scholarship Baird chronicles, and such a study earns a share in the earthshaking story it tells. Second, they are epochal in the way they cover their subject: comprehensively, insightfully, and generally sympathetically. This is not to say that different selections and interpretations of scholars and movements might not be preferable, but it is to commend the author for achieving a breadth and depth of coverage of NT scholarship's modern history matched to date by no other single researcher. In addition, since the three volumes together seemed to have claimed the biggest share of 30 of the productive years of a leading NT scholar, one may ask how long it will be before another person arises with the determination (or need) to match Baird's achievement in this field.

The book is most of all about and for research. Some 18 percent consists of endnotes, and another 12 percent of bibliography and indices, so that nearly a third

of the book is simply references. Yet therein lies a major portion of its value: Baird has catalogued, surveyed, and often scrupulously analyzed the works of dozens of major scholars, their key works, and the movements of which they were part. For anyone seeking information in these areas, Baird's book will frequently be a first port of call in amassing bibliography or simply becoming oriented in some aspect of this vast field of study.

Baird organizes the volume in three parts. The first is "The Renaissance of New Testament Criticism." It consists of three chapters. Chapter 1, "The Zenith of Enlightenment Criticism: Anglo-American Research in the Gospels," presents the contributions of Vincent Taylor, Henry J. Cadbury, T. W. Manson, and C. H. Dodd. Chapter 2 is "The New Biblical Theology" and is devoted almost entirely to Karl Barth and Rudolf Bultmann. Baird treats them in considerable detail and with great respect but faults their failure to give history its due: "The biblical theology of Barth is Barth's theology; the biblical theology of Bultmann (the theology of Paul and John) is Bultmann's theology" (p. 117). Is the Jesus known and revealed by the empirical sources really the center of their "new biblical theology"? Baird has his doubts. Chapter 3 is "The Bultmann School." Baird accesses this vast subject by giving extended attention to Ernst Käsemann, Günther Bornkamm, and James A. Robinson (with a cameo appearance of Robert Funk). A feature of this volume is Baird's inclusion of personal recollections and encounters with the scholars he treats, and in this chapter he tells of a semester spent in Heidelberg (1971–72) in which he rode to class with Bornkamm every Monday-Wednesday-Friday. He learned that "this great teacher—in his last year of lecturing on a subject he had presented scores of times before—was still preparing for every lecture until the last minute" (p. 148).

Part 2 of the book is "The Revisiting of Critical Problems." Chapter 4 ("New Discoveries, Archaeology, Textual Criticism") does not really seem to be about "revisiting critical problems," but it is admittedly not easy to fit everything that this history chooses to cover under neat headings. Baird gives thorough airings of the Nag Hammadi and Dead Sea finds, as well as snapshots of twentieth-century NT archaeology and textual criticism. Chapter 5 takes up "Historical Backgrounds: Judaism" with special attention to the work of Joachim Jeremias, Matthew Black, W. D. Davies, E. P. Sanders, and finally Martin Hengel, to whom Baird strangely attributes "A Revival of the Old Perspective."

While Baird calls Hengel "one of the great NT scholars of the twentieth century" and "above all an eminent historian" (p. 322), he slips in arch insinuations that Hengel is somehow culpable in continuing "the old perspective" by interpreting "Judaism from the Christian point of view" (p. 323). Baird supports his contention with a quote from John Collins that "at some points Hengel has not entirely shed the negative view of Judaism which has been endemic in Christian biblical scholarship" (p. 323). This is a partisan judgment, not a scholarly one. If historic Christian claims are true and Jesus was the Messiah and viewed his death as a "universal, atoning sacrifice," as Hengel argues (pp. 317–18), then it follows that Judaism with its negative view of Christianity leaves the logical Christian thinker no alternative to a "negative view of Judaism." Or is one automatically anti-Semitic

unless one rejects Jesus' messiahship? That seems to be Baird's position and basis for impugning Hengel. On the same page that Baird punishes Hengel for a Christian point of view, he warns "conservatives" against "exaggerating Hengel's orthodoxy" and claims all Hengel's virtues for Baird's own cause: "For all the variations in detail, Hengel is above all a champion of the historical-critical method" (p. 323). This seems to be refuted by Hengel's verdict on "critical biblicalism" quoted by Baird (p. 317), which actually indicts Baird's veneration of historical criticism.

Part 2 continues with three more chapters. Chapter 6, "Developments in Historical Criticism," centers on four foci of NT research and representative major scholars: NT introduction (Werner G. Kümmel, Helmut Koester), redaction criticism (Hans Conzelmann, Willi Marxsen), the Synoptic problem (William Farmer), and Q (Michael Goulder, John Kloppenborg). Chapter 7 takes up "Confessional Research: Roman Catholic Scholarship." The first half of the chapter title could have been omitted, since only Roman Catholic scholars are mentioned. Showcased are Rudolf Schnackenburg, Raymond Brown, and John P. Meier, the last of whom is praised for his "unswerving devotion to the historical critical method" (p. 437). Defense of and praise for that method (as if it were singular and monolithic) emerges as one of the leitmotifs of the volume. Chapter 8 completes part 2 with "The Development of Scholarly Societies." Those deemed worthy of mention are the Society of Biblical Literature, the Catholic Biblical Association, and the *Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas*. Tacked on to commendations of those societies is a lengthy write-up on Robert Funk and the Jesus Seminar, which Baird assesses both negatively and positively (pp. 466–68).

The final section, part 3, is "Theological and Synthesizing Movements" and contains three chapters. Chapter 10 ("Theological and Hermeneutical Developments") is devoted to a significant collection of scholars who nonetheless make strange bedfellows: Oscar Cullmann, John Knox, and Paul Minear treated in tandem, and finally F. F. Bruce, praised as "at his best when he is writing history" (p. 516). "Bruce demonstrates that Protestant evangelicals can embrace historical criticism and maintain their faith" (p. 525). Chapters 10 and 11 have identical titles ("Critical, Exegetical, and Theological Accomplishments") but different subtitles: chapter 10 covers "Europe," while chapter 11 treats "North America." The European scene is depicted by singling out C. K. Barrett, James Dunn, and Birger Gerhardsson. The North American discussion focuses on three universities and leading scholars who served (or serve) there: at Harvard, Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza; at Yale, J. Louis Martyn, Leander Keck, and Victor P. Furnish; and at the University of Chicago, Hans D. Betz.

Most of Baird's summary statements come at the end of subsections or chapters. The "Epilogue" is a rambling survey of major emphases found in the current volume. Baird seems to go along with the idea that, text-critically speaking, the notion of an "original text" has now been supplanted by David Parker's claim that "the text is a process" (p. 690). Perhaps there is middle ground between Parker and "original text" as sometimes caricatured. If we really cannot be relatively sure about the text, most of the critical operations performed on that text as reported in Baird's *History of New Testament Research* are fatally compromised.

In sum, while Baird is correct that historical perspective is essential to the apprehension of ancient texts, the strength of this volume (and its two predecessors) is not the cogency of their arguments in favor of “historical criticism,” the note on which Baird chooses to end the work (pp. 695–96). In fact, a weakness of volume 3 is failure to come to grips with the extent to which Walter Bauerian historiography has enjoyed hegemony in NT scholarship (and popular applications of it) despite its dubious empirical grounds (cf. Andreas J. Köstenberger and Michael J. Kruger, *The Heresy of Orthodoxy* [Wheaton: Crossway, 2010]). That is an indictment of “historical criticism” as actually practiced by the great many who subscribe to Bauer’s approach whether openly or tacitly. To his credit, Baird warns against the evil twin of “ecclesiastical authority,” which he describes as “the scholarly captivity of the Bible” (p. 695). Yet the warning rings weak compared to the many and too uncritical plugs for “the” historical-critical method that dot the book.

Baird’s strength is rather the patient, tireless drive that impelled him as he cast such a wide net over such a long time period and then as he examined so doggedly and painstakingly what his net collected for analysis. He completed a study that will be a staple in its field for generations to come. For that he has every reason to rejoice in an exceedingly arduous task completed with a high level of acumen and industry.

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Forgery and Counterforgery: The Use of Literary Deceit in Early Christian Polemics. By Bart D. Ehrman. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013, x + 628 pp., \$39.95.

Bart Ehrman’s *Forgery and Counterforgery* is an impressive scholarly treatment of ancient pseudepigraphic writings that will be sure to remain a standard resource on the subject for years to come. While many studies in recent decades have explored one or more aspects of pseudepigraphy in the Greco-Roman world, Ehrman’s volume is by far the most comprehensive work written in the English language, comparable in several respects to Wolfgang Speyer’s German volume, *Die literarische Fälschung im heidnischen und christlichen Altertum* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1971).

Many of Ehrman’s historical suppositions regarding the early history of Christianity made evident throughout this volume may also be observed in several of his well-known volumes such as *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), *Jesus, Interrupted* (New York: HarperOne, 2009), and *Misquoting Jesus* (New York: HarperOne, 2007). Throughout these volumes, Ehrman argued that it was not uncommon for scribes to edit and modify the text of the NT in order to promote and/or defend a particular theological persuasion. For Ehrman, the NT was not a fixed and established collection of early Christian literature—either in terms of its content or readings—but an unsettled and ever-evolving collection of writings that continued to develop over the years in response to various theological controversies. This practice occurred to such an extent, Ehrman rea-

sons, that any claim to have discerned the probable original reading of a NT text should not be taken seriously.

As Ehrman argues throughout *Forgery and Counterforgery*, ancient writers and scribes were not content simply to alter the words of authoritative texts in order to defend or advance a theological position. Another common tactic was to produce fresh writings and to falsely attribute them to authoritative figures such as Peter or Paul. Such a practice was recognized as an effective means of winning a theological debate. After all, how might one successfully perpetuate contrary beliefs if they were thought to be condemned by an authoritative Christian leader? In addition, what better way to advance one's theological convictions than to refer to an authoritative text that substantiates one's claims? Polemical motivations such as these are discussed at great length by Ehrman throughout the volume. As he writes, "the ultimate goal of the study is not to determine if this, that, or the other writing is forged, but to examine the motivation and function of forgery, especially in polemical contexts" (p. 4). For Ehrman, the study of ancient pseudepigraphy is of significant historical value given that it enables scholars to understand more thoroughly various aspects of the theological controversies that transpired over the first several Christian centuries. Just as the many textual variants of the NT shed light upon the various theological controversies that took place in early Christianity, so, too, Ehrman reasons, do the rather large number of ancient Christian forgeries.

The volume is divided into two major sections. In the first section (chaps. 2–5), Ehrman discusses both the practice and perception of forgery in the ancient Greco-Roman world. So common was the practice of forgery, Ehrman notes, that many forgeries were condemned by writers who were themselves responsible for the creation of forged writings (e.g. the author of the Apostolic Constitutions, Epiphanius, and the author of 2 Thessalonians). Throughout the opening chapters, Ehrman makes a convincing case that the practice of falsely invoking the name of another individual "was not an innocent matter of reactualizing tradition" (p. 43) or simply an acceptable literary form, but was "a culturally despised activity" (p. 132) that was commonly condemned in the ancient world as "a form of lying" (p. 43). Despite the strong evidence in support of this conclusion, Ehrman notes that several contemporary scholars such as David Meade, Richard Bauckham, James Dunn, and Luke Timothy Johnson have erroneously suggested that the practice of pseudepigraphy in early Christianity was not a deceptive practice but an acceptable literary technique employed by ancient authors to demonstrate that their writings were in agreement with a particular tradition or influential personality.

In the second major section of the volume (chaps. 6–16), Ehrman examines the use of forgery in early Christian polemics. For Ehrman, many of the writings produced within Christian circles during the first several Christian centuries contained false authorial claims. Ehrman discusses over 50 writings—both canonical and non-canonical—that he believes to have been forged. Throughout his treatment of these works, he seeks to demonstrate that pseudepigraphers frequently sought to deceive their readers and that their most common purpose in doing so was to advance a particular theological agenda. These forged writings, Ehrman notes, "were written at different times, in different places, by different authors, for

different purposes” but were all written by authors who “assumed false names for one chief end: to provide for their views an authority that otherwise would have proved difficult to obtain had they written anonymously or in their own names” (p. 150). In the final chapter of the volume, Ehrman suggests that while the practice of making false authorial claims was always considered a form of deceit, it was often recognized as an effective means of furthering the greater good. As Ehrman writes, ancient authors “may have realized that the best way to assure a broad and much-desired influence was by hiding their identity behind that of a greater authority. They may have thought that they had a truth to convey, and they may have been willing to lie in order to convey it” (p. 548). This “ends justify the means” type of thinking, Ehrman reasons, was quite prevalent in early Christianity and can even be found in various biblical narratives. He argues that were it not for the deceptive testimony of various individuals such as Abraham, the Hebrew midwives, Rahab, and Michal and Jonathan, the nation of Israel would not have been established and the preservation of the messianic line may not have survived (pp. 547–48). Ehrman even goes so far as to conclude that “Jesus too was known to have used deceit” and that “even God could use deceit when he chose to do so” (p. 548).

With regard to the canonical writings, Ehrman confidently concludes that roughly half of the NT was forged. Included in his tally are Acts, Ephesians, Colossians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, 1 John, and Jude (p. 529). Not all of these writings, of course, may be technically classified as pseudepigrapha given that the author is not explicitly identified. Such is the case, Ehrman notes, for Acts, Hebrews, and 1 John (p. 149). Concerning these particular writings, it is argued that, while the authors did not make explicit authorial claims, they did include subtle clues that their writings were authored by a particular Christian leader whom modern scholars have determined to have played no role in the writing’s composition. In the case of Hebrews, for example, the author references Timothy and concludes with the standard Pauline valediction “grace be with you all” in order to insinuate that the writing was written by Paul.

While Ehrman’s primary concern is to ascertain the polemical motivations that inspired ancient writers to produce texts and to falsely attribute them to early Christian leaders, he does discuss his reasons for rejecting the authenticity of several of the canonical writings. For the most part, Ehrman bases his conclusions on internal evidence such as the structure, literary style, and theology of a given writing. External evidence such as the testimony of early Christian writers or the early textual history of the NT is rarely considered. For Ehrman, so effective were the authors of the forged writings of the NT at deceiving their audiences that the testimony of early Christians is largely irrelevant when it comes to dealing with questions of authorship. Given that Ehrman bases many of his conclusions about the authorship of the canonical writings on subjective internal evidence, it is doubtful that all readers will share his conclusions regarding which specific canonical texts were forged. To cite but one example, his conclusion that 2 Thessalonians is inauthentic in part because it shows similarities to 1 Thessalonians will most certainly not be embraced by all scholars.

While readers will undoubtedly disagree at times with Ehrman's conclusions regarding which specific Christian writings were forged, his thesis that the practice of ancient forgery was a common means of deceiving readers in order to advance a particular polemical agenda demands careful consideration. The volume offers a serious challenge to the prevalent theory that the production of pseudepigraphal writings was regarded as an acceptable literary practice in early Christian circles. As Ehrman emphasizes throughout his volume, authorship and authority were closely related in early Christianity. Those who would argue that a text's authorship was unrelated to its perceived authority or place within the biblical canon would do well to grapple with the evidence laid forth in this work.

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Gospel Writing: A Canonical Perspective. By Francis Watson. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013, xii + 679 pp., \$48.00 paper.

C. S. Lewis said that a bad reader seeks to "use" a book for his own end, while the good reader seeks to "receive." There is much to receive in Francis Watson's new book *Gospel Writing: A Canonical Perspective*. Historically, Watson's aim is to account for the genesis of the canonical Gospel. Hermeneutically, the concern is the implications of the fourfold Gospel. Theologically, the position Watson takes underlines the mediated character of all knowledge of Jesus. He does this by examining the *reception* of the Gospels, seeking a paradigm shift in the standard account of Gospel origins. Gospel origins have normally been relegated to the first century, but the reception of these pieces must extend to the second century. Related to this is that the standard account of Gospel origins rejects the irreducible plurality of the canonical Gospel presentation.

He divides the book into three parts. Part 1 ("The Eclipse of the Fourfold Gospel") begins with Augustine. Watson argues it was Augustine who shaped the subsequent Western understanding of Gospel relationships in his *De Consensu Evangelistarum*. Here Augustine laid down the principles of Gospel harmonization. The Enlightenment's dismantling of the canonical Gospel is founded on Augustinian premises. In seeking to provide an apology for the faith, Augustine attempted to create a singular text and thereby paved the way for the eclipse of the diversity of the fourfold Gospel. Watson supports the notion of Augustinian influence by jumping ahead to two other figures in the history of interpretation, Reimarus and Lessing. The Enlightened critics agreed with Augustine that contradictions in the Gospels would seriously compromise the integrity of the Gospels themselves.

Part 2 ("Reframing Gospel Origins") turns to source-critical issues. Watson begins by rejecting Q because the coincidences between Luke and Matthew are too many and too striking for Luke to be independent of Matthew. If this is the case, then Q's existence is no longer to be maintained, since the Q theory is based on the premise of Luke's total independence from Matthew. Watson maintains that the Lukan prologue may be read on the assumption of this evangelist's dependence on

both Mark and Matthew. Yet if Luke is the interpreter of Matthew and Matthew is the interpreter of Mark, then whom does Mark interpret? Watson asserts that a source-critical theory *must* incorporate non-canonical Gospels in the reconstruction to solve this problem. Watson argues that Mark is an interpreter of a Sayings Collection like that of the *Gospel of Thomas*. *Thomas* is an exemplar of an archaic genre, and he attempts to show this by looking at the *Second Letter of Clement* where citations diverge from Synoptic parallels, and show some similarities to *Thomas*. Although *Thomas* is not the source of Mark, it supports the notion that a saying source was utilized. Therefore he proposes that the Sayings Collection should replace the Q hypothesis. Watson does not omit John from his reconstruction. He identifies the *Egerton Papyrus 2* as a source for the Fourth Gospel, claiming that the *Egerton* fragments show similarities to John. Watson continues to contend that source criticism must incorporate Gospel evidence that was later deemed non-canonical. To solidify the process for his readers, Watson ends part 2 by giving a sevenfold summary of the process of reception.

The last step in reception is “normitization,” which is the subject of part 3 (“The Canonical Construct”). Watson begins with Eusebius, arguing that the fourfold Gospel remained a work in progress well into the fourth century. He then turns to Irenaeus, because most argue that he is the earliest to articulate the fourfold Gospel. However, Watson says Irenaeus’s rationale for proposing the fourfold Gospel is motivated by achieving consensus between Rome and Ephesus, West and East. Therefore, for Watson, the fourfold Gospel as presented by Irenaeus is an ecumenical construct with Irenaeus as a peacemaker. Watson slightly shifts gears with Origen who answers the question of why there are four Gospels in a different way. Origen argues the Gospels are not there to tell us purely about observable events, but to communicate *gospel*. If there were not a spiritual gospel beyond the perceptible surface and if acquaintance with the facts were all that the gospel had to offer, then its plural form would be a hindrance rather than a help. Watson closes the book examining pictorial and liturgical articulations of the fourfold Gospel and offering seven theses on Jesus and the canonical Gospel.

Watson’s presentation is filled with detailed examination of texts and many fascinating observations that cannot be covered in a short review. I will interact with his main ideas and let forthcoming reviews argue over the particulars. Hermeneutically, Watson argues against harmonization, which corrupts the received *form* of the Gospels. The presentation of four is vital to interpretation and should not be reduced to a constructed singular text. One does wonder if it is fair to start with Augustine. Tatian seems like the most obvious originator, but attaching harmonization to Augustine gives it more import. Watson presents Augustine as setting the stage for the Gospels being restricted to reconstructing the life of Jesus. Although he admits that Augustine was doing it for apologetic reasons, there is a sense in Augustine’s writings that his hand is forced to defend them. Yet Watson is right that harmonization presented a trajectory that was carried out in the Enlightenment. However, to argue that harmonization is never legitimate is one thing, to warn against its dangers is another. The church has always believed in one Jesus Christ in the midst of four presentations. Even the paintings that Watson analyzes evidence

this. He thoroughly affirms that the evangelists are not merely copyists, but *interpreters* of the tradition. However Watson goes further than most evangelicals will be comfortable with, seeing glaring contradictions as posing no problems.

His rejection of Q, a view that is gaining popularity (see Mark Goodacre), is replaced by a Sayings Collection proposal. In reality, one could maintain both a Sayings Collection for Mark and Q for Matthew and Luke, although Watson would probably add that if Mark used a Sayings Collection to compose his narrative, then the other Gospel writers probably did as well. As Watson repeatedly states, source-critical theories need to incorporate non-canonical Gospels in their reconstructions. What he means by this is simply that the non-canonical Gospels can teach us something about the process and reception of Gospel writing that the four canonical Gospels do not teach us. And there is no reason to reject this proposal out of hand. His Sayings Collection proposal seems reasonable enough, although he is going against a large amount of literature in favor of Q. Some may rightfully argue the Sayings Collection proposal is just as speculative as the Q proposal. For although Watson points to *Thomas* as evidence of the genre, he ultimately is arguing for a non-existent Sayings Collection that Mark used. There is nothing principally to disagree with here and it sounds reasonable, but on source-critical issues it seems that the maxim is true that “the one who states his case first seems right, until the other comes and examines him.”

In the prologue it is clear that Watson adopts a community-determined model for the canon. There is some truth to this model, since the Gospels must be received as canonical, but it is insufficient to explain all the evidence. He examines Eusebius, Irenaeus, and Clement, arguing that there was a wider acceptance of non-canonical Gospels than most are willing to admit. Even if one sticks to only the community-determined model there are counterarguments. J. A. Brooks has observed that Clement cites the canonical books about sixteen times more than the apocryphal and patristic writings. Saying Clement cites an apocryphal Gospel proves little. Yet ultimately his presentation of the canon falls flat because it is too narrow. The community-determined model does not account for the early church fathers appealing to internal qualities of the books and the broad consensus of the majority of the books. The books were also self-authenticating. Although they needed to be recognized by the community, the divine quality of the books played the most significant role in their authentication. Additionally, it seems that Watson misinterprets Origen. Origen sought out spiritual meanings precisely when there were contradictions in the text. Therefore, to state that Origen approached the fourfold Gospel in a different way than Augustine is misleading. He simply had a different way of dealing with the premise Augustine presented.

Gospel Writing is filled with engaging material, and it is a thought-provoking and well-researched book (although long). Positively, it is a contribution to show that the study of Gospel origins has been somewhat stunted and that there are things to learn about the reception process of the Gospels from second-century texts. Although the book is called *Gospel Writing*, it is also about Gospel origins, and therefore more interaction with orality and maybe memory theories would have been helpful. It will be interesting to see if some of his views become mainstream

in scholarship, but undoubtedly the next few years of conferences will have the name “Watson” referenced repeatedly.

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Jesus Is the Christ: The Messianic Testimony of the Gospels. By Michael F. Bird. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2012, ix + 207 pp., \$18.00 paper.

This volume is a follow up to Bird’s earlier volume on the messianic intentions of the historical Jesus, *Are You the One to Come? The Historical Jesus and the Messianic Question* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009). Here Bird moves beyond the historical Jesus to the function of Jesus’ messiahship in the narrative and theological perspective of the four Evangelists. Bird’s basic thesis is that, though the four Gospels have distinct purposes, audiences, and theological perspectives, for all four Jesus’ messiahship is paramount: “It is the testimony to Jesus as the Messiah that binds together the theological, literary, rhetorical, and social functions of the four canonical Gospels” (p. 31). The book is comprised of an introduction, four chapters covering the four Gospels, a conclusion summarizing the results, and a significant bibliography.

In his introduction Bird sets the stage by summarizing the nature of Jewish messianism, the evidence that Jesus claimed to be the Messiah, and various theories of how Jesus came to be viewed as such by the early church. Though the early church used a variety of titles and terms to describe him, “[t]he key designation that summarized their convictions about him, God, and Israel was that he was the Messiah” (p. 11). Early Christian preaching could be summed up in the phrase, “Jesus is the Messiah.” Even the nominal use of *Christos* implies the titular use, since both appear together in the same writings. The reason Jesus’ messiahship is not explicated at length in, say, Paul’s writings is because it was a settled and assumed matter.

In chapter 1, “The Gospel of Mark: The Crucified Messiah,” Bird asserts that apologetic messianism is at the heart of Mark’s Gospel. The Second Evangelist’s goal is to reconcile Jesus’ messianic identity with the scandal of the cross. In light of Deut 21:23, a crucified Messiah is a cursed Messiah, and a cursed Messiah implies a cursed Israel. After several hints at Jesus’ coming fate (2:20; 3:6; 6:6–31), the key turning point of the Gospel comes with Peter’s confession (8:29) and a series of three passion predictions (8:31; 9:31; 10:23–34). All is building to the cross, from the plots of the religious leaders (11:18; 12:12) to Jesus’ parable of the tenant farmers (12:1–12) to his anointing by an unknown woman for burial (14:3–9). Yet for Mark, Jesus’ death is no tragedy, but is part of God’s predetermined plan of salvation. Jesus dies alone under the banner “king” (= Messiah). The cross for Mark represents a ransom for sins (10:45), inaugurating the new covenant (Mark 14:22–24). Bird agrees with Robert Gundry that Mark’s Gospel is essentially an apology for the cross.

In chapter 2, “The Gospel of Matthew: The Davidic Messiah,” Bird argues that Matthew’s Jesus stands as the embodiment of Israel’s Davidic hope. The aim

of Matthew's incipit and genealogy is to locate Jesus in Israel's story as its climax. The themes of the birth narrative drive home this point. Jesus, though conceived by the Holy Spirit, is adopted into the Davidic line. The coming of the Magi reflects OT prophecies of nations streaming to Israel to worship God. The birth in Bethlehem fulfills Micah's prophecy of a messianic shepherd king from David's line. The unusual placement of the quote from Hos 11:1 *before* the flight to Egypt means Israel has become Egypt. They are in exile. Jesus' coming out of Egypt as the Son of God recapitulates the role of Israel, leading God's people out of exile. Taken as a whole, the Matthean birth narrative presents Jesus as the Davidic king "who brings deliverance to Israel in exile and encompasses Gentiles in the scope of the salvation that he achieves" (pp. 66–67).

Matthew amplifies Mark's "Son of David" tradition. Most significantly, the title is associated with Jesus' healings and ministry to the outcasts. After discussing the various possible backgrounds to this healing Son of David, Bird identifies it with Isaiah's prophecies of eschatological healing and restoration: "Overall, the Matthean Jesus is the new Davidic Shepherd over the lost sheep of the house of Israel, who leads them in a new exodus where there is forgiveness of sins, healing, and restoration of the nation" (p. 70).

The trial of Jesus in Matthew highlights his role as suffering, yet soon-to-be exalted, Messiah, Son of God, and Servant of the Lord, who redeems people by his death. With the resurrection, Jesus rises to be the Lord of the church who is worthy of worship and is invested with all authority: "Matthew thus emphasizes that Jesus is the crucified Messiah, yet he shows the church that the crucified one is also its exalted Lord to whom it owes obedience and whom it must follow" (p. 77).

Chapter 3, "The Gospel of Luke (and Acts): The Prophetic Messiah," examines the messianism of Luke and its sequel in Acts. Luke's primary purpose in Luke-Acts is to show the continuity between the promises to Israel and the fulfillment of those promises in Jesus and the church. In this context, Jesus' Davidic messiahship is emphasized at key points in the narrative. The hymns of Luke's birth narrative "highlight in scriptural language Jesus' identity as a Davidic deliverer, prophetic leader, and Son of God." (p. 82). In the programmatic Nazareth sermon Jesus' role is defined in both prophetic and messianic terms. The arrival of the messianic deliver results in a great reversal, as the rich and self-righteous are cast out and the poor, the outcast, and sinners respond to the Messiah's call to repent. At the end of his ministry, Jesus enters Jerusalem as the Son of David (18:38–39) and "the King who comes in the name of the Lord" (19:38), entering the city on a donkey in fulfillment of Zech 9:9. The question of David's son shows Jesus is both Davidic Messiah and divine Lord. For Luke, the death of Jesus does not negate his messianic claims, but rather confirms them, since the suffering and prophetic role of the Messiah was predicted by the prophets. In the account of the Emmaus disciples, "the Son of Man who suffers and is raised is identified explicitly as 'the Messiah'" (p. 88).

In Luke's sequel in Acts, Jesus' messiahship is at the heart of Christian preaching. In the Pentecost speech, Psalms 16 and 110 relate not to David, but to Jesus, who is exalted to God's right hand as Lord and Messiah (2:36). Confirmation

that Jesus is the Messiah (5:42; 8:5; 9:22; 13:22–34; 17:3; 18:5, 27–28) and that the Messiah must suffer (17:3; 26:23) are at the heart of the apostolic preaching.

Chapter 4, “The Gospel of John: The Elusive Messiah,” examines the messianism of the Fourth Gospel. It is debated by scholars whether John’s Jesus reflects Jewish messianism or whether he has abandoned the eschatological dimensions of Jewish messianic hope for more transcendent ones. Bird rejects the notion that for John Jewish messianism has been replaced by a Logos Christology. Rather, “Jewish messianism is put in service to a particular Christian conception of Jesus as the Son of God” (p. 98). The dominant Christology of John is expressed in terms that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God (20:31). This is clear even in the prologue: (1) Preexistence is not a uniquely Christian idea with reference to the Messiah. The rabbis debated whether the Messiah would be preexistent. (2) Jesus as the “Coming One” is a traditional messianic designation (1:9, 15; cf. 1:30; 4:25; 6:14; 11:27; 12:13; 18:37). (3) “Son of God” retains messianic implications in John. Nathaniel declares Jesus to be the Son of God in parallel with “the king of Israel” (1:49; cf. 11:27). (4) Though *Christos* may sometimes function in John as a name (1:17), it never loses its titular significance.

The messianic presentation begun in the prologue continues in the rest of the Gospel. For example, John the Baptist identifies Jesus with traditional messianic titles: the Coming One, the one endowed with the Spirit, and the Lamb (mighty ram) of God. Andrew tells Simon, “We have found the Messiah, the one scripture testified about.” The “signs” that provoke faith in Jesus contain allusions and echoes of messianic themes. Jesus’ statement about rebuilding the temple (of his body) is “pregnant with messianic significance” (p. 115), since the coming Messiah was expected to rebuild the temple (2 Sam 7:12–14; Isa 44:28–45; Zech 6:12–13). As Messiah Jesus is healer (chap. 9), shepherd (chap. 10), life-giver (chap. 11) and king (chap. 12). “Good Shepherd” does not merely identify Jesus as a provider and protector, but also as messianic king. This is evident in a long tradition of kings identified as shepherds in the Ancient Near East and in the tradition of Davidic messianism (Jer 23:1–6; Mic 5:1–9; Ezek 34:16, 23–24). In John 10, the crowd asks Jesus if he is the Messiah (10:24). His answer not only confirms this identification, but links him in unprecedented unity with God (10:30, 33; cf. 5:18; 8:58, 59). In the account of the raising of Lazarus (chap. 11), Martha confesses that Jesus is “the Messiah, the Son of God” (11:27), who gives life to the dead. This is the penultimate Christological confession of the Gospel ahead of 20:31. Both are thoroughly messianic in nature. At the triumphal entry Jesus is called “King,” a theme that unfolds throughout John’s passion narrative, “though the character of his kingdom . . . is defined by a heavenly order” (p. 130).

In the Synoptics, the suffering of the Messiah was predicted in the Scriptures, and his resurrection is the vindication of his claims. In John, the crucifixion is itself the ultimate manifestation of his “glory,” seen already in the earlier “signs” of the Gospel. When Jesus tells Pilate that his kingdom is not of this world, he does not mean that it is personal, internal, and subjective. He means it is spiritual and eschatological—coming down from God. The climax of Christology and the purpose of the Gospel are given in 20:30–31: to provoke faith in Jesus as Messiah and Son of

God. In summary, John confirms that Jesus is the Jewish Messiah, but he is also much more. He transcends and transforms traditional expectations, since they are insufficient to account for his person and work.

Bird's final chapter is summary and conclusion. Though not denying the diversity of perspectives, Bird contends that "all Gospel Christology is a form of messianism and must be understood in that light" (p. 142). What sets NT Christology off from traditional Jewish expectations is the death and resurrection of the Messiah.

This is a helpful little volume. Bird writes in a clear and engaging style and shows good awareness of secondary literature. He provides a convincing case that Jesus' identity as Israel's Messiah is foundational for all Gospel Christology. Especially insightful is Bird's lengthy chapter on John. While the material on the Synoptics at times appears to be stating the obvious, Bird shows how traditional messianic expectations are also foundational for the transcendent Christology of the Fourth Gospel. As a model for how to do biblical theology, this volume would be an excellent supplemental text for college or graduate level courses on the Gospels, NT theology, or NT survey.

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Acts. By Eckhard J. Schnabel. Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012, 1162 pp., \$59.99.

Eckhard Schnabel is the Mary French Rockefeller Distinguished Professor of New Testament Studies at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. He is highly qualified to write this commentary on Acts, since Acts is primarily about early Christian missionary activity, and Schnabel has considerable expertise in this area. Among his writings is the two-volume work *Early Christian Mission* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2004) and another on *Paul the Missionary: Realities, Strategies and Methods* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2008). In his early career, Schnabel served for some 20 years in cross-cultural mission work in Europe, Latin America, and Asia.

His commentary begins with the usual introduction, which covers quite adequately such standard matters as authorship, date, and provenance. Its best contribution is in highlighting issues more specific to Acts, especially Luke's methods of historiography: his selectivity of materials, his comparison to contemporary historians, his use of speeches, and the genre of Acts. The introduction concludes with two useful charts. The first is a detailed chronology for the period from the death of Herod to the martyrdom of Peter and Paul. The chronology covers not only matters specific to Acts but also provides dates of major Jewish and Roman political events. The second is a thorough seven-page outline of Acts, which is followed and enlarged upon for each section of text covered in the commentary. One useful addition to his commentary would have been a brief survey of the history of critical

research in Acts. Though Schnabel provides no such survey, he often alludes to the results of such pursuits, and the reader (especially a student) might not be familiar with them.

Schnabel has divided the commentary into 41 chapters, arranged according to narrative content or thought units. Some are rather short, others much longer. As an example, for Acts 2, Peter's speech (verses 14–36) occupies 32 pages of the commentary, while the account of the aftermath of the speech (verses 37–41) occupies 14 pages. The Zondervan Exegetical Commentary requires each contributor to provide certain set procedures for each block of text—the literary context of the passage, its main idea, the commentator's own translation of the Greek text laid out in graphical form (a sort of discourse analysis), a discussion of the structure of the passage, an outline, the commentary proper (“explanation of the text”), and a concluding application of the passage. Usually the commentary/explanation section occupies the lion's share of each chapter, as it should. Sometimes, however, the other procedures, such as the graphical presentation of the translation take up considerable space. (For Acts 2:37–41, the commentary occupies seven pages—only half the length of the chapter.)

The comment section of each chapter is arranged primarily in verse-by-verse comments, beginning with the author's translation and the Greek text printed beneath it. This arrangement is helpful for the reader, allowing an easy comparison of the translation with the Greek. Schnabel's translation is generally excellent, both true to the text and in easy-to-read modern, idiomatic English. Only rarely does he go out on a limb with his translation. One such instance occurs in the scene of Paul's appearance before the Sanhedrin, where Schnabel translates 23:8 as follows: “For the Sadducees say there is no resurrection, neither as an angel nor as a spirit, whereas the Pharisees confess belief in them both” (p. 929). The usual rendering in English translations is more like this: “For the Sadducees say there is no resurrection, nor angel, nor spirit, but the Pharisees acknowledge them all” (ESV). Schnabel is attempting to solve the “problem” of Luke's using ἀμφότερα (“both”) with reference to *three* things—resurrection, angel, and spirit. In actuality, in Hellenistic Greek the word does not always mean “both,” but in some instances “all.” Interestingly, the only other instance in the NT where the word is used with the sense of “all” is also found in Acts—in Acts 19:16, where Luke refers to the *seven* sons of Sceva as “all” (ἀμφότερων). The usual rendering (as in the ESV above) also avoids the rather unusual translation of μήτε . . . μήτε (neither . . . nor) as “neither *as a* . . . nor *as a*.” In addition, it avoids attributing to the Pharisees a most unusual view of the resurrection in terms of becoming an angel or spirit.

In his comments, Schnabel covers the most important textual issues in Acts, noting particularly the variants of the Western text, although his treatment of the latter could be expanded somewhat. His exposition of the biblical text is excellent. Drawing from the presentation of his translation in graphic form, he regularly brings out the full content of each passage. He also discusses in detail the meaning of passages whose interpretation is disputed among scholars. He often outlines the various views, documents them fully in the footnotes, and chooses the view he

considers most convincing. Though some may not always be convinced by his conclusions, his presentation of the options is both fair and adequate.

Schnabel is at his best when dealing with historical issues. He often provides primary source references in the footnotes. Sometimes, however, he attempts to fill in the gaps of the narrative by suggesting possibilities that are not provided in the text, such as specific dates where Luke's chronology is not so precise or specific locations of events where the text mentions none. An example is his placing several important events in Jerusalem in Solomon's Portico, where the text shows no concern with the specific location. This is true for his treatment of the Jerusalem conference (p. 631), Paul's meeting with James and the elders (p. 871), and Paul's trance in the temple (p. 906). By the time one reaches his chapter on the theology of Acts, Solomon's Portico is no longer a suggestion but the definite location where the "larger" congregation met (p. 1095). On the other hand, sometimes Schnabel downplays the significance of details that *are* in the text. A curious example is his statement regarding the falling of the sleepy Eutychus from a window sill at Troas: "Eutychus's drowsiness is not explained by the 'many lamps' but by the fact that this meeting lasted well into the night" (p. 835). Surely Luke included both facts as contributing to the boy's sleepiness. Why else would he have mentioned something so trivial as the many lamps at all?

Some of the most helpful features in the commentary are his "in-depth" presentations, which are fuller discussions of matters raised in the text, such as the speeches in Acts, the self-understanding of the Jerusalem church, the God-fearers, the Roman procedures of appeal to the emperor, and the ending of Acts. The piece on the ending of Acts is full and well organized. Unfortunately, the various views presented are not documented for the reader, who might want to pursue one or more of them in greater depth. Schnabel could most likely present this documentation with ease, but probably did not include it to save space. In the preface to the commentary he mentions that his original manuscript was twice as long as contracted. This obviously led to some necessary cutting, which is unfortunate. Much of the extra length may be the result of the requirements of the series, including such things as the long presentation of the translation in the form of discourse analysis, which is not all that profitable for writings like Acts that are primarily narrative.

This review will conclude where it began: the contribution of this commentary in applying the missionary story of Acts to contemporary missions. Schnabel has done this with distinction, in his comments on the text and especially in his theological applications at the end of each chapter. His insights in this regard are too numerous to treat adequately here. Suffice it to say that this work will prove invaluable to those who are training for a ministry as Christian missionaries. It will be equally useful for students working in Acts. Its arrangement probably makes it more useful as a reference work than for someone who wants a guide for simply sitting down and reading through Acts. The procedure of placing each chapter in context, presenting the main idea of each section, and outlining it thoroughly will be welcomed by pastors preparing a sermon on a given text or preaching through Acts or leading a study in the book. Schnabel has put an incredible amount of ef-

fort into this project, and it will prove its usefulness to a diverse group of those seeking to have a better grasp on the message and mission of Acts.

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Empowered Believers: The Holy Spirit in the Book of Acts. By Gonzalo Haya-Prats. Edited by Paul Elbert. Translated by Scott A. Ellington. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011, xxv + 289 pp., \$35.00 paper.

Originally a doctoral dissertation written in Spanish in 1967 and subsequently translated into French in 1975, this classic work on the Holy Spirit finally has been made available to an English-speaking audience. In this influential study, Gonzalo Haya-Prats successfully discredited some older proposals, while anticipating many of the advances in Lukan pneumatology. His well-balanced treatment of the topic is still widely referenced today and merits our attention.

The work of Haya-Prats fits into a rich history of Holy Spirit research in Luke-Acts, a history that centers on how closely Luke follows Paul in attributing soteriological significance to the gift of the Spirit. The modern era of research on Lukan pneumatology was inaugurated by Hermann Gunkel in 1888, who argued that Luke understood the Spirit only as the source of the extraordinary but not the source of ordinary conduct or morality for the individual Israelite. In 1926, Friedrich Büchsel moved to the other extreme, arguing that the Spirit was primarily a Spirit of sonship and that charismatic manifestations were merely symptoms of this filial relationship. Heinrich von Baer (1926) attempted to mediate a middle ground between the two extreme camps, but failed to resolve all the tensions. Attempting to respond to some of the unanswered questions of von Baer, Haya-Prats continued this quest for a satisfying middle position, broadening the role of the Spirit from a narrow “empowerment for mission” to a witness of salvation history.

In his preface, Haya-Prats states that the larger aim of this work is “to contribute to the development of biblical moral theology,” which he defines as “that part of biblical theology that pertains particularly to the moral aspect of the message” (p. xv). To offer this contribution, he has narrowed his focus specifically to the Holy Spirit as described in the book of Acts. Haya-Prats’s methodology works much like building blocks, as he moves from smaller units of vocabulary to phrases and paragraphs, and then to the overall narrative structure. Throughout this process, Haya-Prats desires to allow the text to speak for itself, focusing first on the original Lukan communicative intention prior to modern application.

Haya-Prats divides his book into two main parts: “The Lukan Understanding of the Spirit” and “The Effects of the Spirit.” Using nice symmetry, each part consists of four detailed chapters, and the ideas are then synthesized in a brief conclusion chapter. He begins part 1 with an extensive introduction to the term “Holy Spirit” in its Lukan and pre-Lukan contexts. Exploring the origins of the concept and term “Holy Spirit,” he tracks the evolution from the OT to Second Temple Judaism, into primitive Christianity, and eventually to Luke. In this first chapter, he

concludes that Luke has inherited his themes of the Spirit and many of his formulas from the OT and has fixed the term “Holy Spirit” as a proper name for this OT Spirit of God. While primitive Christianity (Paul, early Synoptic strands, etc.) began to move the concept of the Spirit from the impersonal force of the OT toward a literary personification, it is Luke who is to receive credit for firmly fixing the proper name “Holy Spirit” to designate a person in Christian understanding.

Once Haya-Prats has established the Jewish provenance of the Lukan Spirit, he moves on to highlight the specific nuances of Lukan pneumatology as distinct from other portraits in the NT. Chapter 2 emphasizes the distinction between the Holy Spirit and other types of divine interventions, such as angels, power for healing and miracles, and even Christ’s ongoing salvific action. Haya-Prats spends chapter 3 observing Luke’s description of the Spirit as a “gift” or “promise.” Luke’s particular vocabulary leads Haya-Prats to conclude that the Lukan Spirit is an eschatological gift, offering a foretaste of the kingdom that is yet to come fully. In chapter 4, Haya-Prats describes two primary “modes” of the Spirit’s actions in Acts: “complementary influence” and “invasive irruptions” (p. 72). As a general pattern, he sees the Spirit working in a complementary relationship with human agents in the first half of Acts, while during the later Pauline cycle the Spirit imposes his guidance through more external inbreakings. He then assigns any exceptions to the hands of various redactors.

While part 1 defined the reality of the Holy Spirit as found in Acts, part 2 examines the effects attributed to this same Spirit. Chapter 5 discusses the work of the Spirit that is most emphasized in Acts: testimony. Haya-Prats discusses both the indirect testimony of the Spirit (initiated through the apostles) as well as the unmediated testimony of the Holy Spirit himself. Concentrating more on the direct testimony of the Spirit, Haya-Prats notes three characteristics: (1) this unmediated testimony is always directed to believers; (2) it is always a sensory experience in Acts; and (3) at times it serves as a decisive sign for knowing the plans of God.

Chapters 6 and 7 explore the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the moral life of Christians. While chapter 6 focuses on the role of the Holy Spirit in the initiation of the Christian life, chapter 7 centers on his role in the ongoing development of the Christian life. Haya-Prats observes that in Acts one’s original calling is directly attributed to God and only after this initiating faith is it possible to receive the Spirit. He concludes, “[T]he Spirit, according to Acts, exerts no influence either in the forgiveness of sins or in the beginning of the Christian life. On the contrary, the Spirit is given as a fruit of faith to those who already participate in this life” (p. 187). In chapter 7, Haya-Prats notes that, while the Holy Spirit in Acts does not intervene in the ordinary development of the Christian life, the Spirit does have a role in the extraordinary empowerment of this Christian life.

In chapter 8, Haya-Prats describes the Spirit’s role in the prophetic direction of God’s people. As Luke lays out his original presentation of salvation history, the Holy Spirit’s role is not to confer this salvation, but rather: “His work, like that of the prophets, is the announcing of salvation, the transmission of the unforeseeable designs of God in new, critical situations, and the intermittent stimulation of perseverance in God’s people” (p. 230). This salvific plan found in Luke’s two-volume

project centers around three great interventions of the Spirit: first at the Jordan, second at Pentecost, and third at the house of Cornelius.

Haya-Prats concludes both parts of his book in a single brief chapter and offers some contemporary applications. He states that “the Lukan conception of the Spirit awakens the responsibility of believers in order to discover the action of God in each phase of history, in order not to oppose him and to be able to collaborate in his salvific plan” (p. 248). In order to accomplish this in our modern world, “it is necessary to become sensitive to the experience of the Spirit, to the intimate sense of Scripture, and to ecclesial dialogue” (p. 248).

While Haya-Prats’s classic work is almost fifty years old, his fresh insights still merit our consideration today. While his ultimate aim is modern theological application, he patiently examines Acts within its own context, obligated “to study first of all how Luke perceived the Spirit” (p. xvii). While writing in the Catholic interpretive tradition, he allows the text to speak for itself. Likewise, he resists imposing the artificially divisive epochal schema with the rigor of von Baer, or later Conzelmann. He also guards against diluting the distinctively Lukan perspective on the Holy Spirit by reading Acts through a Pauline lens.

While the work of Haya-Prats offers a significant contribution to Lukan pneumatology, some aspects of his work can be questioned. Since he was writing at a time when source and redaction criticism were popular, it is not surprising that Haya-Prats remains overly optimistic concerning knowledge of the sources behind Acts and the Lukan redaction of these sources. When exceptions are found to disagree with his general proposals, Haya-Prats tends to assign them to redactors. Likewise, he overestimates what can be known concerning the mind of the author, Luke.

At times, Haya-Prats fails to give adequate attention to certain aspects of the Lukan narrative. Perhaps the most important of these is the failure to explore sufficiently the larger Lukan concept of salvation. Haya-Prats limits Lukan salvation to conversion, which allows him to distance the Spirit from soteriological matters. Likewise, Haya-Prats neglects the importance of genre criticism in understanding the particular shaping of the narrative. While he acknowledges Luke’s “historic apologetic style,” he does not give adequate attention to how this affects Luke’s presentation of the Holy Spirit in his historiography. In addition, Haya-Prats has given limited attention to the Second Temple background for Luke’s work, focusing almost exclusively on the OT as the matrix for Luke’s thoughts.

As a doctoral dissertation, this work is geared toward the academic student, assuming a working knowledge of both NT pneumatology and Greek grammar. The many tables included are helpful in understanding Luke’s vocabulary, but only if one is familiar with Greek parsing. While his focus remains on detailed academic research, Haya-Prats summarizes his findings in a readable manner, making this book helpful for anyone interested in the role of the Holy Spirit in the early church.

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Exemplary Life: A Theology of Church Life in Acts. By Andy Chambers. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2012, xv + 219 pp., \$29.99.

Andy Chambers, vice president for student development and professor of Bible at Missouri Baptist University in St. Louis, has written this book in order to bring the book of Acts back into the discussion regarding what church life should look like. Chambers argues that the three summary passages in Acts 2:42–47; 4:32–35; and 5:12–16 are all intended by Luke to be portraits of church life that are “a positive example for readers to study and emulate in their own churches” and “describe what life could be like in an exemplary church” (p. 5).

Chambers begins his study with an overview of the impact of historical-critical approaches to Acts, which have led to “an underemphasis on church life in the study of the theology of Acts” (p. 20). The rest of the chapter summarizes the benefits of literary approaches, as Chambers argues that ultimately Acts should be read “historically, theologically, and as literature” (p. 29).

Chapter 2 continues the methodological discussion with a focus on the role of summarization as a narrative technique. Chambers argues that the positive portraits of church life in the summary narratives in Acts are exemplary portraits to be imitated. Thus, although they have historical value, apologetic value (for a non-Christian Roman audience), and evangelistic value (showing the way that Jesus changes peoples’ lives), the main purpose of these summary passages is to provide Luke’s Christian audience with portraits of what “exemplary church life looks like” (p. 59).

The following three chapters then examine each of the three summary passages in turn. Chapter 3 sets Acts 2:42–47 in the context of Pentecost and Peter’s sermon and then walks through the summary by explaining the commitments of the new believers in 2:42, before outlining the qualities of church life in 2:43–47. Chambers discusses the authority and uniqueness of the apostles as “Jesus’ designated representatives in the early church” (p. 73); the hospitality and generosity of the believers in meeting the needs of other believers (i.e. rather than a form of primitive communism, pp. 74–75); and God’s “sovereign initiative and plan” in the growth of the church (p. 81).

Chapter 4 turns to the summary in Acts 4:32–35. Chambers highlights the continued emphasis on the unity of the believers in these verses noting the similarities with ancient Greek writers. He also correctly notes, however, the distinctive emphasis of Acts. This unity is a result of a common submission to the reign of the Lord Jesus through the work of the Holy Spirit (a common submission to the apostolic gospel could also be added here). Again, the continued generosity of the believers in 4:32–35 is neither an idealized portrait nor evidence of communal living like the Essenes but rather a description of “a people whose grip on possessions was dramatically transformed by Jesus Christ” (p. 98).

Chapter 5 examines the third summary passage, Acts 5:12–16. This chapter particularly focuses on the miraculous activity associated with the apostles in these verses. Here Chambers correctly notes the similar “signs and wonders” terminology

in the OT, especially with Moses, concluding that in Acts they primarily certify the leadership of the apostles and their message for the church (pp. 112–13).

Chapter 6 argues that echoes of these principles from the summary passages are found throughout the rest of Acts. After observing patterns such as the large number of conversions and the involvement of the apostles Peter and John in Samaria (Acts 8), the large number of conversions and generosity of the church in Antioch (Acts 11), the teaching ministry, prayer, and generosity of Paul in Ephesus (Acts 19, 20), and the teaching ministry of Paul, the miraculous raising of Eutychus, and the gathering of believers to “break bread” in Troas (Acts 20), Chambers concludes that these are deliberate “echoes” of the summaries of Jerusalem church life. Such echoes are designed to reinforce Luke’s portraits of exemplary life in the earlier chapters (p. 136). The uniqueness of some aspects are noted along the way (the Ephesian “disciples” of John the Baptist in Acts 19 were “non-Christians” who needed to hear about Jesus; the spread of the gospel to Gentiles for the first time is an “unrepeatable circumstance” in salvation history), though Chambers correctly highlights the constant emphasis on local churches founded and established through gospel preaching and teaching that reflect characteristics of unity under Christ in their “togetherness” and generosity.

Chapter 7 summarizes the findings from chapters 3 through 6 and develops a theology of church life in Acts under three main headings: the church’s origin, character, and mission. Chambers argues that although there are unique elements in Acts, the common elements highlight the continuity in church life. It is this continuity that provides a “foundation upon which a theology of church life in Acts can be built” (p. 141). After discussing both the sovereignty of God and human responsibility in the *origin* of the church, the bulk of the chapter is taken up with 20 statements worded as general principles about the *character* of an exemplary church in Acts. Each statement generally begins with “An exemplary church” Not surprisingly, among these statements are principles such as: An exemplary church calls people to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, demonstrated by baptism; submits to the authority of Scripture; commits to the fellowship; prays together; maintains reverence and the fear of the Lord; meets together regularly and shares in each other’s lives; gives generously to meet each other’s needs; gathers regularly for worship; shares meals regularly in each other’s homes; expects to see people saved; testifies boldly to the resurrection of Jesus, etc. Some may wonder if the evidence of the summary statements is stretched occasionally (e.g. the general claim that “God makes them [believers] influential and causes people to respect them,” p. 160). A brief paragraph rounds out the chapter that the *mission* of the church should include proclaiming the gospel as well as establishing and nurturing churches. The book concludes with a brief chapter calling for these principles to be applied in church life.

There is much to commend in this book. Chambers has correctly shown that Acts has much to teach us about the mission of the church, and he has carefully and clearly highlighted the main emphases of gospel proclamation and church formation in Acts while being sensitive to unique elements too. His exegesis is clear, the details of the text are examined carefully, and there is evidence of wide reading

in the secondary literature. His examination of these summary statements is certainly thorough.

Although there are bound to be minor disagreements over specific exegetical decisions, I have two main criticisms of this work. First, methodologically, I do not think that starting from the summary narratives is the best approach to finding a theology of church life in Acts. The result of this approach appears to be a difficulty with some unique aspects that Chambers correctly identifies. For instance, on the one hand, Chambers argues that the point of summarization in Acts 2, 4, and 5, is to commend an exemplary church life, and yet, on the other hand, he rightly notices the unique and foundational role of the apostles and their miracles (see the helpful discussions on pp. 72–73, 111–13, 151–53). This seems to indicate that some significant aspects of the summary statements may not have imitation as their primary purpose. Furthermore, there is little reference to church leadership in this theology of church life, and it is surprising that the only reference to suffering in the 20 principles is number 18 “The risk of persecution will keep some from joining an exemplary church” (p. 159). In the narrative of Acts, however, Paul’s speech to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20 comes climactically towards the end of Paul’s public ministry as a free man and is addressed to the elders of the church at Ephesus who have the task of feeding, protecting, and nurturing the flock in the midst of suffering and persecution (cf. Acts 14:21–23). In this book, however, we have little mention of suffering and persecution and the role and responsibility of elders to model and teach the word so that by God’s grace these characteristics of church life might be seen in the midst of suffering.

Second, in terms of the overall purposes of the summary passages and Acts in general (listed on p. 59; see above), one purpose that Luke himself provides in Luke 1:1–4 is neglected: namely, assurance for believers. If the summary statements (and the helpful observations that Chambers has made from the rest of Acts) are read in light of a purpose to provide believers with assurance, then some of the themes that Chambers has identified might be better integrated (e.g. the role of the apostles as the authorized representatives of Christ), and some of the major themes that did not figure prominently could also have been included (e.g. the continuing reign of the risen Lord Jesus, the theme of suffering, the role of elders who teach the word and shepherd the flock).

Overall, this book succeeds in showing the importance of the book of Acts for thinking about a theology of church life. The specific features that Chambers highlights provide food for thought and should lead readers to examine their own understanding of church life and mission in the light of God’s word. Implementing the principles from Acts highlighted in this book will go a long way, by God’s grace, toward establishing healthy churches.

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God's Saving Grace: A Pauline Theology. By Frank J. Matera. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012, xvi + 267 pp., \$28.00 paper.

In this welcome contribution to Pauline studies, Frank Matera, Professor of Biblical Studies at Catholic University of America, gives readers a compendium of Paul's theology that is relatively concise and yet covers the breadth of the great apostle's contribution. Lamenting the current divide between exegesis and [systematic] theology, Matera writes an exemplary *biblical theology*. As such, the book presents the fruit of his careful analysis of the theology contained in the thirteen NT letters attributed to Paul—what he terms a “Pauline Theology.” In so doing, he does not write a “theology of Paul” (which he views as an attempt to clarify and synthesize the theology of the historical figure). Therefore, while he regularly acknowledges that there are ongoing debates about whether Paul actually wrote some of the thirteen letters attributed to him, Matera's goal is to understand the theology presented within the biblical Pauline corpus. (For the record, Matera is not confident that Paul wrote Ephesians and the Pastorals, though he claims he would not be surprised to learn that Paul did write them.) In my view, this approach is useful in several ways, including that it highlights how very “Pauline” even the disputed letters are. There appear to be as many divergences among the widely acknowledged Paulines as there are between them and the disputed letters. It may be that Paul's theological flexibility in responding to ever-changing ecclesial situations accounts for the diversity of his theological affirmations, rather than that later pseudonymous writers penned letters in Paul's name.

As the title of the book indicates, Matera sees God's “saving grace” as a fundamental structure of Paul's thought. The other guiding principle that Matera employs arises from what he sees as three implicit narratives in Paul's theology: Paul's personal experience of God's saving grace; what God accomplished in Christ; and the narrative of what God's grace means in the lives of believers, namely, that “having been rescued from a past defined by sin and rebellion against God, believers presently live their lives within the eschatological people of God as they wait for the return of their Lord, when they will be conformed to his resurrection” (p. 11). The book proceeds to unpack these themes starting with Paul's own conversion, call, and apostleship, and how these frame Paul's entire theology. Matera contends that Paul's experience of God's saving grace on the Damascus road shaped his entire theological understanding. Based on that, Matera considers Paul's presentation of the person and identity of Christ—the embodiment of God's saving grace (including the concept of the corporate Christ). He moves, then, to the nature of salvation in Christ, followed by Paul's perception of the community of believers who constitute the people of God. This leads naturally to ethics—the life of those within the saved community. Eschatology comprises “waiting for the final appearance of God's saving grace.” The book concludes with the climatic portrayal of Paul's depiction of God—the one who calls, elects, and justifies, who is faithful, who shares his name, who is revealed in Christ and in the economy of salvation, and who is savior.

Faithful exegesis of the relevant texts within Paul's letters contributes to the strength of Matera's enterprise. Virtually every page has at least one footnote; Matera interacts with the major scholars at each point of his presentation. Readers will not be disappointed because Matera has avoided some of the thorny or problematic issues within Paul's letters. While not as capacious as some of the very large recently published theologies of Paul, Matera's 267 pages manage to cover all the important matters that comprise Paul's output. Also, helpfully, every chapter ends with a robust bibliography for further reading, and, again, these lists evidence his assessment of the significant participants in the scholarly debates and contributors to an understanding of Pauline theology.

His tactic is to move carefully from letter to letter within each of the selected topics to extract how Paul presents his understanding in view of the occasions that elicited each of the letters—hence his (and my) characterization of his project as “biblical theology.” He does not begin with philosophical or contemporary categories but allows Paul to set the agenda in each case. Matera ends each subsection with a summary of what he has discovered. The chapters end with an attempt at a synthesis but not at the expense of overly harmonizing the unique perspectives within the various letters.

All reviews must be selective, so I will focus on a few interesting elements of Matera's work. One helpful discussion surrounds Paul's presentation of Christ as a corporate figure in whom believers live and dwell. Matera asserts that “in addition to believing *in* Christ, believers dwell *in* Christ” (p. 75, emphasis original). In other words, “Paul views Christ as a corporate figure whose actions have consequences for others” (p. 77). Here he discusses texts such as 2 Cor 2:14–4:6; 1 Corinthians 15; Rom 5:12–21; Eph 1:22; 2:15; 4:15, 22, 24; 5:23; and Col 1:18, 28; 2:19; 3:9–10. Matera cites evidence of Paul's frequent use of “in Christ” and “with Christ” references. Tellingly, “the risen Christ transcends the limits of time and space” (p. 80).

Along with what seems like an ever-increasing company of scholars, Matera understands πίστewος Ἰησοῦ (e.g. Gal 2:16; Rom 3:26) as “the faithfulness of Jesus” (subjective genitive) demonstrated in his obedient death on the cross. Referencing specifically 2 Cor 5:17, he writes, “This new creation is life in Christ, whom Paul identifies in Romans 5 as the eschatological Adam. To be in the eschatological Adam is to belong to this new creation, where everything has been made new” (p. 120). This appropriately locates Paul's concept eschatologically, rather than the sometimes popular view that here Paul affirms that Christians are new creatures in Christ.

Matera provides a useful unpacking of Paul's view of ἐκκλησία (the church). He shows Paul's theologically complex view of the body of Christ. Paul viewed the church as a local assembly of believers in a specific place (e.g. Rom 16:1). Each local assembly is the church of God (e.g. 1 Cor 15:9). The church exists throughout the world (e.g. Col 1:18, 24). What does Paul mean that the church is the “body of Christ?” As to the evidence in 1 Corinthians, Matera answers the question this way: “the body of Christ is the body of the crucified and risen Lord into which believers have been baptized. Inasmuch as they are one body in Christ, the church is the body of Christ, in which each member plays a role according to the gift the Spirit

has bestowed on him or her” (p. 137). What does Matera say about the church’s relationship to Israel? His answer merits a full quote: “The church is the eschatological people of God drawn from the remnant of Israel and from the Gentiles. But the church is not *a new Israel*, nor has it replaced historic Israel. Although it has not believed in the gospel, Israel continues to exist as Israel, whereas the church exists as the eschatological people of God. According to Paul’s eschatological vision, however, all Israel will be saved. When this happens, Israel and the church will converge” (p. 151, emphasis original). Matera does not explain further what he thinks Paul means that all Israel will be saved (Rom 11:25–26) or how God will accomplish this. Perhaps this is a wise demurral.

I found Matera’s explanation of Paul’s ethic to be very useful. Naturally, he shows how Paul’s explanation of the life lived in Christ grows out of God’s redemptive work accomplished through Christ: it is founded in soteriology. Also, of course, Christian ethics are Spirit-empowered. In an interesting section, Matera describes Paul’s picture of ethics as “a sacramental ethic.” The Eucharist and baptism ground ethics in the church’s foundational identification with Christ that grants the capacity to overcome sin and death in one’s present experience. To unpack this, Matera usefully draws on Paul’s discussions in 1 Corinthians 6 and 11, Romans 6, Colossians 2, and Ephesians 4. I disagree with his appeal to Titus 3:4–7 (“water of rebirth and renewal”) as an allusion to baptism (p. 175), but other scholars certainly defend that identification. In this section, Matera also describes Paul’s ethical viewpoint as a love ethic—faith expresses itself in love for others—and as an eschatological ethic—the *parousia* will be a day of judgment of deeds done in the body.

If you want a reasonably sized engagement with the thinking reflected in Paul’s letters, you could hardly go astray with this book. It is clearly the product of a mature scholar who has thought long and reflected deeply on the words of Paul and their implications for understanding the Christian faith. It is well organized and clearly written. He lets Paul’s letters speak for themselves in a thoroughly engaging way.

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Zeal without Knowledge: The Concept of Zeal in Romans 10, Galatians 1, and Philippians 3. By Dane C. Ortlund. Library of New Testament Studies 472. London: T & T Clark, 2012, xv + 215 pp., \$110.00.

This book is a revised version of Ortlund’s Wheaton College dissertation, supervised by Douglas Moo. It is a study of the concept of zeal in the OT, Second Temple Judaism, and Paul, with a focus on Paul’s theology. It also enters into the discussion about Paul’s break with Judaism by keeping a sustained dialogue with the new perspective on Paul and especially the position of James D. G. Dunn. Dunn is the only NT scholar who has addressed zeal in Paul in a significant way, but in Ortlund’s view Dunn has wrongly emphasized the horizontal aspect of zeal

(zeal for ethnic purity) over its vertical aspect (zeal for God). Ortlund offers a nuanced discussion of Dunn's position, which is essential for a study that has one main dialogue partner. Ortlund recognizes this and aims for "scrupulous fairness" (p. 13). He observes that Dunn at times allows zeal to mean something beyond zeal for Jewish ethnic identity. Yet at the end of the day, Dunn argues that references to zeal in Paul point to the "ardent maintenance of Israel's ethnic distinctiveness over against the nations, violently if necessary" (p. 15). Is this horizontal emphasis correct?

Ortlund begins his study of zeal in the OT by examining the root זָקַן in the Hebrew Bible (and ζῆλος in the LXX). He is aware of the danger of confusing words with concepts—an example of his careful approach throughout the study—but זָקַן is really the only Hebrew root in the OT used to speak of the concept of zeal. He finds that zeal in the OT (both divine and human) is often bound up with Yahweh's covenant with Israel (e.g. Exodus 34; Numbers 25; 1 Kings 19), with idolatry (e.g. Exodus 20; Psalm 74; Ezekiel 16), and (interestingly) with fire, underscoring its consuming intensity. This leads to a definition of zeal in the OT: "relational ardor rooted in the covenant instituted by God with Israel that is invariably aroused by a breach of the covenant and which defends his name and his people against all threats, whether internal or foreign" (pp. 49–50). Contra Dunn, he finds that the zeal of Yahweh, Phineas, and Elijah was not centrally concerned with ethnic purity but with idolatry and ethics—it was zeal for God. In the OT, zeal has both a vertical and horizontal dimensions, but the vertical is primary.

Ortlund next studies zeal in the Second Temple literature, surveying the concept in the Apocrypha, pseudepigrapha, Dead Sea Scrolls, Philo, and Josephus. Once again, he demonstrates the carefulness of his approach by avoiding both dangers of "parallelomania" and "parallelophobia." He studies the background literature to illuminate Paul, not to give his thought a straitjacket. This chapter examines a broad swath of literature, but Ortlund synthesizes his study with the conclusion that "zeal in Second Temple Judaism is inextricably ethical and ethnic, moral and social, vertical and horizontal, concerned with upright living as well as Israel's set-apartness from the nations—yet the former in each pair is consistently the fundamental or most immediate denotation" (p. 113). He follows up with an interesting observation: "not only do these two dimensions interrelate, but they are also, to some degree, mutually inclusive" (p. 113). In other words, the distinction between zeal for Jewish purity and zeal for obedience to God posited by the new perspective is a false dichotomy in the Jewish literature.

Finally, Ortlund moves to the main focus of his study, examining zeal in Rom 10:2, Gal 1:14, and Phil 3:6. Like the OT and Second Temple literature, there is both a vertical and horizontal aspect in Paul's concept of zeal. Dunn has rightly observed the horizontal aspect that has been neglected in Pauline studies. However, "he has framed Pauline zeal in such a way that emphasizes the *form* or *expression* of Paul's zeal-language [ethnic zeal] to the neglect of its *substance* or *essence* [ethical zeal]" (p. 165, emphasis original).

In the conclusion of his study, Ortlund notes that zeal is primarily vertical in the OT, Second Temple Judaism, and Paul. It "refers fundamentally to obedience

to God and God's law—often including, but not to be limited to, issues of nationalism or corporate set-apartness" (p. 169). Thus, "Dunn has set forth the 'horizontal' and the 'vertical' in inverse proportion to the way these dimensions worked in Paul's theology" (p. 175).

I have tried to summarize the main points of Ortlund's study in these few paragraphs, but let me give you a few reasons why this book is worth reading all the way through. First, it is carefully written. It works through an enormous amount of material in the primary and secondary literature (incidentally, in my view it would have served readers to translate the French and German sources in addition to quoting them in the original). Yet it is readable, short, and carefully argued.

Second, the study is balanced but not inconclusive. In the midst of a polarizing discussion (the new perspective on Paul), Ortlund offers nuanced interaction with his dialogue partners and nuanced conclusions about the texts. For example, his study supports the thesis of Krister Stendahl that anticipated the new perspective—the pre-Damascus Paul did not have a conscience troubled like Luther over his inability to obey the law (pp. 172–73). Paul the Pharisee was indeed zealous for God (e.g. Philippians 3). However, Ortlund's fairness does not prevent him from drawing clear conclusions, in particular with reference to Dunn's view of zeal in Paul.

Third, Ortlund's conclusions are both convincing and insightful. Not only was I convinced by most of Ortlund's arguments, but I also gained fresh insight into Paul's theology by reading this book, especially Paul's argument in Rom 9:30–10:3. Ortlund's discussion of Rom 10:2 is in my view the most important contribution of his study. Not only does it form the heart of his study of Paul, but it also comes back up in the conclusion of the book (pp. 171–75). He articulates the insight I gained in the conclusion of this discussion: "*Paul's articulation of Israel's fault in 9.30–10.3 is concerned not with their failure to discharge the law but with their success... .* In one sense, of course, doing the law in the way of which Paul is accusing Israel (namely, 'as of works,' 'not according to knowledge') is not in fact doing the law (cf. Rom. 13.8–10; Gal. 5.14). Nevertheless, Israel's fault is bound up with their *pursuit of* (not disdain for) the law and their *zeal for* (not contempt of) God" (p. 135, emphasis original).

This fault highlighted in Rom 9:30–10:3 goes beyond the fault highlighted in Romans 2. There, Paul exposes Jewish transgression of the law in order to demonstrate that the Jewish people are under the rule of sin and liable to divine judgment along with the rest of the world. As N. T. Wright has reminded us, Paul does not fault the Jews for keeping the law in Romans 2 but for not keeping it. However, in Rom 9:30–10:3 Paul in fact speaks of the Jewish *pursuit* of the law, of their trying to keep it but trying to keep it *in the wrong way*. They were zealous for God, but this zeal was not according to the knowledge of God's righteousness. Thus, Ortlund concludes that in the theology of the post-Damascus Paul there are actually three ways to live: without zeal for God, with zeal for God but in the wrong manner (without knowledge of the gospel); and with knowledge of the righteousness of God revealed through faith in Christ. Ironically, in Paul's theology "there is a kind of zeal to obey which clogs up, rather than clears away, the pathway of divine fa-

vour" (p. 171). Religious zeal itself is not bad. Yet "when zeal is exercised independently from gospel knowledge, it reinforces the natural bent of the fallen human heart to boast, however subtly or implicitly, in self" (p. 172).

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Affirming the Resurrection of the Incarnate Christ: A Reading of 1 John. By Matthew D. Jensen. SNTSMS 153. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012, viii + 227 pp., \$95.00.

This monograph is a revised version of Jensen's Ph.D. thesis at the University of Sydney in 2010. Jensen argues that 1 John should be read as affirming the resurrection of Christ. He finds four instances of this affirmation in the letter: 1:1–4; 4:2; 5:6–7, 20. The opening verses of the letter (1:1–4) provide the framework for interpreting the rest of the letter; thus, the resurrection is central to epistle's argument. For Jensen, the most plausible context of the letter is an intra-Jewish controversy over Jesus' messiahship. The affirmation of Jesus' resurrection plays a crucial role in the Johannine apologetic for Jesus as the Christ.

Part 1 surveys and evaluates methods of reading 1 John. Until the recent past, Johannine scholarship has been dominated by a historical-critical approach that seeks to reconstruct the letter's historical situation from "clues" in the text (cf. e.g. R. Brown, L. Martyn, U. von Wahlde). The letter is typically seen as responding to a recent schism in the community between the author and his opponents, whose views can be "mirror read" off of the author's affirmations and denials. Jensen joins many recent scholars in taking a dim view of the success of such reconstructions. He notes the rise of literary and rhetorical readings from scholars such as J. Lieu, T. Griffith, D. Neufeld, and H. Schmid, though he paints them with a rather broad brush as "abandon[ing] the Historical Critical method," a description that certainly does not apply to Lieu and Griffith. Jensen finds much of value in the rhetorical reading's chastened attempts to reconstruct the situation of the letters. He proposes four methodological principles: (1) situate the work in a first-century context; (2) pay attention to the explicit purpose statements in 1 John; (3) interpret the text in the order it was written; and (4) take the role of intertextuality in the reading process into account.

Elaborating on his methodology, Jensen advocates a "circles and tangents" reading strategy, where the circle is a literary method of reading 1 John, and tangents are intertextual links with texts outside of 1 John. He draws on W. Iser's theory of "gaps" in a text, which a reader must fill in during the reading process. These gaps do not lead to a purely subjective reading, though, since the text has "limiting devices" that circumscribe the process of gap-filling. Readers fill the gaps through the process of intertextuality, as they understand the utterances before them based on their usage in other texts with which the readers are familiar.

In part 2, Jensen engages in a sequential reading of the letter, with a focus on possible references to the resurrection of Jesus. The first and most important text is

1 John 1:1–5, which is typically taken to refer to the incarnation, due to the elements shared with John 1:1–18 (word, life, light, witness, etc.). Jensen argues instead that the resurrection is in view, noting that the author claims to have “handled with our hands” (1 John 1:1)—language that echoes John 20:27 and Luke 24:39.

Jensen next examines 1:6–2:11, which is typically used to reconstruct the claims of the opponents or secessionists, often along the lines of perfectionism or “Gnostic” libertinism. Jensen holds that these slogans are best understood as reporting the claims of first-century Jews.

The only passage in 1 John that explicitly mentions secession is 2:19. Jensen identifies the “antichrists” of 2:18–22 as “faithless Jews” who have never accepted Jesus as the Messiah (p. 113). The “us,” from whom the antichrists have gone out, is not the author and his community, but true Israel. Thus, by denying that Jesus is the Messiah, the antichrists “were no longer Jews, but had left true Judaism” (p. 119). Jensen finds an analogous claim in the sectarian texts from Qumran. Likewise, in the NT, Romans 9–11 and the apostasy passages of Hebrews are seen as describing unconverted Jews leaving true Judaism. Unfortunately, Jensen does not here cite or interact with J. C. O’Neill, who famously proposed an almost identical view in his *The Puzzle of 1 John* (London: S.P.C.K., 1966). Jensen’s reading is also substantially weakened by 2:24, where the emphasis is on *remaining* in the Son, in contrast to the secessionists who have not *remained* in the Son (implying a previous conversion) but have departed.

First John 2:28–3:12 and 3:13–24 each receive brief treatments. Jensen argues that 3:5, 8, which mention Jesus’ “appearing in order to take away sin” refer not to the incarnation, but to his appearing in heaven as high priest (à la Hebrews 9–10). He does not deal with the clear verbal parallel in John 1:29 (αἶρω/ἀμαρτία), which calls his reading into question.

An important passage for identifying the opponents is 1 John 4:2–3, which refers to false prophets who apparently deny “Jesus Christ having come in the flesh.” Most take this to describe the incarnation (since Jesus is often said to “come into the world” in the Fourth Gospel), and thus to be combatting an early docetic Christology. Jensen, however, refers this language to Jesus’ resurrection appearances, that is, his “coming . . . back into the realm of humanity” (p. 162). He notes that ἔρχομαι four times refers to Jesus’ appearance in the Johannine resurrection narrative. (Contra Jensen, however, the verb in the resurrection narrative does *not* refer to his coming back to life, but merely to his entering the room or location where his disciples are.) Jensen does not explain why there is no *clear* reference in 1 John 4:1–6 to the resurrection. Were the resurrection in view, one would expect at least the traditional terminology, such as ἀνίστημι or ἐγείρω, as in other creedal references to the resurrection.

Jensen’s case here would also be strengthened if the Johannine resurrection narrative described the resurrected Jesus in terms of σάρξ (as Luke 24:39 does), but the evangelist, with the rest of the early church, prefers to use σάρξ to summarize Christ’s earthly (i.e. pre-resurrection) phase. Indeed, Jensen is forced to argue the very tenuous position that σάρξ in other creedal fragments (e.g. 1 Tim 3:16:

ἐφανερώθη ἐν σαρκί) speaks of the resurrection, not the incarnation. His discussion of the parallel in *Barn.* 5:6 (ἐν σαρκί ἔδει αὐτὸν φανερωθῆναι) is especially lacking. Jensen claims that “the resurrection is clearly the referent” (p. 168). The context, however, indicates the opposite. *Barn.* 5:1 describes how the Lord handed over his flesh to corruption, while 5:4–6 explains that it was necessary for the Lord to appear in the flesh *precisely in order that he might suffer*. Later, 5:10–11, which Jensen does not treat at all and which is the clearest parallel to 1 John 4:2 (Εἰ γὰρ μὴ ἦλθεν ἐν σαρκί ... ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ εἰς τοῦτο ἐν σαρκί ἦλθεν), relates his coming in the flesh to his suffering and death for the remission of sins (cf. 5:12, “the wounds of his flesh”; 5:13, “pierce my flesh”).

Jensen concludes by scouring 1 John 4:7–5:21 for resurrection references. The “three witnesses” of 5:6–8 play a prominent role in most reconstructions of the opponents. Jensen circuitously argues that the “water and blood” here refer to the piercing of Jesus’ side in John 19:34, which then relates to the doubting Thomas episode, where the wounds in Jesus’ side are used to establish the identity of the resurrected Christ. In my view, to characterize the “water and blood” in this way as referring to the resurrection is dubious, at best. The abrupt conclusion of the letter (5:16–21) contains one more resurrection reference, according to Jensen. In 5:20, the author states that “the Son of God has come” (ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ἦκει) and has given knowledge (διάνοια) to the audience. Jensen reasons that if “coming” in 4:2 and 5:6 can refer to resurrection appearances, so too can ἦκει in 5:20. He further argues for an intertextual link between διάνοια in 5:20 and the verb διανοίγειν in the resurrection appearances of Luke 24:32, 45, calling διάνοια the “cognate noun” of the verb διανοίγειν (p. 191). This is, of course, not the case. The two share only the common prefixed preposition δια- and come from completely different roots (ἀνοίγω from ἀνα+οἶγω, διάνοια from δια+νοέω/νοῦς).

Jensen’s work certainly merits consideration by the guild of Johannine scholars. I welcome his attempt to read 1 John closely with a view to intertextuality and the audience’s participation in the construction of the text’s meaning. The work is generally readable and demonstrates the level of research expected for doctoral work. One could hope, however, for more extensive editing to eliminate or shorten the repetition and laborious style of the underlying thesis, especially the sections on method.

In the end, I believe, Jensen will convince few, if any, with his main thesis. I have already indicated my reasons in the summary above. Certainly a case may be made that the resurrection is (at least partly) in view in the epistle’s introduction, but Jensen’s arguments for resurrection references in the epistle’s other key passages are exceedingly weak. Jensen’s case might have been bolstered had he dealt with 2 John, where the confession required of believers is “Jesus Christ *coming* in the flesh” (ἐρχόμενον ἐν σαρκί; v. 7), the present tense being taken by many as a reference to the *parousia*, which implies a prior resurrection in the flesh. Had 2 John been treated, though, Jensen’s case that the opponents are unconverted Jews would have been substantially weakened, since in verse 9 the author repudiates those who do not *remain* in the teaching of the Messiah, clearly implying that the secessionists

did indeed once confess Jesus as the Son of God, but have failed to continue in faithfulness.

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New Testament Theology and Its Quest for Relevance: Ancient Texts and Modern Readers. By Thomas R. Hatina. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013, xi + 278 pp., \$29.95 paper.

Thomas Hatina seeks to pull NT theology out of what he perceives to be its decline into postmodern irrelevance in his recently published monograph. Hatina believes that because NT theology has historically been practiced from a modernist stance that focuses on objective results and an exclusivist position with respect to other religions, it is increasingly in danger of being left behind in a postmodern, religiously pluralistic, global community. His proposed solution is to approach the discipline in dialectical perspective, allowing for an interpretive circle of communication between exegesis, the reader, the hard and social sciences, and especially the field of religious studies. In this way, argues Hatina, “New Testament theology should be informed by the academic study of religion *before* any attempts at theologizing take place” (p. 3). Being informed by the academic study of religion for the author means that categories in religious studies such as the nature of religious language, religious experience, myth as meaning making, ideology and authority, and mysticism can inform an understanding of the theology of the NT (p. 208). According to Hatina, this inclusive dialectic between world religions, the contemporary situation of the reader, and the ancient text will place NT theology in a more palatable place where it can continue to speak to our contemporary situation.

The book’s organization is straightforward: Hatina describes the current situation of NT theology in part 1, overviews past and current methods of practicing NT theology in part 2, and proposes his own methodological way forward in part 3. Additionally, each chapter ends with a set of discussion questions. Throughout the book, the author makes a distinction between foundationalist and dialectical approaches to the discipline. These categories, building off of Gerhard Ebeling and Dan Via, serve to distinguish between approaches that focus on historical analysis to determine what the text meant (foundationalist) and ones that focus on the contemporary situation of the reader to determine what the text means now (dialectical). As Hatina points out, though, Wrede’s purely descriptive program has not succeeded, as foundationalists still seek to determine not only what the text meant but also what it means for readers today.

Hatina sees serious flaws in the foundationalist approach, arguing that it is too quick to assume the objectivity of the historical-critical method in light of the postmodern situation and the differing results of historical inquiry (e.g. historical Jesus research). Additionally, it is too quick to assume, or perhaps impose, unity onto the NT, both with respect to the canonization process and also to its content. Hatina also finds flaws with the way foundationalists typically structure their NT

theology, using either an author-by-author or chronological approach to the material. These rely too much on the supposed objectivity of the historical-critical method.

Much more palatable to Hatina is the dialectical model, which seeks contemporary relevance over historical description. So palatable is this position for Hatina, in fact, that “the future of New Testament theology depends on [it]” (p. 43). Although Hatina includes the salvation history and doctrinal or thematic approaches here, seemingly exemplary is Bultmann’s demythologization project, where the husk of ancient culture is shed to expose the contemporarily relevant kernel of biblical truth beneath. These critiques of the foundationalist approach and lauded attributes of the existentialist dialectical model lead Hatina into the third portion of the book, where he argues that NT theology ought to assume a posture of inclusivity, openness, and dialogue with respect to world religions in particular and the postmodern situation in general. For Hatina, this means that NT theology ought to take seriously the conclusions of modern scientific inquiry, the global religiously pluralistic community, and the reader’s situation.

There are a few positive points made in *New Testament Theology and Its Quest for Relevance*. First, the author is right to point out modern biblical scholars’ overly confident and sometimes exclusive use of the historical-critical method to achieve interpretive results. Hatina rightly points to the faulty assumption that any method can bring the interpreter pure, objective results, and he is also right to note that simply uncovering historical data is not the sum of interpretation. In other words, getting behind the text is not the foundation for or sum total of the interpretive task. Hatina also provides a helpful summary of biblical hermeneutics from the Reformation through the contemporary situation in his chapter on NT theology and biblical interpretation (chap. 3). And although evangelicals, especially on the conservative end of the spectrum, will disagree almost completely with Hatina’s foundations and methods for how NT theology ought to engage the contemporary postmodern and pluralistic situation, it is nevertheless important for the discipline to recognize its prescriptive role along with the more historically prevalent descriptive stance.

The weaknesses in this monograph, though, greatly outweigh its strengths. There are a number of minor points with which many readers could quibble—interpretive conclusions on a number of biblical passages frequent the work, almost none of which I find persuasive. Some may find Hatina’s interpretive assumptions convincing, but because of their more extreme nature and reliance on old but continually reworked theories—F. C. Baur, Walter Bauer, the Jesus Seminar, late canonical decisions, etc.—that may be doubtful. More troubling are the underlying philosophical and theological foundations that give way to these interpretive disputes that produced for me so many interjections of *Nein!* in the margins.

First among these is Hatina’s lack of attention to an understanding of revelation, either from a sociological, theological, or epistemological perspective. For Hatina’s program to be effective, the NT must be one text among many in religious studies, and NT theology must be one theology among the many theologies of these various texts. He hints at this neutering effect of any sense of biblical authori-

ty in light of his program in chapter 6, when he states that “it remains to be seen whether the empathetic approach ... will inevitably be the demise of organized religions as we know them For once religious devotees begin to view their own faith as one of many religious options, and empathetically try to understand the other beyond the basic level of description, can organized religion function as a medium for ultimate meaning any longer?” (p. 203). Hatina neither answers this question nor provides any theological or philosophical foundation for his program to stand up against this oncoming tide of pluralistic irrelevance. His proposed solution to the problem of NT theology’s quest for relevance may perhaps only speed along its perceived slide into the postmodern abyss.

As if cutting off the branch on which he stands is not enough, Hatina also throughout the book relies on false dichotomies between, for instance, faith and reason and fact and meaning. As much as he wants to move on from modernity, Hatina cannot escape Descartes’s original divide. Although his point that meaning does not derive from bald facts is true and a needed corrective, Hatina swings the pendulum to the opposite end and seems to argue that meaning can be divorced from fact. This seems to come from his reliance on Bultmann’s demythologizing method, but in the end that program puts asunder what God has joined together. Hatina would do well to ponder over 1 Cor 15:12–19—if the resurrection of Jesus is not a bodily, historical fact, then we of all men are most to be pitied. The NT that Hatina seeks to theologize does not divide body and soul, fact and meaning, event and text, but instead demonstrates them to be integrally intertwined, as does the entire biblical canon.

Two other weaknesses deserve mention here. In Hatina’s haste to move from historical-critical objectivity to dialectical subjectivity, he fails to detach himself adequately from the former. His Bultmannian dialectical project is based in part on the assumption that many of the historical-critical conclusions about the NT—its lack of cohesion historically and literarily, its diversity and perhaps paucity in views of Jesus as divine, its movement from Jewish to Hellenistic in outlook—are correct. Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly, Hatina hardly ever engages with opposing viewpoints on either these historical and exegetical points or in his larger methodological enterprise. For someone so adamant about conversation, Hatina almost never cites the opposing viewpoint, much less engages with it. For instance, while questioning the foundationalist approach’s lack of understanding of modern linguistic philosophy, he never mentions Anthony Thiselton and makes only one mention of Kevin Vanhoozer’s monumental work in that arena, and even then it is only in a dismissive footnote (p. 51, n. 22). Similarly, in all of Hatina’s postulating about the lack of the teaching of the NT on Jesus as divine, he never mentions, quotes, or even footnotes Richard Bauckham’s *Jesus and the God of Israel*, which, if not completely refuting Hatina’s position on the matter, at least throws a serious wrench into it. Because of these and other methodological, exegetical, and academic flaws, I cannot recommend *New Testament Theology and Its Quest for Relevance*.

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The Composition of the Gospel of Thomas: Original Language and Influences. By Simon Gathercole. SNTSMS 151. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012, pp. xiii + 322, \$95.00.

Since its discovery in the 1940s, the *Gospel of Thomas* has proven to be a source of both unremitting fascination and controversy. That the controversy shows no signs of going away is confirmed by Simon Gathercole's recently published monograph, which sets out to treat just what its subtitle suggests: the Coptic Gospel's original language of composition and its sources. The two issues, while not necessarily mutually entailing, are nonetheless related. If underlying the present text of *Thomas* we may surmise a Semitic background, this in turn makes plausible either a predominantly oral, early Aramaic background (as argued by DeConick) or a predominantly scribal/oral background in Syriac-speaking Christianity (as has been argued—full disclosure—by the present reviewer). In this volume, Gathercole sets out to argue (1) that the Gospel was written not in a Semitic language but in Greek; and (2) that its author was aware of major NT documents, not least Matthew and Luke.

In the introduction, Gathercole registers five immediate suspicions regarding recent approaches to *Thomas*. First, the author maintains that the retroversion approach taken up by DeConick and Perrin is methodologically suspect. Second, he calls into question the form-critical laws of transmission, which continue to play a role in scholarly theory of Thomasine origins. Third, Gathercole is skeptical of ascriptions of orality on the basis of allegedly oral features within the text, when that same data can be equally explained by editorial modification. Fourth, he finds the oft-made comparison between Q and *Thomas* to be unconvincing, all the more so now that the Q hypothesis itself has fallen on relatively hard times in recent decades. Finally, a sharply posed dichotomy between “independent oral tradition” and “literary dependence” also comes under criticism. Each of these five contentions continues to play a role in the remainder of the book.

Part 1 of the volume is concerned with the two-fold goal of refuting Semitic theories of origin and advancing, in their place, the argument that *Thomas* was in fact written in Greek. In chapter 2, Gathercole catalogues ten difficulties in recovering a Semitic *Urtext* beneath Coptic *Thomas*. These include, for example, the necessity of eliminating Greek and Coptic explanations for a Semitism, a weak database of (Western and Eastern [Syriac]) Aramaic vocabulary and grammar, the rarity of Syriac literature translated into Greek, and the potentially tendentious nature of my own catchword project. This is followed in chapter 3 with a close analysis of some five dozen plus sayings that have been alleged as evidence for a Semitic substratum at one time or another. In each case, the suggestion of a Semitic substratum is called into question with alternative, presumably closer-at-hand, explanations brought to bear.

Chapter 4 then sets forth a positive case for an originally Greek *Thomas*. First, Gathercole offers the obvious fact that *P. Oxy.* 1, 654 and 655 are composed in Greek. Second, he notes that where the Greek Oxyrhynchus fragments overlap with the Coptic text, Coptic loanwords preserve the Greek in 25 out of 27 instanc-

es (an interesting argument). Third, there are several unusual turns of Coptic grammar that can be explained by direct reliance on a Greek *Vorlage*. Fourth, a Greek *Thomas* may be generally surmised from the fact that all of our Gospels (canonical and non-canonical) are thought to have been composed in Greek. Fifth, it is widely held that the Nag Hammadi documents outside of *Thomas* were also originally Greek compositions. Sixth, Gathercole argues for “striking correspondences” (p. 124) between the Greek fragments of *Thomas* and the Gospels represented in NA²⁷.

Part 2 begins with a critique of arguments typically advanced in favor of independence theories. There are four lines of argument in view: (1) *Thomas*'s failure to follow Synoptic order; (2) *Thomas*'s (alleged) primitiveness; (3) the lack of close parallel between *Thomas* and the Synoptics; and (4) the (alleged) absence of redactional material in *Thomas* (where such redaction does occur this can be counted as a late interpolation). Each of these arguments is turn is found wanting. This prepares for Gathercole's own statement of method in chapter 6, which involves testing for Synoptic dependence by identifying places in *Thomas* where Matthean and Lukan redaction of Mark is preserved. Naturally, this preempts other possible avenues of investigation. Gathercole explains: “In sum, arguments for (1) an individual canonical Gospel influencing *Thomas* where the canonical Gospel and *Thomas* are the only two documents in this case, (2) harmonization in *Thomas*, (3) the influence of redaction of unknown sources (4) including Q—all these are problematic This is not to say that such theories are impossible or even unlikely, merely that they are very difficult to prove to the satisfaction of many” (p. 151).

The following two chapters constitute a carefully argued prosecution of the method along with further investigation of other possible dependencies on early Christian documents. Chapter 7 provides four instances where traces of Matthean redaction are discernible in *Thomas*; chapter 8 lists even more instances of Lukan redaction. “In sum, then,” Gathercole writes, “we have eleven out of twenty cases of sayings in which redactional features are identifiable” (p. 212). Because these redactional elements are scattered throughout the putative strata hypothesized by leading advocates of oral/independence models, these models are problematized (pp. 221–24). Part 3 closes the monograph out with further evidence of “secondary orality” dependency on other early Christian texts: Romans (chap. 10), Hebrews (chap. 11), and the “Two Ways” tradition (chap. 12).

The Composition of the Gospel of Thomas makes a helpful and unique contribution to Thomasine scholarship, even if that contribution is not utterly original. Others have opined against the *Thomas*-as-oral-and-independent theory by appealing to not only the standard critiques of form criticism but also the subjective route by which *Thomas*'s oral quality is often inferred. Several scholars have also maintained that the method of retroverting Coptic *Thomas* into Aramaic or Syriac is too precarious to warrant assent. Finally, Gathercole's principal project, namely, the marshaling of redactional material in *Thomas* as a way of proving dependency, is also familiar territory—here one thinks mainly of the writings of Tuckett. Yet in synthesizing these familiar lines of argument in a fresh way and taking them further and deeper through painstaking attendance to the details, Gathercole has succeeded admirably.

As such, the book is an exemplary piece of scholarship. Thomas scholars owe the author a debt of gratitude for offering a detailed critical assessment of arguments that various scholars (myself included) have marshaled in favor of a Semitic substratum behind *Thomas* and/or its oral-independent status.

Nevertheless, I confess I remain less than impressed with the overall force of Gathercole's case either for a Greek *Thomas* over and against a Syriac *Thomas* or for his separate argument for Thomasine dependence on account of redactional traces. Space forbids a thorough discussion as to why, but perhaps one or two broad criticisms are in order. First, while Gathercole is rightly nervous about arguments where the evidence may be stacked (p. 41), he is unforthcoming with the fact that his own methodological commitments also serve to stack the deck in his favor. Rather conveniently, for example, he will not permit "considering possibilities ... of influence upon *Thomas* of harmonizing readings" (p. 150) when precisely a harmony like the Syriac *Diatessaron* will at many turns explain the data better than his own solution (see e.g. his insistence on *Gos. Thom.* 31's use of Luke alone, even though the former exhibits elements of both Luke 4:24 and Matt 13:57//Mark 6:4 [pp. 187–88]). It is presumably for this same reason that when in the following analysis of the Parable of the Wicked Tenants (pp. 188–94), Gathercole cites Snodgrass's monograph but oddly makes no mention of the same author's persuasive article (cited in the bibliography) that the unusual structure of *Thomas*'s parable mimics that of the OS (and therefore likely also the *Diatessaron*). In short, Gathercole's overall argument would be stronger, had he been more willing to engage his opponents at their best.

There is a broader concern along these lines: Gathercole's method is problematic inasmuch as it rules out *a priori* the very alternative arguments he seeks to counter. The author apparently seems to be looking for "decisive proofs" (p. 31, emphasis original) for a Semitic substratum; similarly, the case for Thomasine independence appears to be mortally wounded because it is "virtually unfalsifiable" (p. 209). Yet in his recurring criteria of decisive proof and unfalsifiability, the author seems to be unaware that he (like far too many scholars in the guild) is appealing to a narrowly positivist method of empirical falsification, which, as it turns out, preempts the very kind of coherentist argument that his opponents share. Neither DeConick nor I would claim that all the many building blocks in our respective arguments are equally strong (a dozen years beyond my dissertation there are a good number I wish I had dropped!), but the very fact that Gathercole is forced to do business with the *scores* of Semitisms proposed over the years raises the question as to whether such an overwhelming abundance of "reasonable maybe's" finally points in the direction of "probably." Apparently, given Gathercole's positivism, even a great pyramid of such "maybe's" fares no better than an evidentiary molehill once the individual bricks can be shown to be of varying quality. I demur. In my view, if the only thing we can "know" about *Thomas* is that which can be garnered

on the basis of a strong foundationalism, we “know” next to nothing at all about the text as a whole. Perhaps, in the end, even Gathercole seems to grant this point.

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The Myth of Persecution: How Early Christianity Invented a Story of Martyrdom. By Candida Moss. New York: HarperOne, 2013, 308 pp., \$25.99.

Historical method is instrumental for establishing techniques and limits to approach and to appropriate the past. Church history is no exception. Rare is an historiographical topic like early Christian martyrdom so worthy of attention to reestablish limits against exaggeration or uncritical assumption; even rarer is how a corrective would ironically exaggerate any historian’s ability to appropriate the sources fairly and accurately after its treatment. In this very important work for scholarly and popular cultures, the pendulum swings too far.

Candida Moss, Notre Dame Professor of New Testament and Early Christianity, is author of the recognized work *The Other Christs: Imitating Jesus in Ancient Christian Ideologies of Martyrdom* and the more recent *Ancient Christian Martyrdom: Diverse Practices, Theologies, and Traditions*. Both are scholarly and careful. She is part of an educated effort in the academy to recognize multiple associated interpretations in historical texts centered on martyrdom in the early church. In this work *The Myth of Persecution: How Early Christianity Invented a Story of Martyrdom*, she shifts from a tone of scholarly inquiry to a more popular-sounding accusation of the historical and contemporary use of martyrs in the Christian tradition. The very title projects an allegation against the tradition established long ago and that continues to be in place in plenty of sectors of the faith. The work seeks to offer a corrective to the popular martyrdom tradition.

Persecution against Christians was not as widespread, thorough, extensive, and consistent as parts of the church and academy presume. This is the main thesis of the work that corrects all indiscriminate assumptions about early Christian martyrdom. The author recognizes that scholarship has tried to correct the image of constant marginalization, persecution, and martyrdom of Christians, and she gives further voice to it: “On the Roman side, there is very little historical or archeological evidence for the widespread persecution of Christians. . . . That Christians saw themselves as persecuted and interpreted prosecution in this way is understandable” (p. 15). Yet, the problem for her is that the victorious church was able to construct stories in the era to follow Constantine and church sovereignty: “The fact of the matter is that there are no stories about the death of martyrs that have not been purposely recast by later generations of Christians in order to further their own theological agendas” (p. 17). For the author, this proves to be the case for almost all early accounts of martyrdom.

The work surveys lightly the historical record of persecution accounts. The background to early Christianity’s view of martyrdom begins the work, the Christian development of its own martyrdom tradition follows, and then several chapters

address the “invention” of the martyr through assessment in the chapters to follow. The two early chapters seek to broaden any view that Christians were unique pioneers of victimage through examination of Greek philosophers and literature, including funeral orations, which proved that there are “a great variety of opinion about the value of [death by martyrdom]” in which all sorts of cultures “respected, revered, and valorized their fallen heroes” (p. 52). She reveals early her *Angst* against Christians who abuse history by claiming that the early church somehow equals some inaugural grandeur of social suffering. Besides her accusations aimed at a tradition that has not yet been given a chance to speak for itself, the only error that stands out in early chapters is a missing definition of martyrdom. Throughout the work, Moss challenges the accepted Christian notion of martyrdom as any form of suffering that leads to death. She should offer sooner her desirable, narrower definition of martyrdom—that it must be an exclusively direct, inimical, and religious persecution leading to death (pp. 159–60). This omission requires her to repeatedly reconstruct “martyrdom” from its traditional meaning throughout the work.

The most important chapters and core of the work address the problem that early Christian martyrdom stories are invented. For the author, the accounts from the first two hundred years of the faith mostly “aren’t historical accounts; they are religious romances written and intended to be read for moral instruction and entertainment” (p. 88). Likewise, the accounts written later of these early events, especially those recorded by Eusebius in *Church History*, are “a deliberate and strategic attempt to improve the image of Christians, to bolster the position of the church hierarchy, and to provide security for orthodoxy” (p. 217). Numerous accounts of martyrdom from the early church are touched on for illustration or example throughout the work, revealing the erudition and familiarity the author possesses on the topic. Works like *Perpetua and Felicity* and the *Acts of Justin and his Companions* predictably get attention, alongside more obscure works like the *Acts of Ptolemy and Lucius* or the *Martyrdom of Chrysanthus and Daria*. The work will stand as a resource for critical evaluation of several martyrologies.

In the core of the work lies the controversy of the book. Chapters 3–8 posit several premises that construct a case for martyrdom invention: the need of the early church to construct martyrdom stories to justify its persecuted identity, the inflated level of persecution of the early centuries, the politically-based dislike of the Romans for the church, the false image of church innocence, the manipulative promotion of orthodoxy through martyrologies, and a resultant dangerous legacy that becomes a bane of contemporary Christianity. If historical method involves research, sampling, and interpretation, the author is well versed in the first two and does not reveal herself as skilled in the latter—at least not in this work. As an historian well acquainted with martyrological sources, Moss provides enough examples to keep her sample set viable. It is the interpretation and application of the ancient sources that makes the work controversial and disappointing. Having positively reviewed her prior work, *Ancient Christian Martyrs*, I was shocked to see such a radical departure of interpretation from judicious plausibility of dating or parts of sources to outright dismissal of so many sources in this book. Moss writes here to

an audience that seems to be unaware of the myth that early Christians were consistently and widely persecuted, rather than a scholarly set of people already aware of this presumption ready to nuance the patristic data. The result is that she pleads to delegitimize the entire tradition without allowing the sources any credibility.

Several themes in the work are worth recognizing for their legitimacy for readers. First, persecution against Christians was not so much religious as it was political. Romans executed people for civil unrest, under political pressure, or out of a desire to offer empire-wide political support for an emperor. In fact, Moss points out well that so many martyrdom stories come with a political component that must be considered in the reason for execution: Religion “is the key element that’s missing if we’re to argue that they died for Christ” (p. 137). Valerian is a good example of political motivation for capital punishment: “Although he was ambivalent about rank-and-file Christians, he did not want to see Roman values corrupted by Christianity” (p. 152). Rightly and readily admitting that a political factor was part of the persecution against Christians, she overlooks how religious persecution can be veiled for political purposes. “We do not know whether at any point they were given the opportunity to deny Christ and live. This is the key element that’s missing if we’re to argue that they died for Christ” (p. 137). Yet, the *ratio decidendi* for any given ancient martyrdom episode must be considered permissibly in its complex justification for persecution. Social, cultural, religious, and political incentives are often blurred in human motives; the theology, exegesis, and hagiography of the early writers are no less historically valid just because the immediate context was political. Furthermore, for ancient Romans the political sector and the state religion were often united in one cause; to recognize Caesar was to be civically pious.

Second, a theme of a critical reading of the sources is preferred to a blind faith acceptance of their validity. There is a cross-section of the church that accepts and celebrates the martyrs without ever examining the sources or the context of the sources. Occasionally, Moss does not deny early Christian suffering: “Nor should we underestimate the reality of their experiences. There is no doubt that Christians did die, that they were horrifically tortured and executed in ways that would appall people today” (p. 160). Closer study of early church martyrdom reveals that the stories of the apostles come as claims rather than with multiple attestation of dependability. Apologists like Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and Cyprian wrote in a complex setting with church problems and not merely observers to impartial persecution. Yet, when the author challenges the historicity of an entire martyrdom source as biased or selectively touches on certain authors, she slants the case for readers against the redemptive validity of the sources.

With this theme of critical reading, martyrdom sources are questioned on minor points, then too easily dismissed. For example, Eusebius has long been questioned for bias, but Moss does not elaborate nor offer appreciation of any historicity in his record. Instead, the church historian is dismissed in a paragraph as “drawing battle lines for the established church orthodoxy against heresy” (p. 217). She does not fairly justify the reasons for his bias in the book, but assumes the scholarship and potentially dismisses any historical account of martyrdom that he offers.

Additionally, the veracity of the accounts is retired through the litmus test of a single missing feature. For example, “The fact that Pliny has to make inquiries about [trials of Christians] indicates that, before this point, there were no measures in place for the treatment of Christians” (p. 140). For Moss, there can be no lost sources, clarification of practice, or stories of episodes by the governor that lead him to find clarification from the emperor.

With both of these first two themes, the author reveals the uncertainty of the historical record of early Christian martyrdom. Moss effectively pops the bubble of disillusion that hagiographic and historical works can be accepted uncritically, even for matters of faith. This is nothing new for a NT scholar. However, she errs on the side of critical dismissal of the wealth of historical sources on martyrdom by questioning their veracity because today we lack knowledge of their exact relationship to historical events: “The climate was hostile, but there was no active persecution” (p. 145); “we do not know how bad the persecution was, but we know that the edicts were not uniformly enforced” (p. 158). A better approach would be to admit that their historicity can be ambiguous; sometimes we lack reasons to dismiss them as much as we lack reasons to accept them. The critical scrutiny she applies to their authenticity does not apply to their possibility, even when we lack any proof to discredit them. At least we should admit that these sources might be fully or partially authentic until scholars can effectively prove otherwise. When archeology, textual criticism, or a literary reading does not yet invalidate the accounts, the burden is on Moss or other scholars to disprove their veracity and not just to broad-brush against them.

Third, a theme of contemporary overstatement of early Christian victimage is particularly troubling to Moss. Throughout the book, she rightly challenges as invalid any assumption that these early figures were purely or perfectly motivated individuals. She rightly challenges that any image of a restrictive religious persecution consistent across the ages untainted by ulterior motives as equally invalid. Any church individual who employs the martyrs as equivalent to a contemporary branch of the suffering church should beware. The desperate nature of apocalyptic literature, the problem of voluntary martyrdom, and the vindictive undertone of many early martyrdom accounts are noteworthy to balance common perception of innocent victims.

Yet, here Moss reveals her most irritating motivation in writing the work: the polemical abuse of her peers. In *Culture Wars*, Michael Jones reveals Moss’s personal acrimony toward conservative Catholic bishops walking in the circles of the University of Notre Dame. Such individuals compare the Obama administration with Hitler and the marginalization of conservative ideology (as in regards to national health care reform) with the persecution of the church in the Roman Empire. The positing of unfortunate parallels should not motivate an historian to overreach in casting aspersions on the credibility of early church martyrdom accounts. The possibility of such an agenda is further advanced when Moss’s examples of abuse in the introduction and final chapter are stacked with conservative figures in the Catholic Church and contemporary press: Bishop Jenky, Bishop D’Arcy, Newt Gingrich, Glenn Beck, Rush Limbaugh, and Nicolas Sarkozy. Naming these figures

does not reinforce a method of objectivity of early church history, and they have nothing to do with the credibility of ancient Christian persecution.

The response of any reader must be either to weigh the delegitimizing of these accounts for fruitful insights or to become frustrated with entire claims against their historicity potential. The author does not allow for any conceivable historical acceptability of most accounts illustrated; for example, the entire corpus of apostolic martyrdom stories “are not historical accounts and they do not demonstrate that Christians were persecuted” (p. 138). For the Scillitan martyrs, “We just cannot be sure how many died, what their names were, or precisely what they said... . [W]e cannot be sure that they were truly martyrs” (p. 117). The posture of the historiography seen here has two distinct oversights: single sources are too easily undercut, and the corporate effect of a chain of martyrdom stories is emasculated. Too easily can a reader conclude that the entire martyrdom corpus of the early church is a fabrication. Yet, this is the desired overall effect that the author seeks. To her credit, she unashamedly posits a thesis that challenges the whole and the individual parts, and this combination could have been more subtle for a less powerful book. Its boldness can only lead us to assume the author is so convinced by the lack of veracity of this tradition that it was time to sacrifice it on the altar of reason.

A criticism of omission of martyrological data to this thought-provoking book is warranted. Lactantius’s *On the Death of the Persecutors* can equally be called biased for its favoritism of Constantine, but it also offers an important perspective of consistent persecution phenomena that does not find recognition here. He hardly finds mention in the book. Hippolytus’s *Commentary on Daniel* has been evidenced to reveal a martyrdom motif behind its writing, but this early third-century work or author is not mentioned. Tertullian’s *To the Martyrs* is missing as a resource for evidencing a larger phenomenon of persecution. Even works like Tertullian’s *On Flight in Times of Persecution* cannot offer Moss partial evidence of persecution as much as it finds emphasis of a work that “does not fit with the evidence” of even a short era of ubiquitous persecution (p. 161). Omission of such works steals the validity of a comprehensive—even if intermittent—generational challenge of persecution.

In the end, through treating the sources so easily, the overall effect of an intermittent but legitimate persecution of the church is lost. For Moss, the ancient literature about the persecution against Christians does not gain momentum until the fourth century, at which time it is excessively removed from the event and comes with a bias of theological or economical gain. While such threads cannot be denied, neither can the evidence that preceded the fourth-century writings about the earlier two centuries be denied. Scholars will recognize many of these errors, but we return to the audience and purpose of the book to confront idyllic and uncritical embrace of early church martyrdom. While there is need for rank-and-file believers to examine the tradition more critically, the popular opinion of church tradition is hurt by this work.

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The Poverty of Nations: A Sustainable Solution. By Wayne Grudem and Barry Asmus. Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2013, 398 pp, \$30.00 paper.

“The poor,” Jesus promised his disciples, “will always be with you.” By this, he was not dismissing the grim reality of poverty as frivolous or simply bothersome. Jesus was saying, instead, that the opportunity to serve the poor would be constant, because poverty would never be extinguished.

The hard data vindicate the Savior’s prediction. Even though gains have been made over the past two decades, massive hunger stalks the planet. The World Bank notes that “1.22 billion people lived on less than \$1.25 a day in 2010, compared with 1.91 billion in 1990, and 1.94 billion in 1981. Notwithstanding this achievement, even if the current rate of progress is to be maintained, some 1 billion people will still live in extreme poverty in 2015” (<http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/poverty/overview>). And due to hunger, it is estimated that six million children age five and under die annually (<http://www.care.org/work/poverty/child-poverty/child-poverty-facts>). Yet international agencies and economists alike acknowledge that the world has the capacity to produce more than enough food for everyone living, and considerably more. So why the massive disparity between the relative abundance of food and the continuing enormity of global poverty?

This question and those related to it—the general causes of perpetual poverty, inequality of opportunity, lack of access to essential resources, etc.—are what occupy Wayne Grudem and Barry Asmus in *The Poverty of Nations: A Sustainable Solution*. However, their concerns go well beyond tracking the causes of poverty and extend to solutions to these causes that are practical and effective.

Grudem is a well-known theologian and author; Asmus, who holds a Ph.D. in economics from Montana State University, is the senior economist at the conservative National Center for Policy Analysis in Washington, DC. Together, they have combined to write a book that asserts, “We can win the fight against global poverty. We just need a better way forward.” *The Poverty of Nations* (a word-play on Adam Smith’s *Wealth of Nations*) is their thoughtful, systematized offering to provide that way.

“The goal of this book,” Grudem and Asmus announce in the introduction, “is to provide a sustainable solution to poverty in the poor nations of the world, a solution based on both economic history and the teachings of the Bible” (p. 25). This ambitious goal is articulated in nine chapters containing an extensive series of propositions designed to present the reality of global poverty, the reasons it continues to exist, and “real world” ideas about how to combat it.

The Poverty of Nations is for thoughtful but non-academic, non-specialist readers. For example, it devotes only five pages to explaining why communism and socialism are failed economic models, enough to give a reasoned explanation but not an exhaustive analysis. This is what the authors intend: they want to familiarize concerned Christians with the reasons for poverty and rational solutions to it, not provide tome-like socio-political analyses. As they explain, “We have written this book for ordinary adult readers” (p. 31). Consequently, the book offers a comprehensive summary of the philosophies, practices, and principles that lead to, or away

from, economic prosperity. Additionally, the book does not deal with “mercy and compassion”-types of efforts, which the authors endorse heartily. Rather, its “focus [is] on the nationwide laws, policies, and cultural values and habits that determine so much of the course of economic development in a nation” (p. 26).

In its opening pages, the book deals with the production of goods and services as the essential goal of all economic endeavors. The authors discuss the nature of poverty and provide examples of countries whose economic models have changed for the better. They address economic philosophies that deter prosperity (everything from slavery to communism) and then describe, at length, the benefits of the free market.

Of particular interest to readers of *JETS* are the five theological justifications for economic freedom the authors provide: the Bible’s teaching about ownership of private property; personal stewardship before God; the common *imago Dei* shared by all persons (“all men are created equal”); Scripture’s teaching that the role of government is a narrow one; and “the absence of any clear biblical support for the idea that government should control the economy of a nation” (p. 139).

Much like a systematic theology text, the book is organized into a clear outline form (e.g. chapter five, section A, subpoints 1–3). This makes it not only relatively easy to follow, but also enables the authors to build their case sequentially. To read the chapter outlines is, to an extent, to read the book. The appendix, in which the seventy-eight propositions that inform that book’s substance are listed, combined with the chapter outlines, provide a useful overview of the book’s theses.

The chapter headings inform the substance of the authors’ argument:

- The Goal: Produce More Goods and Services
- Wrong Goals: Approaches That Will Not Lead to Prosperity
- Wrong Systems: Economic Systems That Did Not Lead to Prosperity
- The Economic System: The Free Market
- The Mechanics of the System: How Does a Free Market Work?
- The Moral Advantages of the System: A Free Market Best Promotes Moral Virtues
- The Government of the System: Leaders Who Use Their Power for the Benefit of the People as a Whole
- The Freedoms of the System: Essential Liberties for Economic Growth
- The Values of the System: Cultural Beliefs That Will Encourage Economic Growth

The “solution” proposed by the authors is comprehended in the propositions they espouse. It is not a solution in the sense that taking an aspirin can cure a headache. Rather, the solution Grudem and Asmus present is found in the articulation of the nearly fourscore axioms in whose application they believe stable and just economic growth is derived.

Unlike a book on, say, mass transit, Grudem and Asmus do not offer ideas about how to pay for, build, and maintain a particular system of economics and government. Instead, they offer principled counsel applicable to every nation. They describe the conditions by which poverty can substantially be alleviated, wealth created, and justice achieved.

Critics will charge that Grudem and Asmus have presented a set of principles that have little bearing on the real world. It is, some will complain, a listing of principles whose application can never be fully realized. This criticism misses the point: The authors have made clear that they are providing a road map to prosperity, not the car in which to drive there. In other words, they are mindful that the implementation of their program is fraught with difficulty. They make no pretense of presenting a comprehensive agenda of application, but rather say, in as many words, “If a country wants to rid itself of poverty and put itself on the road to prosperity, here’s the way.” In comments made at Immanuel Bible Church in Springfield, VA, on November 7, 2013, Grudem acknowledged that the principles articulated in the book cannot easily or smoothly be implemented in every cultural and national context. He called for “heroic leadership” to bring changes needed, and made the point that every country is at various stages of economic and social maturity (<http://immanuelbible.net/component/preachit/message/a-sustainable-solution-to-world-poverty>). This means that some principles will be more relevant to one culture than to another.

In despotic regimes, the potential for change might seem modest. The disinterest of autocrats and dictators to appreciate the value of their peoples’ well-being is acute. Yet political and economic revolutions are neither impossible nor unprecedented—witness the fall of the former Soviet Union. Had the principles outlined by Grudem and Asmus been applied in the post-Communist economy more fully, it is likely that the resurgent oligarchism in Russia would have been more constrained.

The authors emphasize both the value of personal charity (and note that the free market promotes it) and its inadequacy as a means of solvency. It might prevent people from starving in the short term but does nothing to alleviate their condition of poverty. This is why Grudem and Asmus stress the need for wealth creation “by [people] creating valuable things that did not exist before. When they do this, they add not only to their own wealth but also the wealth of their nation” (p. 55).

The authors also cite such nations as Japan, China, and Taiwan as examples of countries that, when they embraced more free market, growth-and-productivity economic patterns, developed more prosperous societies and families. Grudem and Asmus would not claim that these or any other economy perfectly followed all aspects of the recipe for progress that the book outlines; their point is that as countries begin to apply Scriptural and market-based principles of growth, then, to the extent they do, they prosper. As Grudem and Asmus note, a simple review of international GDP data makes this clear.

The principles they advocate are animated by a belief that a free market, conditioned by just laws and regulations, is the greatest generator of prosperity for any nation. The authors express specific economic goals as foundational: “the standard measure of wealth and poverty [is] per capita income,” and “the standard measure” of a country’s prosperity is its GDP.

Grudem and Asmus offer a careful but comprehensible apology for the free market (pp. 131–221)—its biblical basis, how it works, its benefits, and its morality.

At the same time, they do not idealize free markets, noting that “every economic system on earth has sinful people in it, people who do morally wrong things. . . . Neither are we saying that free markets . . . eliminate stupidity, obliterate selfishness, eradicate greed, or control the behavior of companies to everyone’s satisfaction. . . . The proper question is, ‘Does a free-market system tend to discourage and punish wrong behavior and tend to encourage and reward virtuous behavior, and does it do these things better than other economic systems?’ We believe it does” (pp. 187–88). Similarly, they make a case for a government system that prevents the excesses of human fallenness within the free market: “A free-market economic system is not enough *by itself* to bring a country from poverty to greater prosperity. The government of the nation must also protect against corruption in government; protect its citizens against force and people who would harm them; and promote universal education, stable family structures, and freedom of religion” (p. 258; emphasis original). In tandem with this, they assert that “unless government establishes and guarantees crucial economic and political freedoms, no society can move from poverty to prosperity” (p. 260). Their chapter on “the freedoms of the system” (pp. 259–307) explains what those guarantees must entail.

The authors are neither libertarians nor unquestioning conservatives. They believe government should mandate “compulsory universal education” because such is essential to economic productivity (pp. 253ff). The question they do not address (purposefully so) is at what level (city, state, county, federal) such a mandate should be enacted. Some would respond that if the nation-state demands universal education, implementation of this demand is best left to local schools and parents, or else the powerful tentacles of government will reach in and erode parental authority, impose uniform standards inapplicable to every student in every context, and accrue far too much power in the lives of the citizens over whose children it possesses such authority. However, Grudem and Asmus’s contention, fundamentally, is that education leads to prosperity—and about this there can be no dispute—and does not deviate from the book’s chief narrative argument: liberty, order, and justice, premised on respect for human dignity and freedom, provide the framework in which prosperity can be increased and access to it expanded.

The authors spend a fair (and welcomed) amount of time on property rights (pp. 141–53). Their exposition of the biblical and axiological bases of property ownership is exceptional. At a time when some evangelical leaders seem to be calling for what amounts to “soft socialism,” it is refreshing to read a systematized explanation of why the ownership of property is a moral and biblically endorsed good. In this, the authors are much in sync with the founders of the United States, for whom property rights were seen as the bedrock of liberty. Mason, Jefferson, and many others in the founding generation grasped that if one cannot legally own oneself (per John Locke) and that which one earns or inherits, there is no real incentive to work hard or even work at all. Without the right of property, one operates solely at the government’s whim. That is hardly the inspiration of achievement. There is also a very practical benefit from the recognition and support of this right: As scholar Thomas West explained in his book *Vindicating the Founders*, “Government protects property, not because the current pattern of wealth and poverty is in

all respects just, but because security of property is a promise to the industrious and talented that they will be able to keep what they earn” (p. 44).

The book ends with a healthy caution against materialism. “We recognize that material prosperity is a secondary issue,” aver Grudem and Asmus. “We close by encouraging rich and poor alike to make their own personal relationship with God the first priority of their lives. . . . Our hope is . . . that every reader will come to a deeply satisfying and rewarding relationship with God through Jesus Christ” (p. 367).

The Poverty of Nations is a unique contribution to the literature of economics and theology. The insights contained in it could, if applied with courage and common sense, transform economies, nations, and countless lives. Few books can provide such an extraordinary promise.

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Privilege the Text: A Theological Hermeneutic for Preaching. By Abraham Kuruvilla. Chicago: Moody, 2013, 336 pp., \$35.99 paper.

Captivated by the intricacies of the interpretive movement from Scripture to sermon, Kuruvilla centers both his practical and academic ministry around homiletics: exploring preaching through research and scholarship, explaining preaching by training the next generation of church leaders, and exemplifying preaching in regular pulpit engagements. Before joining the Dallas Theological Seminary faculty full-time he was an adjunct professor in pastoral ministries. He has also served as interim pastor of several churches, as well as president of the Evangelical Homiletics Society. Kuruvilla is a Diplomate of the American Board of Dermatology, and he maintains an active clinical schedule. His research arenas include hermeneutics as it operates in the homiletical undertaking as well as the theology and spirituality of preaching and pastoral leadership. Single by choice, he also has a special interest in the theology of Christ-centered singleness and celibacy (see his faculty page, <http://www.dts.edu/about/faculty/akuruvilla>). Kuruvilla’s work *Privilege the Text* advocates a *Christiconic* hermeneutic that informs a preacher’s homiletical endeavors, specifically as they relate to application of the biblical text to the congregation.

Kuruvilla’s work is a complex analysis of homiletical methods and hermeneutical paradigms. Further, his work not only critiques alleged *Christocentric* hermeneutical and homiletical methods; it also propounds a new mode of reading Scripture for the purpose of preaching in such a way as to “privilege the text”—he calls this homiletical interpretative schema a *Christiconic* reading of the biblical text. He contends that this hermeneutical method most clearly enables homileticians to abide by the rule of centrality that compels preachers to focus interpretation upon Jesus. Kuruvilla subdivides his work into four chapters, not including his introduction and conclusion: (1) “General and Special Hermeneutics”; (2) “Pericopes, Theology, and Application”; (3) “Divine Demand and Faithful Obedience”; and (4) “The Adeqah and Christiconic Interpretation.” This review will highlight salient points

from each of the various sections that I found to be particularly insightful or helpful throughout Kuruvilla's work.

In chapter 1 Kuruvilla is concerned with what authors do with what they have said in their compositions. Homiletically, it is clear that he is specifically concerned with what authors do with what they say as it relates to valid application for both readers and sermonic auditors who experience distanciation from the text(s) composed. In agreement with Ricouer, he argues that the divine text, the Bible, projects into a *world in front of the text* that transcends the effects of distanciation. This, he contends, enables preachers to bridge the homiletical gap that grammatical historical exegesis cannot overcome and to derive valid application(s) for their auditors who inhabit a future world (i.e. *the world in front of the text*). Further, Kuruvilla advocates that homileticians utilize a Hirschian concept of meaning when endeavoring to derive valid applications that exist in such a world. Thus, he contends that authorial intention in the past event of composition governs valid future applications that homileticians may exposit for their congregants.

Chapter 2 introduces pericopal theology as it relates to application—throughout, Kuruvilla asserts that valid application is his chief concern. Kuruvilla argues that the heralding of each biblical pericope brings about covenant renewal for the preachers' auditors as the text's divine demand is elucidated and applied validly to the hearers. He, therefore, argues for a two-step process in the preaching enterprise: "the task of the preacher consists in moving from pericope to theology, and subsequently from [pericopal] theology to ['valid'] application" (pp. 90; cf. 136–140). To accomplish his task, he contends that homileticians "must look *at* the text, not *through* it" (p. 272); this is the only way to "privilege the text," according to Kuruvilla. Pericopal preaching, then, simultaneously privileges the text and allows for relevant and valid theological application(s) to occur in the *world in front of the text*, a world that is projected throughout the entire biblical canon. Furthermore, Kuruvilla's concern for pericopal theology and preaching is that it positions preachers to bring the whole counsel of God to bear on their auditors as they herald the Word systematically (p. 93). In addition, it allows for homiletical specificity in relation to 'valid' application as "the theological thrust of a given book is thereby elucidated pericope by periscope, with the preacher generating specific and discrete application in each sermon" (pp. 115; 117–18).

In chapter 3 (pp. 151–210) Kuruvilla's concern is how preachers discern the divine demands of Scripture in order to bring them before their auditors through the homiletical enterprise. He broadly defines divine demand as "anything God desires and expects of mankind, in terms of relationship, behavior, responsibilities, and so on" (p. 152) or as "how one may be aligned to the precepts, priorities, and practices of God's ideal world" (p. 272). He contends that the divine demands of Scripture never change, though "the contexts and circumstances of the original giving of the OT law" do change (p. 208). His chief concern throughout is that the divine relationship existing between God and his redeemed in Christ necessitates the obedience of faith (i.e. the divine demand).

In chapter 4 Kuruvilla seeks to substantiate a newly proposed hermeneutic that will inform homiletical endeavors—a *Christivonic* hermeneutic of Scripture.

Again, he reiterates that his chief concern is the potential applicability of every pericope within the Bible for Christian readers and auditors who experience distancing from the text. Before proposing his new hermeneutical schema along with its homiletical implications, Kuruvilla analyzes a familiar OT pericope—Genesis 22—that has often been read *Christocentrically* by interpreters who ask, “Where is Christ in this text?” Throughout, his analysis models an intensive literary reading of Scripture that accentuates the theology proposed by the pericopal unit. Further, he critiques *Christocentric* models of interpretation; indeed, he argues that *Christocentric* readings and preaching cannot be substantiated in the Bible. Therefore, he contends that a new hermeneutic must be proposed in order for homiletical endeavors to offer valid applications of Scripture. For Kuruvilla, a *Christiconic* reading of Scripture contends that “every biblical pericope portrays a facet of the image (εἰκὼν) of Christ that man is to be conformed to” (p. 265). Christ, according to Kuruvilla, is not found *explicitly* in every text—that is, not in a redemptive historical sense. Rather, every pericope accentuates God’s divine demand to call believers to Christlikeness through the heralding of the Word. For this reason, he contends that *Christiconic* preaching accentuates the formative nature of Scripture through the preaching enterprise better than *Christocentric* preaching does.

Overall, *Privilege the Text* is text-centered and biblically saturated. Each chapter is laced not only with complex hermeneutical theories, but also with textual examples in order to demonstrate Kuruvilla’s homiletical and hermeneutical claims. Additionally, he is both lucid and provocative throughout, even when laboring to articulate these complex homiletical and hermeneutical techniques. Readers familiar with homiletical and hermeneutical debates surrounding *Christocentric* readings of Scripture and the subsequent suggested applications will profit from Kuruvilla’s thought-provoking work. Most helpfully, his concern throughout the work is valid application of the biblical text to people. His emphasis on application refreshingly accentuates that the preaching enterprise is not primarily about the conveyance of information from the herald to the hearer; rather, it is about making the Word come alive *through* the medium of application so that transformation can take place. Thus, this work will be helpful to disciplined pastors wanting to study more intensely how to make concrete applications that faithfully “privilege the text” and are simultaneously relevant to twenty-first century hearers. While not everyone will agree with all of Kuruvilla’s conclusions as to how homileticians are to make valid application, every reader will have to consider his thorough proposal.

Furthermore, Kuruvilla’s literary reading of the Aqedah (Genesis 22) is both one of the book’s greatest strengths and thought-provoking sections. His patristic-esque, intensive reading style accentuates that the authorial interest of the biblical writers was theological in the composition of their respective canonical documents. It is for this reason that homileticians must pay attention to the detailed composition of the text(s) under consideration. For example, he notes the perplexing disappearance of Isaac from the narrative after Gen 22:16. It is as if Abraham leaves the mountain alone, returns to his waiting attendants, and then returns home without his beloved son, Isaac. The narrative disappearance accentuates that Abraham loved God more than his son; that Abraham’s final test disposed him to pine after

God more than the heir he had desired for so long. Again, though some will not adhere to the hermeneutical observations that influence Kuruvilla's homiletical conclusions, it is clear that his careful, intensive reading notes "unobservable" meaning to the careless eye.

I have only a few criticisms of Kuruvilla's work. First, though he has many valuable points to contribute to our understanding of meaning, it seems that he too strongly bifurcates the relationship between the "original textual sense" of a passage and the passage's "significance" to the contemporary era. His work would do well to close this gap by noting that application (or "significance," for Kuruvilla) *is* meaning; application *is* the meaning of a passage. What the biblical texts incite us to do is what they mean for us. Further, Kuruvilla too strongly distinguishes "exemplification" (i.e. application) from "significance" (p. 63), creating even further distance from the text's "original sense." Though he intends his method to aid homileticians, he appears to complicate interpretation by providing multiple hermeneutical layers that only a few skilled technicians can draw out from the text. In an attempt to "privilege the text" he separates meaning from the text.

Second, Kuruvilla contends that applications are *authoritative* if properly drawn from the text, yet he provides no objective criteria by which interpreters can extract these *authoritative* applications. Rather, citing Richard Hays, he merely notes, "Our ... readings must be tested prayerfully within the community of faith by others who seek God's will along with us through close reading of the text" (p. 146). This, it seems, is unhelpful, especially in light of the fact that Kuruvilla endeavors to articulate *one* authoritative way of reading (hermeneutics) and preaching (homiletics). In short, his criterion of authoritative application is too vague.

Third, Kuruvilla critiques *Christocentric* readings and preaching as unsubstantiated by the biblical text, yet he is unclear as to how his *Christiconic* hermeneutical and homiletical paradigm is markedly distinguished from the methods of those he critiques. Both are attempts to accentuate valid and concrete applications of the biblical text; both are attempts to avoid moralistic exhortations devoid of the grace of God in Christ that alone saves sinners (Eph 2:8-9) and empowers the redeemed to be perfect as the heavenly Father is perfect (Matt 5:48). Therefore, it seems, in many ways the primary difference is terminological rather than hermeneutical or homiletical.

In conclusion, Kuruvilla's book is not only thought-provoking but also saturated with the biblical text. Indeed, it has implications not only for the intersection of hermeneutics and homiletics but for methods of expository preaching and expositional reading of Scripture as well. Preachers will be challenged, even in their disagreement, to read the Bible more faithfully by interacting with this seminal work.

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God's Good World: Reclaiming the Doctrine of Creation. By Jonathan R. Wilson. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013, xviii + 259 pp., \$24.99 paper.

Jonathan Wilson believes that we are “missing basic research on the doctrine of creation” (p. vii); therefore, his goal in *God's Good World: Reclaiming the Doctrine of Creation* is threefold: (1) demonstrate the neglect of the doctrine of creation; (2) consider the consequences of that neglect; and (3) offer an account that corrects this deficiency while providing a corrective (p. viii). The overall theme of his project is to hold redemption and creation together because “without creation, there is nothing to redeem ... without redemption, there is no creation” (p. ix). Wilson strongly grounds his theology in a Trinitarian doctrine of creation; his view of creation as Christological is also admirable. Often in ecological theology, academics either overshoot to being bio-centric, or underdevelop doctrines and engage in androcentrism. The corrective—and evangelical—perspective must be theocentric. Wilson does this skillfully.

Chapter one begins with a diagnosis of five “diseases ... that result from a theological deficiency in the doctrine of creation” (p. 3). The first is Gnosticism, or the belief that matter is evil. This leads to disembodiment, the second disease, which makes one “weakened and vulnerable to anyone who has a corrupt theology of the body” (p. 5). A deficient theology of the body in turn leads to a truncated salvation, the third disease, whereby humans believe that salvation is an other-worldly phenomenon, the fourth disease, which will liberate them from their body. Finally, because of the “deficiency in the doctrine of creation,” Christians have bought into alternative creation stories (p. 8), among them evolution. Wilson continues to diagnose “church health” and the prognosis is negative. The lack of a doctrine of creation rooted in redemption allows some Christians to deride creation care. This surely leads to complicity in the destruction of God's creation. For Wilson, the antidote to the anemic doctrine of creation is recovering the twofold practice of the sacraments of baptism and Eucharist. He is not speaking of the moment in time when one is baptized or takes the Lord's Supper; rather, he is encouraging *practicing* baptism and Eucharist.

In chapter two, Wilson opines that the lack of attention to the doctrine of creation is due to “the marginalization or absence of theology itself” from the academy (p. 17). That is, theology intentionally retreated from the academy and decided to play by its own rules, which are outside of scientific and historical critique. In order to return theology to the academy, Christians must focus on the superabundance of creation and the dialectic of creation and redemption. The superabundance of creation is not merely the physical products of the earth, but closer to the superabundance of God's being that is described in Jürgen Moltmann's *Jesus Christ for Today's World* ([Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1994] 44–45). Chapter two, like chapter one, ends with a recommendation for action. Here, reclaiming Sabbath rest as a way to stand against the “pretensions and pride of the academy” (p. 28) facilitates Christian participation in the redemption of creation.

Chapter three tackles the pathologies of a society “missing” creation. At this time Wilson presents conflicting accounts of the implications of a lack of redemp-

tion in our doctrines. In chapter one he wrote that we have been taught “salvation that promises freedom from our bodies and escape from the world” (p. 6). Yet by chapter three he claims “we have lived as if this world circumscribed the possibilities of thought and life” (p. 35) and have believed the lie of society that “this world is all that ever has been and ever will be” (p. 37). Chapter three is written in short topical snippets like the preceding two chapters. These can seem disjointed at times, but allows readers to peruse a topic and dip into an example of the lack of redemption in the doctrine of creation and return to the chapter as a whole at will.

In chapter four Wilson sets out to “develop a doctrine of creation” (p. xii). He focuses on the dialectic of the Kingdom—“the necessity of holding in relationship two works of God” (p. 51)—namely, creation and redemption. This point is laid out in a multiplicity of ways. Like his other chapters, there are numerous very short sections, from one paragraph to a few pages long, that isolate various points he wants to make. I was pleased to see a section towards the end dedicated to Christian ethics.

The focus of chapter five is the Trinity in relation to the redemption of creation. After a précis on the doctrine of the Trinity, Wilson considers “the trinitarian economy of creation” (p. 80) that follows naturally from the economy of salvation. It is creation that is his concern here, however, and Wilson takes an apophatic approach to indicate what happens when the triune God is not foremost in the doctrine of creation. For instance, he suggests that when the Holy Spirit is not present in formulations of creation, we have a world where God “has no continuing relationship with it” (p. 87); furthermore, without the Son, we forget that the world is in need of redemption (p. 89). Although there is not a section dedicated to the Trinity minus God the Father—presumably because it would no longer be a theology, properly speaking—Wilson does double back and examine the doctrine of Christianity from a Father/Son/Spirit Unitarianism where two members of the Trinity are absent. This section is truly fascinating; I leave curious readers to explore his insights for themselves.

Chapter six seeks to “re-map” the doctrine of creation, though the author indicates that the entire book up to this point has “been engaged with the doctrine of creation” (p. 97). Wilson lifts up three main aspects of creation: it is a gift; it is a blessing; it is life. Keeping this trio in focus allow Christians to look always to redemption while at the same time dodging the enslavement that accompanies the snare of “religion, entertainment and technology” (p. 118). The chapter ends with a note on peace.

By far the longest chapter in the book, chapter seven examines Scripture through the lens of creation and redemption. The goal is to “be drawn into and to draw others into the good news of the redemption of creation that is narrated and witnessed in Scripture by the work of the Holy Spirit” (p. 128). Wilson uses a novel approach to his extended treatment of Scripture: he starts at the end of the canonical Bible and arrives at the beginning. In this way “we can catch all the things that we did not notice the first time” (p. 132). Of particular note is the discussion of wisdom in the poetic books. Wilson footnotes the scholastic debate about wisdom as Christ (p. 156 n. 37), but does not invoke Elizabeth Johnson, *She Who Is: The*

Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse (New York: Crossroads, 1992). This would have been a helpful addition to his theology, as Johnson explains persuasively how Sophia is the female counterpart to the male Logos. This point allows both women and men to be affirmed as being created in the *imago Dei*—a God beyond gender who created a sexually dimorphic creature—and ties back into Wilson’s motif of creation.

Chapter eight engages the world’s narrative of human life: the broken clock; the blind watchmaker; the selfish gene; survival of the fittest; natural selection; and virtuality (avatar life through new technological identities) are discussed. These are conspicuously rooted in atheistic philosophies or philosophers. Here Wilson takes a decisively Calvinist turn, citing total depravity and (gracious) election as a counterbalance to purely scientific explanations for our broken world. These theological remedies are all situated in true life—“hope of redemption and the power of the new creation: the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (p. 196).

Following from the discussion of the world, chapter nine takes up worldliness and culture. Reacting against separatist fundamentalists who retreat from “the world,” Wilson wisely warns evangelicals not to fall into the same trap when it comes to “culture” (p. 202). In fact, neither the world nor culture *per se* are problematic, but rather “all things . . . that have not recognized and submitted to God’s work of redeeming creation” (p. 203) is the issue. H. Richard Niebuhr’s classic *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1951) would place this viewpoint squarely within the “Christ Transforming Culture” typology.

Chapter ten takes a decidedly different stance. Addressing consumerism, Wilson rightly notes that American Christians are not only consumers individually and corporately but also that “we are being consumed” (p. 207). In a powerful denouncement of consumer culture, the global market, and inundation with advertisements, Wilson leaves readers with practical steps toward stewardship instead of profligate wastefulness. Environmental ethicists will no doubt be pleased with these recommendations.

Chapter eleven contrasts two stories: that of the fallen world and that of redemption. These two narratives told in conjunction help to cultivate in us the practice of presence and patience leading to a two-fold prayer: “how long?” and “come Lord!” (p. 233).

Conservationists and advocates of simplicity will rejoice to see that chapter twelve confronts meekness, or what Wilson defines as “power under control” (p. 226); theologians might also have *kenosis* called to mind. Meekness—exemplified in Jesus—assists Christians in avoiding the two extremes of “think[ing] that we must act without God to save the planet and . . . think[ing] that the superabundance of life from God gives us license to drain the resources of life in this world” (p. 232). This tactic is typical of Wilson’s middle way approach.

Chapters thirteen and fourteen build a theological anthropology, with personhood and embodiment being addressed, respectively. Personhood is not earned; it is given by dint of “being dependent on God” (p. 236) and becoming “a participant in God’s redemption of creation” (p. 239). For the embodied soul—the person—this perspective means believing that “our bodies are a part of God’s creation

and thus also part of God's redemption" (p. 243). Bodies are therefore good and redeemed through life in the *pneuma*.

Wilson ends with worship. Chapter fifteen could be a conclusion as easily as the last chapter of the book. The (Protestant) sacraments are revisited (cf. chs. 1 and 2) and the good news of "the story of the redemption of creation," which is life (p. 259), is reiterated.

While *God's Good World: Reclaiming the Doctrine of Creation* will be of broad interest to students, pastors, theologians, and academics, there are a few points of critique that I would level against Wilson's book. First are concerns about his presuppositions. In the introduction Wilson clearly states that he will not address common creation issues such as evolution or science and faith (p. xi), but his view of these topics necessarily informs his work even if they are not given explicit attention (see ch. 9). At one point he lists "particular accounts of evolution" (p. 8) among the diseases of "alternative creation stories" to which Christians are susceptible. It is unclear here if he is addressing micro- or macro-evolution, but either way various evangelicals can and do hold to evolution. Instead of dismissing some evolutionary theories as a symptom of a lack of redemption in creation care, a generous reading of this non-essential doctrine could have been extended.

Second, Wilson glosses over concepts that have strong roots outside the evangelical biblical tradition in some places, but he does not alert readers to complementary resources. For example, chapter two discusses life and knowledge as participatory (p. 25). Our participation is necessarily localized in each unique individual or, as feminist theologians indicate, in the experience of each person (see Anne Carr, *Transforming Grace: Christian Tradition and Women's Experience* [New York: Harper and Row, 1996]). These experiences are unique to each of us and allow us to "understand our particularity as the form of our participation in creation" while giving others freedom in their particularity as well (p. 26). Also in chapter two is a discussion of the *telos* of each person and each part of creation (p. 27). This presentation seems to be rooted in Thomas Aquinas (*Summa Theologica*, pt. I-II q. 91, art. 2) but it was not flagged as such.

Finally, I was surprised to see Wilson buck tradition and describe the *telos* of humans as "participat[ing] in the peace of creation ... [and] not to be 'saved' or 'condemned' either individually or corporately" (p. 28). Although set within the discussion of *shalom*, the traditional belief that the human purpose is to "glorify God and enjoy Him forever" (Westminster Shorter Catechism, Q. 1) was overlooked. Because Wilson's ideas put forth in the book are orthodox, it would only strengthen, rather than detract from, his argument to show broader interdisciplinary and interdenominational awareness. These concerns notwithstanding, *God's Good World* moves Christian evangelical theology of creation beyond ecology or systematic theology into a tangible, applicable realm; Wilson is to be commended for this on several fronts.

Wilson takes special care to include a post-colonial critique of explorers and modern theologians who have been unable to "'recognize' the humanity of the inhabitants of the New World" by "[placing] them in categories that deny their humanity" (p. 42). Surprisingly, sexual orientation—perhaps the most prominent

way conservative Christians have dehumanized other people through categorization—is not listed among his analysis. Perhaps this was intentional, although sexism (p. 201) and gender oppression (p. 236) are identified as obstacles to true Christian life, so Wilson is not unaware of Christian social justice.

This book is also a great corrective to the well-supplied, well-fed, developed world readers—who are his purported audience (p. 45). The lack of business ethics and rampant consumption which needs to be tempered by the belief that God “is all we need for life” (p. 45) is a fine prescription for those of us in the opulence of America, but it would be cruel to tell those in the developing world that there is a superabundance of creation and that love for God is all we need. A global context is generally absent in Wilson’s writing (though see p. 89, n. 32; p. 102).

Overall, Wilson is innovative in his thesis that the suffering of the doctrine of creation can be attributed to a deficiency in the view of redemption and not as some would say, a result of the misinterpreted Genesis imperative to domination (Gen 1:28). He persuasively points to the manifold ways that creation apart from redemption leads Christians to live their lives on earth as if resource consumption and preservation for future generations does not matter. The idea that this world is disposable and therefore one is not accountable for personal consumption and use is surely evident not only in planetary destruction but also, in my opinion, ballooning obesity. A faulty eschatology, one that awaits only the end of this world and body, or one that does not look forward to the redemption and renewal of this world and body, is surely at the center of creation neglect. Wilson navigates these hurdles effectively and orchestrates a solid account of redeemed creation.

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