

## BOOK REVIEWS

*The Unseen Realm: Recovering the Supernatural Worldview of the Bible.* By Michael S. Heiser. Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2015, 413 pp., \$27.95.

Bizarre. Weird. Strange. Terms like these, Michael Heiser says, express how many Christians today feel about select Bible passages that deal with the supernatural—passages that the author targets in his treatise. Heiser works as a scholar-in-residence at Faithlife, the parent corporation of Logos Bible Software. A website promotes his book ([www.theunseenrealm.com](http://www.theunseenrealm.com)), while another website offers supplementary details concerning the book's contents ([www.moreunseenrealm.com](http://www.moreunseenrealm.com)). The primary audience includes pastors and scholars. A popular version of the work also appeared concurrently: *Supernatural: What the Bible Teaches about the Unseen World—and Why It Matters* (Lexham, 2015).

Forty-two chapters and eight parts fill out the volume. Helpful visual aids appear throughout, but numerous substantive footnotes distract the reader from the running text. The end matter consists of an epilogue, acknowledgments, subject index, and Scripture index.

The book reads like a biblical theology, moving through history chronologically, with a special focus on the world unseen. The author's launching point, Psalm 82, received a thorough treatment in his dissertation (p. 13). Verse 1 proclaims, "God (אֱלֹהִים) stands in the divine assembly; he administers judgment in the midst of the gods (אֱלֹהִים)." The latter use of אֱלֹהִים shows that God possesses a divine assembly—members of a divine council. At the book's outset, Heiser lists about forty biblical excerpts that many interpreters gloss over because those excerpts seem nonsensical to the modern Western mind (p. 19). Sample excerpts include Gen 6:1–4 (the sons of God), Ezek 28:11–19 (the king of Tyre), John 10:34–35 ("you are gods"), and Hebrews 1–2 (the divine council). The book aims to expound these excerpts and show their interrelatedness while accounting for the details. The author takes the reader on a journey through Scripture, building his case brick by brick.

Exegesis ought to shape our theology, rather than vice versa, Heiser stresses. We must allow Scripture to speak rather than "*filter the Bible through creeds, confessions, and denominational preferences*" (p. 16; emphasis original). He encourages readers to pursue the original intent of the authors of Scripture (p. 13).

Heiser devotes many pages to the identification of Bible characters. Chapters 17 and 18 insightfully discuss instances in which two separate Yahweh figures appear in the same scene. One interesting example goes unexplored: Gen 19:24. In this verse, Yahweh on earth tells Yahweh in heaven to rain fire on Sodom and Gomorrah.

Genesis 1–3 mentions the divine council in three verses according to Heiser (pp. 39, 62). First, God tells the members of his divine assembly, "Let us make humankind as our image" (Gen 1:26). Second, the serpent promises Eve, "You *both*

shall be like gods (אֱלֹהִים), knowing good and evil” (Gen 3:5). Third, Yahweh says to his council members (אֱלֹהִים), “The man has become as one of us, to know good and evil” (Gen 3:22). Heiser rightly denies the notion that the plural pronouns of Gen 1:26 prove the existence of the Trinity. Other scholars, however, maintain that the plural pronouns point to multiple persons of the Godhead without specifying the number of persons. Regarding Gen 3:5, the translation “gods” falls short because other deities did not exist prior to the fall of humanity.

The author (pp. 57, 326–27) asserts that the following guises do not represent the devil: the adversary (Job 1–2), the prince of the power of the air (Eph 2:2), and the god of this age (2 Cor 4:4). The cows of Bashan in Amos 4:1 constitute deities (p. 290). At the crucifixion, Jesus was surrounded by the bulls of Bashan (Ps 22:12), namely, demonic אֱלֹהִים (p. 291).

No text of Scripture depicts an original fall of angels that resulted in the origin of demons (p. 325). Interestingly, Heiser never interacts with the commonly held view that Rev 12:4 describes the fall of Satan and one third of the divine beings prior to the birth of the male child.

A few textual quandaries factor into the discussion. In Deut 32:8, the “sons of God” (4QDeut<sup>l</sup>) surpass the “sons of Israel” (MT), argues Heiser (pp. 19 n. 113). This reading forms the basis for the “Deuteronomy 32 worldview,” which “at many times looms large” (p. 254). Speaking of looming large, Goliath stood 6 feet 6 inches (4QSam<sup>a</sup>) rather than 9 feet 9 inches (MT) according to the author (p. 211). On the other hand, if the Philistine measured only 6 feet 6 inches, then Saul would have towered over him, because Saul stood taller than the tallest Israelite by about a foot (“from his shoulders upward,” 1 Sam 9:2; 10:23).

Heiser claims the biblical writers sometimes relied upon other ANE writings for their material (p. 372). Two “textbook examples” include Ps 48:2 (“the heights of the north”) and Isa 14:13 (“the mountain of assembly” and “the summit of Zaphon”). The author does not, however, provide criteria that help the reader evaluate the possibility of literary dependence.

An issue arises concerning the clarity of Scripture. According to Heiser (pp. 241–43), the OT does not clearly predict the death and resurrection of the Messiah. If it did, the evil spirits would have known that Jesus needed to die and would not have killed him. Even the holy angels could not anticipate God’s plan for the death and resurrection of Christ. The absence of the term “anointed one” (מָשִׁיחַ) in Isaiah 53 confused everyone enough to prevent them from discerning that the Messiah would die. Other interpreters, however, believe that the OT clearly taught the death and resurrection of the Messiah, even without the added perspective of the NT (Luke 24:25–27; Acts 26:22–23; 1 Cor 15:3–4).

Heiser indicates that the NT writers could alter the original meaning of an OT text: “Although Psalm 22 wasn’t originally messianic in focus, Matthew’s use of it fixes that association” (pp. 290–91). For him, “The New Testament writers who speak about prophetic fulfillments *didn’t* always interpret the Old Testament literally” (p. 349, emphasis original). One of Heiser’s favorite passages, 1 Pet 3:14–22, purportedly employs typology (p. 18). Peter “assumes that the great flood of Gene-

sis 6–8, especially the sons of God event in Genesis 6:1–4, *typified* or foreshadowed the gospel and the resurrection” (p. 336; emphasis original).

According to Heiser, Jesus inaugurated the kingdom of God on earth when he exorcized the demon in Mark 1:25 (p. 280). The prediction concerning the Davidic kingdom in Ezek 37:24–26 received its fulfillment at Pentecost (p. 364). Paul’s ministry to the Gentiles fulfilled the prophecy of Isa 66:15–23 (p. 305). Concerning eschatology, Heiser goes his own way: “My own eschatological views are not those of Kline’s (amillennial), nor would my views align with any of the other systems” (p. 371 n. 3). Moreover, “an identification of Armageddon with Megiddo is unsustainable” (p. 368). The author also touches upon matters relating to God’s foreknowledge and the presence of evil. He believes God took an awful risk in granting his creatures free will (pp. 66, 68).

Two of the book’s typographical errors need mention. The Mosaic law contains 613 commands, not 663 (p. 163). And the Scripture index incorrectly lists 1 Maccabees with the Bible books rather than with the “Other Citations” (pp. 406, 413).

Heiser succeeds in demonstrating the existence of a divine assembly in the unseen realm. He addresses an important and fascinating topic, fills a gap in the academic literature, and skillfully synthesizes the material. At the same time, Heiser’s audience will not always agree with his interpretive conclusions. I encourage readers to carefully compare the claims of this contribution with the teachings of Scripture.

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*Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics: A Comprehensive Framework for Hearing God in Scripture.* By Craig G. Bartholomew. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015, 623 pp., \$44.99.

Those familiar with the fields of OT study or hermeneutics will no doubt recognize the name of Craig G. Bartholomew, professor at Redeemer University College. He is the author of numerous OT commentaries and books on biblical theology, hermeneutical methods, and living wisely in light of our place within the scriptural story and the contemporary world.

His interest, experience, and expertise suited him well as the founder and chair of Scripture and Hermeneutics Seminar (SAHS). This project, which ran from 1998–2008, was created in response to the perceived, growing crisis in biblical interpretation. Each of these annual meetings was focused upon a particular topic or theme and involved critical engagement of papers by esteemed international and interdisciplinary scholars. These resulted in an eight-volume series co-published by Paternoster and Zondervan. Information regarding the history, purpose, and distinctives of these annual meetings and subsequent volumes are available at their website (<http://www.paideiacentre.ca/what-we-do/scripture-and-hermeneutics-seminar/history>).

The first of their distinctives is that “the Seminar is unashamedly academic ... aimed firstly at biblical interpretation in the academy.” This backstory provides necessary context for assessing and discussing this volume. While the title, *Introducing Biblical Hermeneutics*, might suggest it is a helpful point of entry text for seminary students, keen undergraduate biblical scholars, and curious laypersons in the church, this is not the case. It was written by an academician for academicians, assuming considerable knowledge of the field of hermeneutics and theological vocabulary, including occasional, untranslated phrases from Hebrew, Greek, Latin, German, and French. The subtitle, *A Comprehensive Framework for Hearing God in Scripture*, more aptly communicates the thrust of this book. Bartholomew draws upon his interaction with the Seminar participants, which includes the likes of Brevard Childs, Walter Brueggemann, Kevin Vanhoozer, Gordon McConville, Al Wolters, Anthony Thiselton, Dallas Willard, Alvin Plantinga, Christopher Seitz, Stephen Evans, Gordon Wenham, Stephen Chapman, Richard Bauckham, Trevor Hart, Nicholas Wolterstorff, N. T. Wright, and more. Bartholomew acknowledges in his preface that “this volume has enabled me to consolidate my work, draw it all together, and develop it in many fresh and new ways” (p. ix). And the result amounts to nothing short of a *tour de force*, spanning both a breadth and depth of scholarship that is fully commensurate with his academic interlocutors.

Moreover, Bartholomew makes good on his promise to provide fresh developments. A great deal of his stimulating discussion lies along the interstices of hermeneutics with related disciplines not ordinarily seen in hermeneutics textbooks. He begins by asserting that his foundational commitments are situated in a Christocentric and trinitarian perspective. The entailments here are receiving Scripture as authoritative, seeking inner unity, viewing ecclesial reception as primary, as both exalting and humbling academic interpretation, being protectively sensitive to the discrete witness of the two Testaments, submitting to the interpretive goal of being addressed by God, opening up interpretations otherwise foreclosed by “historicism,” and valuing God’s voice in Scripture for all of life (pp. 8–15).

Following this, he asserts the primacy of listening: “Academic work ... concentrates on analysis; Scripture asks first to be *listened to* as God’s address” (p. 18), calling for our submission. “Lack of attention to listening has left us with a kind of epistemological benumbment” (p. 20). Given Bartholomew’s targeted audience of academicians, his words sound a clarion call for a reintegration of scholarly rigor with reverent awe and humble submission to its divine force, of learning and of desire.

In his discussion of hermeneutics vis-à-vis biblical theology, he aligns with Newbigin’s analysis that “while historical-critical scholarship had brought much insight into Scripture, it also had capitulated to the Enlightenment story as the controlling story,” merely replacing one dogma with another (p. 73). As the antidote, he commends retelling the foundational story, suggesting “a narrative approach to biblical theology is the foundational and primary one” (p. 83).

At this point, Bartholomew takes up a more familiar element in hermeneutics textbooks: the history of biblical interpretation. He allots separate chapters for the role of tradition and early Christian interpretation, the impact of early and medieval

Jewish biblical interpretation (frequently overlooked and unrecognized by Christian interpreters), a single chapter on Renaissance, Reformation, and modernity (identifying the postmodern turn as late modernity), and another on canon formation. Here Bartholomew rightly recognizes that any nuanced understanding of hermeneutics is perforce interrelated with one's understanding of the emergence of the biblical canon.

The interdisciplinary dialogue that characterized the SAHS emerges most clearly in the section "Biblical Interpretation and the Academic Disciplines." Here the author devotes an entire chapter to the relationships between hermeneutics and each of the following: philosophy, history, literature, theology, and the academy itself. Regarding philosophy, an indisputably indispensable factor in hermeneutics, he nonetheless positively cites Ricoeur's oft-quoted dictum, "Beyond the desert of criticism, we wish to be called out" (p. 314), reminding us once again that scriptural analysis must not be conceived as an end in itself.

Regarding history, he notes that over the past century, despite advances in our understanding of the ANE and the Mediterranean world of the first century, scholars have become increasingly and hopelessly divided regarding the historicity of the biblical referents (p. 336). Bartholomew responds to this issue: "Scripture contains a particular view of history, which continues to have the potential to be systematized into a theory of history for today" (p. 345). He draws a helpful metaphor from *Lessing's "Ugly Ditch"* by Gordon Michalson Jr., that "mainstream Protestant theology from roughly 1920 to 1960 proceeded on the basis of a kind of double-entry bookkeeping, one column for faith and one column for historiography" (p. 353), concluding that both the premodern and modern tools are inadequate (p. 372). The retooling he envisions is to be found in a recovery of the meta-drama, the big story of the Bible (see his co-authored book with Michael Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture*, and N. T. Wright's *The NT and the People of God*).

In his chapter on literature, he helpfully surveys major figures and movements in literary theory, offering critical evaluations of and drawing insights from orality, the "literary turn" (Bible as literature), New Criticism, structuralism, discourse analysis, and intertextuality, followed by a brief case study in Luke (see SAHS vol. 6).

In his chapter on theology, Bartholomew states that "a theme of this book is that far too often profound philosophical shaping of biblical interpretation has gone undetected because of the mistaken belief that 'pure' biblical criticism is untainted by philosophy" (p. 444). His antidote is a full-bodied, Christocentric, creational theology that integrates time (both history and the eschaton), space (heaven and earth), and both creation and redemption into a summative *shalom*.

In his chapter "Scripture and the University," the author seeks to promote an "ecology of Christian scholarship" (p. 463), both paying homage to the academy and exposing its pretensions to neutrality and its frequently toxic environment toward faith. He enjoins Christian scholars boldly to recover its all-but-lost vision of integrating all human knowledge around its unifying, divine source. In an era of commodification of information, he cites Reading's sobering comment: "The idea of excellence in education has been hijacked by the consumer university" (p. 473). He advocates a model (ecology) for Christian scholarship that is "a tree of

knowledge,” ultimately rooted in faith, turning us to Scripture for developing a biblical theology, which in turn contributes to a Christian worldview, branching into Christian philosophy and theology, preparing us for the study of all other disciplines (e.g. mathematics, political science, performing arts, psychology, economics, etc.; pp. 474–75).

After a full-chapter case study in the book of Hebrews, he concludes with the interface of hermeneutics and preaching. This is not a how-to manual for sermon construction. Rather, Bartholomew addresses with fresh insight how well suited the Bible is for oral preaching within the context of the ecclesial community of faith, suggesting, “Perhaps the virtue that needs to be invoked at this point is that of *wisdom*, of fittingness” (p. 537). The movement from hermeneutics to scriptural exegesis to theological interpretation to contemporary cultural analysis to faithful proclamation reaches greatest fecundity when heard and received by believers who respond prayerfully. And biblical hermeneutics reaches its goal when believers move decisively into all sectors of God’s kingdom in their areas of vocation, “submitting all of their lives to the reign of the king. And naturally, this includes biblical scholars!” (p. 545).

In a book written for scholars, this book is not written merely for scholars, but rather the real beneficiaries are all whose lives may be influenced by them: people of all trades and arts and professions who respond faithfully when they hear God’s voice through his Word faithfully retold.

To Craig Bartholomew, thank you for modeling in this book the very scholarship to which you have exhorted us to aspire. The lengthy read is worth every bit of the investment.

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*The Bible in the Contemporary World: Hermeneutical Ventures.* By Richard Bauckham. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015, xiii + 178 pp., \$22.00 paper.

The eminent NT scholar and theologian Richard Bauckham presents fourteen essays here, ten previously published elsewhere. The essays consist mostly of theological critique of the present-day culture, especially in regard to individualism, globalization, and ecology. A few essays more detached from these touch on NT criticism and biblical-theological themes. The essay, “The Christian Way as Losing and Finding Self” (pp. 138–43), written for a Buddhist–Christian dialogue, casts the transformation of life associated with the Christian message as a “transition from the false self to the true self” (p. 139).

In “Reading Scripture as a Coherent Story” (pp. 1–16), Bauckham shows that in spite of the lack of uniformity in genre or a storyline akin to a “novel or a modern work of historiography” (p. 3), or the postmodern incredulity toward grand narratives (pp. 8–11), the Bible does possess an identifiable metanarrative inasmuch as it is “about the meaning of the whole of reality” (p. 11). Summaries of the biblical story within parts of the canon evidence this concern for the metanarrative. The

biblical metanarrative invites trust in the Creator, accommodates the intractability of history to human comprehension, and is set up against the dominant narrative of empire. The non-biblical metanarrative of progress, that “history is a great march of human reason toward utopia,” which tells “a selective story that favors the beneficiaries of change over the victims” (p. 29), is also critiqued in chapter 3. The latter essay entitled “Contemporary Western Culture—A Biblical Christian Critique” also examines ‘Freedom and Individualism’ and ‘Consumerism and Excess.’ The biblical concept of freedom also envisions limits, and it is a freedom for “the willing commitment of love” (p. 38). The essay “Freedom and Belonging” (chap. 5, pp. 70–78) further explores the nature of freedom and its finite and relational aspects. The issue of consumerism addressed in chapter 3 is taken up and discussed in chapter 4, “The Bible and Globalization” (pp. 45–69). The biblical God is supra-global, and there is human racial unity alongside cultural diversity, but also a united human rebellion against God that extends from the Tower of Babel to world empires from Nebuchadnezzar’s to Revelation’s Babylon that is Rome, with its “global system of domination” (p. 58) encompassing the political, military, as well as the economic one that “feeds and fulfills the consumerist dream” (p. 60). The kingdom of God is an alternative to this, and presents not only the “globalization of blessing and salvation” (p. 62) but also “small scale particularity” (p. 64) and the triumph of the weak over the tyrannical.

Man’s relationship to the rest of nature is the subject matter of chapters 6–8, and chapter 9 addresses how much human creativity mimics the divine in response to another’s work. The essays focused on ecology provide careful examination of text and lexical semantics. However, they also include questionable assertions such as the following: (1) “Nothing in their created constitution differentiates humans from other animals” (p. 92); (2) “Creation’s bondage to decay (Rom 8:21) is not referring to death as a universal feature of the animal and vegetable creations ... but processes of ecological degradation ... where humans live” (pp. 98–99); (3) “People who deny climate change are devoted to the American dream of limitless economic growth” (p. 110). The author’s confidence about climate change extends even to the anthropogenic correlation as causation (p. ix, 103).

The remaining five essays (chaps. 2, 10, 12–14) touch on disparate themes. “Are We Still Missing the Elephant?” (pp. 17–26) interacts with a 1959 lecture of C. S. Lewis entitled “Fernseed and Elephants” to point out that NT critical scholarship cannot see the forest of historical truth in the Gospels for the imaginary trees devised by source and form criticism. The prevailing understanding of NT scholarship as an “incremental science in which each generation of scholars builds on the results achieved by previous scholarship” is a deeply misleading one (p. 18).

“God’s Embrace of Suffering” (pp. 127–37) in the “voluntary suffering of love” (p. 136) through the incarnation (p. 132) and the Father’s suffering the death of his Son (p. 136) makes the doctrine of divine impassibility questionable. “The Fulfillment of Messianic Prophecy” (pp. 144–50) and “Where is Wisdom to be Found? Christ and Wisdom in Colossians” (pp. 151–58) are summary essays on the titles’ themes, and “What is Truth?” (pp. 159–71) describes the types of truth in John’s Gospel.

Overall, the essays are thought-provoking and provide fresh insights. Not everyone in sympathy with Bauckham's interpretation of economic globalization will take kindly to the arch-villainous role attributed to America. I also suspect that, besides hedonistic individualism, the major themes of social evil he has chosen to identify (globalization and the ecological crisis) would not top the list of evils were the biblical prophets to critique today's society.

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*'Return to Me': A Biblical Theology of Repentance.* By Mark J. Boda. New Studies in Biblical Theology 35. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2015, 235 pp., \$22.00.

Mark J. Boda, Professor of OT at McMaster Divinity College and Professor in the Faculty of Theology at McMaster University, Hamilton, ON, treats in a very thorough way the theme of repentance in the Bible in this monograph. The greatest part deals with OT material, but that is just in accordance with the fact that the OT forms the largest part of the Bible.

Boda neither restricts himself to word studies nor focuses on particular texts of genres. Rather, he provides an overall view of this important biblical theme. Before paying attention to the way in which the message of repentance is communicated in the Bible not only through words, but also through images and stories, the author gives a helpful sketch of his approach to biblical theology.

It is clear the author has a high view of Scripture. God communicated effectively through the text of the Bible, and we can expect that we in principle can understand the ancient text of the Bible. The Scriptures are authoritative in the final form. They provide normative theological and ethical truth. They can do this because of their cohesive character. Boda's approach makes clear that our doctrine of God and our view of the Scriptures are always interrelated (pp. 20–22).

Boda stresses the importance of the progressive and cumulative character of biblical revelation. This is seen in the way he treats his subject. The place and importance of repentance in the history of redemption is emphasized. In accordance with the character of a biblical theological study there is sensitivity for the diversity within the Scriptures.

The most important Hebrew verbs used with regard to repentance are *šûb*, *šâr* and *nĥm* (nifal). Boda points attention to the fact that *nĥm* usually is used for divine shifts, but in three cases at most for human repentance (p. 27). Within the Pentateuch, the book of Deuteronomy provides the most concentrated expression of repentance. Boda highlights that it is envisioned there as a future experience happening when Israel returns from the exile due to their sins (pp. 43–44). Boda could have called attention here to the way in which Paul quotes Deut 30:12 in Rom 10:6–8. The way he quotes Deuteronomy is in his accordance with the original context. Boda says that the circumcision of the heart is the divine response to the penitential seeking of God (p. 46). I would state it the other way around. The penitential seeking of God is the human response that manifests the circumcision



of the heart by God. Certainly in this way is envisioned the return to God in Jeremiah 31 and Ezekiel 36–37.

Especially in the writings of the Later Prophets, the message of repentance has a dominant place. In the first part of Isaiah, we see the proclamation of repentance becomes a form of judgment because Israel consciously turned from following God. In the second part of Isaiah, it becomes clear the era of punishment has been fulfilled. This does not eliminate the need of repentance, but it makes clear that God's grace and mercy is the foundation of repentance.

Boda could have pointed to the fact that there is a parallel between the calling of the prophet and his message of repentance. It is an omission that he does not do that. What Isaiah states when he is called—"Woe is me! For I am lost" (Isa 6:5)—is the confession of every repentant sinner. The message of consolation that starts in Isaiah 40 is closely connected with the experience of the prophet when he was called: "Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for" (Isa 6:7). The same close relationship between the calling of the prophet and his message of God's grace connected with human repentance we see in Ezekiel. In Ezek 1:28c–2:1, the reaction of the prophet to seeing God's glory and God's answer to this reaction is described: "And when I saw it, I fell on my face, and I heard the voice of one speaking. And he said to me, 'Son of man, stand on your feet, and I will speak with you.'" In Ezekiel 37, we read that the people of Israel, although compared with very dry bones, are raised on their feet by the almighty power of the spirit of YHWH.

We can learn from Boda's study that repentance in the OT has a multidimensional character. First of all, it is a shift in human relationship to God, and connected with this shift in perspective is a shift in affection and behavior. Boda stresses that it is finally God himself who enables man to repent (pp. 158–59).

The NT in continuity with the OT identifies repentance as the main characteristic of the community in which the OT promises of restoration are fulfilled. Boda could have made here somewhat more explicit how important is the scheme of exile and restoration to understand the NT. There was in Judaism of the Second Temple period a deeply felt awareness that although the temple had been rebuilt and part of the people returned from exile, the real restoration promised by the prophets was still future. The NT makes clear that the coming of Jesus as the Christ and the outpouring of the Spirit is the principal fulfillment of these promises. The full and final restoration comes, as Boda says, in the eschaton when Christ comes back (p. 181). We can learn from Boda's study not only academically but also for our personal lives that repentance is the posture of those who will participate in the kingdom both in the present age and in the age to come.

Boda emphasizes both the redemptive-historical and personal elements in the message of repentance. I think the last element could be highlighted somewhat more than Boda does. All in all, however, I think Boda wrote a very important study, and for me it was a delight to read.

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*The Message of Joshua.* By David G. Firth. The Bible Speaks Today. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2015, 226 pp., \$18.00 paper.

David G. Firth is a member of the OT faculty at St. John's College in Nottingham, England. As part of The Bible Speaks Today series edited by J. A. Motyer, John Stott, and Derek Tidball, Firth examines the book of Joshua from a literary perspective. This work is not a commentary per se but rather a systematic expositional handling of Joshua with a focus on the overall message of the book. While chapter and verse divisions do appear in the section headings, no direct citations of the biblical text are included unless directly germane to a given point the author is making.

After a brief introductory chapter, the book is divided into eighteen chapters, each having an average length of 10–12 pages. Aside from the Introduction, each chapter covers roughly one to two chapters of the biblical text of Joshua. Firth offers a good balance in his treatment of Joshua, something that Firth himself notes has been a problem for scholars when dealing with this book, especially the last half (p. 141). He devotes 108 pages to Joshua 1–12 and another 85 pages to chapters 13–24. Because Firth follows the basic canonical layout of Joshua, I will not offer a summary of each chapter. Rather, I will address his general approach to the book while pointing out some of the strengths and weaknesses of the work.

In his introductory chapter, Firth highlights the issue of violence as it relates to the conquest narratives. While Firth's treatment of the topic is succinct, it is in no way facile. Firth ameliorates this ethical dilemma often associated with Joshua by highlighting two key points. First, the land was Yahweh's to do with as Yahweh pleased and second, "Israel" comprised more than the descendants of Jacob: entire families (e.g. Rahab) and even cities (e.g. those of the Gibeonites) became associated with Israel. On the other hand, Achan, an Israelite, actually suffered the fate of a Canaanite because of his theft of the spoils of war. Firth rightly notes that the use of terms and phrases such as "genocide" or "ethnic cleansing" are inappropriate when interpreting what really is going on in the book of Joshua (p. 27). Indeed, by addressing this concern up front, Firth sets the tone of the book, enabling the reader to appreciate the rich message of the book of Joshua while downplaying the ethical remonstrations of groups like the Neo-Atheists. Where appropriate, Firth readdresses the violence associated with *herem* at junctures throughout his analysis of Joshua (e.g., pp. 96–97, 127, 135).

Even though the book is not heavily footnoted (except for inter-textual citations), it is teeming with pastoral and scholarly insights. Indeed, it is this style of writing that will make Firth's work appealing to a broad audience. As can be seen in the book's title, identifying the message of Joshua is Firth's central task. He integrates modern applications throughout the book by seamlessly moving from the importance of the biblical text for those living in the period of Joshua to modern-day significance. Closely connected to this integrative approach is Firth's use of personal experiences (e.g., pp. 71–72) and modern analogies when making his points (e.g., pp. 53, 63–64, 99, 146, 205, 215).

Another strength of Firth's work is the fact that he does not get bogged down in the scholarly debates often associated with the book of Joshua. Firth correctly notes the problems with being too dogmatic about issues such as archaeological "evidence" versus the historicity of Joshua (p. 77). Instead, he tends to take a moderating position. One such case is his handling of the identification of Joshua's Ai (Joshua 7–8). He rightly points out the problems with identifying et-Tell as Ai while allowing for the possibility that Bryant Wood's identification of Khirbet el-Maqatir as Ai may in fact be correct (pp. 87–88). As a member of Wood's team for the past six years, I found it refreshing that Firth was aware of the mounting evidence that is challenging the scholarly status quo as it relates to the identification of Ai. In this regard, the only weakness I found in Firth's assessment was his failure actually to get updated information on the work of Wood that is available on the Associates for Biblical Research website.

Finally, it is refreshing to see a scholar with a high view of Scripture bring to life a book that has often been relegated to the realm of insignificance due to post-modernity's questioning and/or rejection of God's judgment on Canaan. Firth's work fits nicely into the scholarly discussion on Joshua. His balance of exposition, historical context, and application makes this book a needed addition to both the pastor's and scholar's library. Indeed, when teaching or preaching through Joshua, readers will be helped by Firth's insights to navigate the thorny issues of the ethics and message of Joshua.

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*1 & 2 Samuel*. By David H. Jensen. *Belief: A Theological Commentary on the Bible*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2015, 325 pp., \$40.00.

David Jensen is the Academic Dean and Professor in the Clarence N. and Betty B. Frierson Distinguished Chair of Reformed Theology at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary. He has authored several books, including *God, Desire, and a Theology of Human Sexuality* and *Living Hope: The Future and Christian Faith* (WJK, 2013). This book is part of the WJK series *Belief: A Theological Commentary on the Bible*, whose general editors at the time of publication were Amy Plantinga Pauw and William C. Placher.

Well-crafted and eminently readable, this volume bears the imprint of a careful, scholarly hand. Jensen gives considerable attention to frequent, practical applications of the text with "Further Reflections" that speak to pastoral and personal intent. The style at times invokes a psychological case study with conflicting and concurring "expert" opinions offered. At times these "reflections" morph into complex philosophical discussions.

The book takes an extensive and intensive look at all of the characters and events mentioned in 1 and 2 Samuel. There is a selected bibliography, an index of Scripture, and an index of subjects. The indices are exhaustive and helpful in unveiling the emphases of the book. The author is to be commended for the fine

attention to detail his commentary offers. He has not avoided any significant passage in 1 and 2 Samuel. This volume bears the testimony of significant dedication and labor.

Indeed, the author admits his personal struggle in writing this commentary. He is clearly uncomfortable with the “stories” he finds in 1 and 2 Samuel; he finds there a disturbing worldview and a decidedly unsophisticated narrative that must be rescued by the modern scholar. Jensen despairs of a Reformed tradition that seeks a meaning in the text (p. 297). Rather, he interprets the text in an almost Barthian manner; he is preoccupied with what the text could be manipulated to say to readers with differing agendas. He is less concerned with what Scripture may actually reveal and more concerned with how the reader may “feel” about the emotions the stories may provoke.

It is this agenda format that dominates the commentary. Jensen rejects biblical inerrancy in any substantive sense; he has no confidence in the historicity of the narrative, and no concern if the narrative is myth and legend. He does like the “stories” because they speak to our “stories” and in some transcendent manner to a “God and humanity” story (p. 298). Though at times Jensen appears to seek a middle ground between affirming or rejecting plenary inspiration, he comes down against “the classic Protestant understanding” of inerrancy and infallibility that he disparages as Charles Hodges’s view: “[This view] has been widely discredited in light of (1) historical-critical studies of the Bible that document the evolution of biblical texts rather than their fixed nature and the multiple traditions within Scripture that often clash with each other and (2) the centuries-old history of abusive readings of Scripture and how the Bible has been used to justify horrors, including slavery, xenophobia, sexism, and persecution of LGBT persons” (pp. 104–5).

In an odd turn, Jensen argues for retaining the “difficult” passages in Scripture, and instead of excising them, he suggests we perform “exorcisms” upon them. Thus, readers will be the better for having rejected the “troubling” texts and reinventing them with helpful modern views (pp. 106–7). Interestingly, this reveals, perhaps, why Jensen “struggles” to write this commentary. He is not at all comfortable with the God of these stories nor with the scope and sequence of the stories; nevertheless, he labors to extract something of value from them. He must remove their offensiveness and retain some humanity in the process. He is confident readers will benefit from his struggle with unpalatable themes and characters.

Jensen’s agenda-driven observations allow him to draft in every politically correct social and cultural whim and fancy. At times his commentary reads more like a political party platform than a theological study. He must accommodate the LGBT “theology” and though he seeks a middle ground—he is not sure if Jonathan and David were homosexual lovers or not—he concludes that it does not matter and that the “story” can be made to serve any of several disparate sexual ethics (pp. 131–33).

Jensen also struggles with the “male-dominant” language ascribed to God and labors assiduously to assure feminist theologians that regrettable analogical “God-talk” can be swept aside as modern sensibilities demand (pp. 28–32). The language and logic of war and violence, clearly evident in the narrative, are reworked by Jen-

sen into something less than the expression of God's wrath and judgment into something more palatable to the modern image of a god who must ultimately answer to man's ethical standards (pp. 91–92).

Jensen writes in bold repudiation of anything that represents the Bible as the inerrant, infallible Word of God. He may not be sure what the legends and myths ought to mean but he is absolutely sure they cannot mean what might offend modern sensibilities. He contrasts “the God of these stories” with another god, regarding whom he has some reverence and relationship. Ultimately he concludes that it is, after all, the telling and re-telling of “the stories” that form us somehow and give us hope somehow (p. 298).

This book's great strength is an unrelenting effort to espouse a variety of social and cultural constructs in which Scripture must be made to serve. The book's great weakness is that this effort comes at the expense of what Scripture does say. The book could be useful on the graduate level as a case study in the results of a methodology that abandons the authority of the Bible and yet longs to retain a literary appreciation for the Bible.

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*The Return of the King: Messianic Expectation in Book V of the Psalter.* By Michael K. Snearly. Library of Hebrew Bible/OT Studies 624. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016, xii + 236 pp., \$112.00.

In his groundbreaking monograph on *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter* (Scholars Press, 1985), Gerald H. Wilson argued that the latter books of the Psalter were edited in response to a Davidic covenant that had failed. In Wilson's view, the primary message of book 4 (Psalms 90–106) is that YHWH reigns even when David does not, with the consequence that appearances of the Davidic king in book 5 (Psalms 107–150) are intended as paradigmatic examples of wisdom and personal approach to YHWH. Since this work first appeared, a plethora of responses have either built on or challenged Wilson's assertions. Michael K. Snearly's recent monograph represents a fresh and very direct counterproposal to Wilson's views, asserting that “the purposeful arrangement of the psalm groups in Psalms 107–150 signals a renewed hope in the royal/Davidic promises” (p. 1).

While Wilson's analysis of the Psalter's macrostructure painted with a broad brush, David M. Howard Jr.'s method of statistical analysis, which was developed most fully in his monograph on *The Structure of Psalms 93–100* (Eisenbrauns, 1997), is exhaustive and exacting in nature, and therefore almost necessarily utilized for small clusters of Psalms. As a doctoral student of Howard, Snearly has overcome this challenge by employing “a mixture of a computer-assisted analysis of the text and a close reading of the text” (p. 52), to adapt and extend his mentor's methodology in a fresh analysis of all 44 psalms of book 5 (Psalms 107–150; pp. 18–19).

In developing his eclectic editorial-critical methodology, Snearly also employed recent insights from the fields of poetics and text-linguistics. His approach

emphasizes parallel features in the text, with a special focus on keyword and thematic links (pp. 39–56). In his view, parallel features extend beyond the individual psalm to include larger sections of text, making them elements of cohesion that bind individual psalms into units (cf. Cole; p. 49). Further, and in an effort to show that a given instance of repetition is intentional and not coincidental, Snearly has added that a key word will only be considered authentic if “at least half of all occurrences in Book V are in one group and/or at least 20 percent of all occurrences in the Psalter are in one group” (p. 1).

Of particular importance in the macrostructure of the Psalter for Snearly are Psalms 1–2 as a dual introduction to the book as a whole, and Psalm 89 as a major turning point that reflects the exile (pp. 79–101). Whereas Psalms 107–150 reflect a postexilic situation in his view, objective keyword and thematic links in each of its parts are said to interact with the royal/Davidic hope exhibited in the earlier key psalms (pp. 105–84). Consequently, Psalms 107–118 are said to highlight YHWH’s **חסד** (covenant loyalty) and the concept of **עלם** (forever), a question broached in Psalm 89; Psalm 119 showcases **תורה** (torah), which is also emphasized in Psalm 1; Psalms 120–137 focus on **ציון** (Zion), which is the place of YHWH’s reign in Psalm 2; and finally, Psalms 138–145 and the theme of the **מלך** (king), coupled with the Davidic superscriptions and the implied “I” of the psalms as the Davidic king, are said to be linked to the three different aspects of kingship from Psalms 2 and 89: foreign kings, YHWH as king, and his earthly vice-regent as king (p. 168). Psalms 146–150 and the **הללויה** (Praise YHWH) superscript and subscript in each psalm are then presented as a climactic conclusion to the book of Psalms as a whole. Snearly then summarizes the *consistent* trajectory of the entire Psalter’s storyline as follows: “Yahweh is king; he has appointed an earthly vice-regent who represents his heavenly rule on earth; the earthly vice-regent and his people travail against the rebellious of the earth” (p. 1).

The strengths of Snearly’s work are extensive. His writing is clear and his analysis exhaustive and persuasive. He has interacted with key works in English, French, German, and Italian and has masterfully summarized the relevant contributions of each. Despite the fact that some will charge Snearly with arbitrariness in the delineation of his statistical boundaries, others will appreciate the “stricter controls” (p. 3) he exhibits, which are meant to correct against the “subjective impressionism” he believes overzealous Psalms scholars have been guilty of displaying in their analysis. An additional benefit of a methodology which exhibits objective controls is that it offers a counterproposal to Gerstenberger and others, who critique the application of editorial criticism to the Psalter at a foundational level (pp. 10–22).

Further strengths include Snearly’s linking of each section’s themes to Psalms 1–2 as a dual introduction and Psalm 89 as reflecting the exile. These points have persuasively shown that the perspective of the final editors of the book of Psalms did not minimize the human king as YHWH’s agent of bringing about hoped-for deliverance. Of additional help are the exhaustive and convincing outlines of the various sections of book 5, and the reporting of numerous key words/themes for each, beyond the primary ones that are his focus. Another point of extreme help-

fulness is the exhaustive list of parallels between Psalm 119 and Deut 17:14–20, with the conclusion that the “T” of the psalm is modeling what the king of Deuteronomy is called to do (pp. 138–39). Snearly’s concluding chapter only bolsters an already convincing argument, as he shows the harmony between his main thesis and other OT and non-canonical second temple texts (pp. 187–95). An excellent index (pp. 229–36) and bibliography (pp. 201–28) further round out the volume.

Although the work does not exhibit any major shortcomings, a few minor points of critique are still worth mentioning. While the monograph’s 70+ Hebrew spelling/typographical errors appear to issue from the transfer of an accurate manuscript onto a different platform for publication, and while the reader will most often be able to figure out what is going on, these do make the work appear less professional than its excellent contents (and hefty price tag) would otherwise warrant. Further, even though the author emphasizes that his methodology offers objective controls, and that ensuing subjective judgment calls are made after much study and reflection (p. 52), it would have been helpful if he had detailed why he did not choose other candidates as primary words/themes in a given section, beyond the fact that they lacked clear links with Psalms 1–2 and 89. Finally, an appendix with an exhaustive list of his key word/thematic findings, perhaps in chart form, may have been received as tedious to some, but to others it could have helped to bolster the particulars of his various assertions.

These quibbles aside, Snearly’s work was a joy to read, and his thought-provoking analysis warranted more than one re-reading for me. In fact, this volume deserves a place alongside the most prominent works in the field of the shape and shaping of the Hebrew Psalter.

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*Interpreting Prophetic Literature: Historical and Exegetical Tools for Reading the Prophets.* By James D. Nogalski. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2015, xi + 130 pp., \$25.00 paper.

James Nogalski is Professor and Chair of Graduate Studies in the Department of Religion at Baylor University. He is well known in the field of OT prophetic literature, especially for his outstanding contributions to the study of the Book of the Twelve (the Minor Prophets).

Nogalski is very clear in delineating the purpose and target audience for this book. *Interpreting Prophetic Literature* is not intended to be a stand-alone textbook for an OT Prophets class. It does not discuss each prophetic book or even give overviews of each book. The purpose of *Interpreting Prophetic Literature* is to help equip students to read and understand OT prophetic literature in general. As such, it is designed to be used as a supplemental textbook. The target audiences are college and seminary students who do not know Hebrew but who are seeking to study the OT prophets at a depth that enables them to write exegetical papers. Nogalski

acknowledges the importance of historical background studies, but his focus in interpreting the prophets is literary.

*Interpreting Prophetic Literature* has seven short chapters. Chapter 1, "Getting Started," covers a bewildering array of introductory material in 13 pages, including prophecy in the ANE, the history and the role of prophets in the OT, literary development and text criticism in the OT prophets, the purpose of the book, the use of English Bible translations, and an overview of the book. Chapter 2, "Analyzing Literary Parameters and Rhetorical Flow," discusses formulaic markers, issues relating to speakers and addressees, characters, parallelism, pronouns and verbal subjects, and syntactical connectors. Chapter 3, "Selecting Key Words," notes the importance of identifying places and people, introduces the semantic range of conceptual terms, and gives a short overview of metaphoric language. Chapter 4, "Literary Forms and Rhetorical Aims," presents the primary literary forms encountered in the prophetic literature: narrative, judgment oracles, salvation oracles, disputations, trial speeches, symbolic-act reports, vision reports, and promises. Chapter 5, "Analyzing a Unit's Relationship to the Context," seeks to provide guidance in determining how a smaller literary unit connects to larger units of text, and how several sequential units might relate to each other. Chapter 6, "Common Themes in Prophetic Texts," provides an overview of the major themes running throughout the prophets (judgment pronouncements and declarations of hope). Chapter 7, "Developing a Hermeneutical Approach," offers thoughtful insight about how to apply the theological message of the prophets in a church setting today.

When evaluated in light of its stated intention, this book has but a few weaknesses and numerous strengths. Most of the weaknesses lie in chapter 1, which tries to summarize in a few pages much of the material covered in more detail in a standard introductory textbook. The target audience appears to be students who are ready to start reading prophetic literature at a serious level, but chapter 1 assumes they know little or nothing about standard word studies, semantic ranges of Hebrew words, or English Bible translations. Likewise, a brief paragraph or two about literary development and text criticism, especially using the difference between LXX Jeremiah and MT Jeremiah as an example, probably confuses more than it clarifies.

The strengths of the book emerge most clearly in chapters 2, 3, and 5, where Nogalski is extremely helpful in explaining how the prophetic genre is working and how to understand it. Particularly strong is his guidance in how to determine the basic literary units in prophetic literature and how to connect them. This is the material that is not generally found in standard introductory textbooks on the Prophets (or is only mentioned very briefly).

In sum, if you are teaching a class on the OT Prophets and already have a good standard evangelical introductory textbook (e.g. Bullock, McConville, Chisholm, Hays), yet you want to help your students go deeper in their ability to



read and exegete the prophetic literature, this would be a helpful supplemental text. I would recommend simply skipping chapter 1 and using chapters 2–7.

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*Reading the Poetry of First Isaiah: The Most Perfect Model of the Prophetic Poetry.* By J. Blake Couey. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, xiv + 247 pp., \$110.00.

Blake Couey offers a substantially revised 2009 doctoral dissertation that deals with the poetry of First Isaiah. His subtitle is aptly chosen: Isaiah is by common consent the poet laureate of ancient Israel. Specialists who delight in the literary craft of Isaiah may anticipate “a feast of rich food for all peoples” (Isa 25:6 TNIV).

Couey approaches his subject with a clear conviction: “an adequate understanding of Isaiah’s prophetic proclamation is impossible without sufficient attention to his linguistic artistry, to the formal and linguistic features that makes his words poetry” (p. 2). To this end, he organizes his study (see pp. 18–20) into an introduction to biblical poetics; an exploration of the problem of lineation (chap. 1); an analysis of the complexities of structure and movement (chap. 2); and a foray into the realm of imagery and metaphor (chap. 3). To this he appends a conclusion (pp. 201–7) that summarizes his findings and suggests avenues for further research. Each of his main chapters concludes with a selected poem (the text is put in romanized script followed by his English translation) that illustrates the application of his literary approach for interpretation.

Couey first provides a brief overview of poetry as a verbal phenomenon (pp. 1–4) and then rapidly reviews the history of scholarship on Hebrew poetry in general and Isaiah in particular (pp. 4–13). He distinguishes his own approach from many recent readings of Isaiah in that he “treats individual poems in Isa 1–39 largely in isolation, with minimal attention to their arrangement or connections to other parts of the book” (p. 12). He prefers to designate the book of Isaiah as an anthology (p. 13). His literary approach, although focusing upon formal or stylistic features, does not ignore historical concerns, thus differentiating his method from many recent studies (p. 14). As to the problem of dating and authorship, Couey opts to select texts that “at least a plurality if not a majority of commentators have traditionally assigned . . . to the historical prophet” (p. 18).

Chapter 1 addresses establishing reliable criteria for determining lines of Hebrew poetry. The primary criteria are parallelism, enjambment, rhythm, syntactical constraints, and the traditional Masoretic punctuation (pp. 27–28). Not surprisingly, the chapter reveals considerable scholarly disagreement over particulars. Informed by leading authorities in Hebrew poetics and interpretation (e.g. Robert Alter, Adele Berlin, and James Kugel), Couey is most indebted to Michael O’Connor’s *Hebrew Verse Structure*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1997). His admission at the end of the chapter is worth noting: “the lineation of Biblical Hebrew verse is seldom cut and dried” (p. 54). Reflecting this reality, Couey’s discussion is punctuated by the subjunctive mood and qualifiers like “probably,” “perhaps,” and “possibly.”

In the nature of the case, this should not be surprising; after all, poetry is not composed of mathematical equations. No immutable laws of operation regulate its performance; consequently, a high degree of subjectivity is inevitable.

Chapter 2, which deals with structure and movement, is the longest and involves the most complex and varied feature of Hebrew verse, best described as free verse (p. 68). Couey walks us through the linguistic landscape of both formal and thematic elements in which single lines, couplets, triplets, quatrains, occasionally five or more lines, catalogues, and repetition coalesce to form whole poems. To illustrate structure and movement, Couey selects Isa 3:1–15. His close reading illuminates how the formal and thematic features function historically (either the Assyrian deportation or an internal overthrow) to portray “oppressive leadership and social disorder” (p. 138).

Chapter 3 deals with imagery and metaphor, a feature of Isaiah’s poetry that “continues to attract interpreters’ attention, perhaps more than any of its other features” (p. 139). After a brief discussion about the theoretical aspects of imagery and metaphor (pp. 140–47), Couey selectively examines Isaiah’s diverse repertoire. Although Isaiah’s images fall broadly into only two primary categories (agricultural or animal), these he adapts and improvises with Mozartean creativity. The result is a “sophisticated piece of ancient literature with substantial rhetorical punch” (p. 200).

Couey’s close readings of selected poems will almost certainly increase the interpreter’s appreciation for the literary artistry of Isaiah and, occasionally, suggest revisions to traditional readings based solely upon historical–critical exegesis. He is well aware his study is limited in scope and treatment and that much work remains to be done (p. 206). Specialists, however, will be grateful for his contribution and share his conviction.

The book includes a comprehensive bibliography and indices of selected authors, biblical and other ancient texts, and subjects.

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*An Introduction to the Study of Ezekiel.* By Michael A. Lyons. T&T Clark Approaches to Biblical Studies. New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015, 214 pp., \$16.95 paper.

In *An Introduction to the Study of Ezekiel*, Michael A. Lyons (Associate Professor of OT at Simpson University) adeptly provides readers with a concise guide aimed at unraveling and clarifying the sometimes enigmatic, prophetic message of Ezekiel. Lyons attempts to offer to readers an “explanation of the book that simultaneously functions as a guide to how biblical scholars read prophetic literature” (p. 5). He desires to contribute to an educated audience a resource that is more detailed than an entry one might find in an encyclopedia but less detailed than an exhaustive commentary. He notes, “The readers envisioned are graduate students (or advanced undergraduates) and teachers of biblical literature” (p. 5). The book provides helpful sections at the end of each chapter titled “Further Reading,” as well as a bibliography for those seeking additional resources.

This volume contains four extensive and yet comprehensive chapters. In chapter 1, the author examines the historical setting and literary presentation of Ezekiel. He reveals that one's understanding of how Ezekiel is depicted in the text (e.g. as exile, as prophet, as priest from a priestly line) is vitally important to how one will read and interpret it. He takes aim at essential and vital introductory issues by addressing the following questions: (1) "What do we know about the book's setting, both the setting in the book and the setting of the book?" (2) "What are the literary features of the book?" (3) "What is the structure, genre, distinctive language and imagery?" While systematically working through these issues, the author is careful to apprise the reader of the various opinions held by scholars in this field of study. For example, when discussing the tripartite eschatological structure of Ezekiel, he notes, "This position is held by, for example, Foher (1968: 414), Zimmerli (1979: 2), Pohlmann (1996: 18–20), and Darr (2001: 1089)" (p. 20). Such accommodating references are found throughout the volume.

In chapter 3, Lyons examines critical models for understanding how the book of Ezekiel was composed, edited, and copied. He gives examples of editorial choices regarding the form and content of Ezekiel. He writes, "It should be noted that the book itself does not directly refer to its own formation. The models that I discuss below are inferred from features in the book and they remain models—our best attempts to account for the data that we see, and not definitive or universally agreed-on statements of how the book grew into the form(s) in which we now have it" (p. 49). An example of an editorial choice Lyons gives is Ezek 23:48. Ezekiel 23 consists of the allegorical story of two sisters who are sexually immoral and are punished for it. The sisters depict Samaria and Jerusalem and their imminent destruction by the surrounding nations. Their downfall is attributed to divine judgment. Lyons proposes that verse 48 is not part of the allegory or interpretation. He says the verse does not refer to Jerusalem but states that God will "make lewdness cease from the land" so that "all women will take warning and not act in accordance with your lewdness." He surmises that this moralizing comment is "to be sure" based on a reading of the surrounding material and is motivated by something "outside the immediate context." Lyons suggests two possible motivations for this redactional insertion. It could be a male's perception and evaluation of female activity in society, or "all women" could be a metaphor to refer to the political centers of other nations (p. 67).

In chapter 3, the author takes a thematic approach as he explores some of the key themes and arguments in the book of Ezekiel. He chooses the topics of Israel, YHWH, land, and temple as the focal themes for two reasons. First, the topics are linked together and understanding any one requires an understanding of the others. Second, he proposes these are the main concerns of Ezekiel. In addition, he notes that it is "the way these topics are dealt with in the book that so often strikes the modern reader as strange or even offensive." (p. 115).

In chapter 4, the author integrates the contents of the book and demonstrates how it represents a purposeful endeavor to offer hopeful solutions to the problems and questions caused by the trauma of the deportation. Lyons establishes how the aim of the book of Ezekiel is to create hope.

The author accomplishes his overall purpose of striking a balance between encyclopedic summary and full commentary. Students who read this volume will benefit from it by gaining acute insights into the literary structure and art work of Ezekiel as well as the book's rhetorical goals. The volume is concise and yet filled with valuable information. OT students who are serious about gaining a quick and thorough grasp of Ezekiel must include this volume in their library.

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*Hosea*. By Bo H. Lim and Daniel Castelo. Two Horizons OT Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015, 272 pp., \$25.00 paper.

Two professors from Seattle Pacific University and Seminary have collaborated to produce this volume; Lim is associate professor of OT and Castelo is associate professor of Dogmatic and Constructive Theology. According to the Two Horizons website (<https://www.eerdmans.com/Products/CategoryCenter.aspx?CategoryId=SE!THOTC>), two features characterize the series: "theological exegesis and theological reflection." Contributors to the series "locate their primary interests on theological readings of the texts, past and present. The result is a paragraph-by-paragraph engagement with the text that is deliberately theological in focus." The book contains an eleven-page bibliography, a four-page general index, and a four-page Scripture index.

The contents are organized into fifteen chapters, eleven of which are authored by Lim and devoted to the exegesis of Hosea (chaps. 2–5, 7–11, 13–14). The other four strategically-placed chapters (chaps. 1, 6, 12, 15), authored by Castelo, are devoted more toward philosophical/and theological discussions. Lim's exegetical work is commendable; two particular characteristics of his exegetical approach are identified in his first chapter (chap. 2, "Introduction to the Theological Exegesis of the Book of Hosea"). First, he advocates for reading Hosea in the larger context of the Twelve in light of the extensive intertextuality that has been demonstrated to exist between Hosea and the following eleven prophetic compositions. Lim proposes that new, post-exilic, literary arrangement of prophetic compositions (i.e. the Twelve) leads to "the revelation of Jesus Christ, the inauguration of the church, and the blessed hope of a new creation" (p. 38). His follow-up exegetical work demonstrates the viability of his proposal. Second, Lim prefers the LXX as the textual basis for such a reading. He favors the Augustinian view of Hosea that both the "Hebrew and the Greek were inspired and authoritative for the church" (p. 30). While the LXX is his preferred text, for "practical concerns" (p. 31), his exegetical work in Hosea is based primarily on the MT. The difficulties, challenges and idiosyncrasies of the MT Hosea—perhaps because of the influence of a northern dialect in Lim's view—may have rendered the Hebrew text of Hosea particularly difficult for the LXX translators.

The opening chapter ("Theological Interpretation and the Book of Hosea") by Castelo initiates the authors' case for "theological interpretation" by asserting

that the approach “focuses more on exegetical goals than exegetical methods” (p. 2). Castelo references Stephen Fowl’s discussion of “determinate”/“anti-determinate”/“underdeterminate” strategies of biblical interpretation. Obviously, each of these strategies produces quite different results, yet each might be employed under the umbrella of “theological interpretation.” This “very large umbrella” approach to theological interpretation is also promoted in Reno’s editorial introduction to the Brazos Theological Commentary series (D. J. Treier, *Proverbs & Ecclesiastes* [Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2011], xiii). Such a wide variety of possible approaches to reading and interpreting biblical text reduces the likelihood of engaging the text’s original message and, from my perspective, subjects the text to the predisposition/s of the interpreter.

This “open-endedness” approach to the interpretation of the biblical text is vividly illustrated in Castelo’s third essay, “Marriage, Sexuality, and Covenant Faithfulness” (chap. 12). The Hosea-Gomer relationship, which clearly functions in the Hosea text as a sign-act to Israel—a sign-act to portray the YHWH-Israel relationship—is without a doubt difficult for modern Western readers to grasp appropriately. This may be particularly true in the current culture, given the upheaval that has become so prominent in the perception and experience of “marriage,” a point both Lim and Castelo appropriately make for the reader. My concern comes at the point where Castelo addresses “Marital Diagnostics Suggested by Hosea’s Oracles and Sign-Act” (pp. 193–99). Here he launches into a discussion of therapies currently employed to diagnose marital challenges. One particular model he explains and seeks to apply to the YHWH-Israel relationship is “Emotionally Focused Couple Therapy” (EFT). Based on the prophetic oracles of the Hosea text, the reader might conclude that the YHWH-Israel relationship is characterized by an “overfunctioning”/“underfunctioning” dynamic; that is, communication between the two parties has essentially broken down. YHWH, the aggrieved party, does all the talking, while Israel, the offending party, has little or nothing to say. In marriage therapy, this situation is referred to as “flooding” (p. 196). In support of his application of clinical methodology to the YHWH-Israel relationship, he writes, “I am aware of how far I am pushing this analogy, but let me continue as a way of making sense of the rhetoric of Hosean marriage imagery . . . . Obviously, I wish to preserve the divine character and the differences implied by a divine-human ‘marriage,’ but if this metaphor of marriage is to do real work for reading and understanding Hosea, then I believe its clinical consideration can help situate some of the most troubling parts of Hosea in a redemptive way, given that those parts are ones that some readers see as having the potential to reinforce patterns of domestic violence” (pp. 197–98 n. 40). Israel’s (textual) failure to interact with YHWH affords current readers in the worshiping community opportunity to “fill in the blanks,” which, according to Castelo, means “apologize, accept responsibility, acknowledge the pain caused to YHWH, make atonement . . . account for infidelity and build trust” (199)—all of which Israel failed to do.

Israel’s perceived failure to respond in the face of the dominance of oracular material in Hosea (“flooding”) is to be understood less through the lens of clinical therapy and more through the lens of prophetic literary composition. There are

prophetic compositions that are built on the basis of dialogue between YHWH and Israel; Zephaniah is one such prime example. It should not be assumed that there was a single template for prophetic compositions. Furthermore, one wonders if it is germane to the ANE culture and hermeneutically appropriate to submit the Hosea metaphor of the YHWH-Israel marriage relationship to modern, western marriage therapy models, as mapped out in Castelo's exercise in ETF.

A final point of concern is generated in Castelo's final essay, "Readers of Terror: Brief Reflections on a Wise Reading of Hosea" (chap. 15). While it is certainly true that seminary education alone does not guarantee a proper reading of Scripture (see discussion on pp. 235–36), his proposed "form of reading in which all participants bring to the table of deliberative scriptural interpretation their experiences, hardships, and joys as vital features of the hermeneutical process" (p. 236) seems extremely subjective, and opens the hermeneutical process to a limitless number of interpretive influences that potentially misdirect the work of discovering the understanding of original authorial intent.

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*Advances in the Study of Greek: New Insights for Reading the NT.* By Constantine R. Campbell. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015, 253 pp., \$34.99 paper.

If you are not able to keep up with the scholarly discussion concerning NT Greek, then you need this book. In it, Constantine Campbell, Associate Professor of NT at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, aims to introduce the reader to what he believes to be today's "cutting edge" issues, "issues of contention, development, and even revolution" in NT Greek scholarship (p. 21). Many of the ten chapters in the book are comprised primarily of literature surveys that introduce the scholarship Campbell feels is most important for understanding the topic of the chapter, and each chapter concludes with a brief bibliography of suggested reading on the issue addressed in the chapter. Thus, the book not only introduces the currents in Greek scholarship but also prepares and motivates the readers to go beyond this book and engage the scholarship for themselves.

The first chapter ("A Short History of Greek Studies: The Nineteenth Century to the Present Day") is a "selective survey" of Greek studies, which is designed to "provide a context for the rest of the book as well as demonstrate how and why certain discussions have taken shape" (p. 29). About half of this chapter is comprised of a survey of major movements in modern linguistics that Campbell feels have been the most influential in the study of Greek during the past two centuries.

The second chapter ("Linguistic Theories") builds on the connection of linguistics and NT Greek introduced in chapter 1 and "explores the need for linguistic theory within New Testament Greek studies" (p. 51). Campbell is explicit in his belief that "students and teachers of the Greek New Testament ignore linguistics at their own peril" (p. 52). To that end he introduces the discipline, briefly describes the two major divisions, generative and functional linguistics, and introduces in

more detail one of the prominent schools within the field of functional linguistics, Systemic Functional Linguistics. To emphasize the importance of linguistics, he concludes the chapter by arguing that a linguistic principle, the relationship between semantics and pragmatics, lies at the heart of the disagreement between Stanley Porter and Buist Fanning concerning Greek verbal aspect.

In the discussion of issues in “Lexical Semantics and Lexicography” (chap. 3) Campbell builds on the work of Moisés Silva in his discussion of some key methodological issues of lexical semantics and the work of John A. L. Lee in the application of those theories to NT Greek lexicography.

Campbell’s discussion of “Deponency and the Middle Voice” in chapter 4 is a helpful entrée into this subject. He chronicles the growth of the question of the validity of deponency and the current state of affairs in NT Greek scholarship concerning this issue. Campbell suggests the category of deponency be set aside, but he acknowledges that the discussion concerning passive deponents and why some active verbs have future middle forms is far from over.

The topic of chapter 5 (“Verbal Aspect and *Aktionsart*”) is in Campbell’s bailiwick. He has written two monographs on verbal aspect in NT Greek, and in this book he provides an introduction to and a brief history of the discussion. I will summarize this chapter by mentioning some of the areas of agreement and disagreement among scholars. Three of the main players in this discussion (Porter, Fanning, and Campbell) agree on several key aspects of this issue, including the following: (1) Aspect is central to verbal meaning; (2) aspect is viewpoint; (3) the aspect of the aorist is perfective, and the aspect of the present and imperfect is imperfective; and (4) there is a discourse function for aspect. However, they also disagree on some important issues: (1) Do Greek verbs “encode temporal reference at the semantic level” (p. 130)? (2) How many aspects are there? (3) What is the aspectual nature of the Greek perfect, pluperfect, and future tense forms? It appears that the differences of opinion on these issues will not be settled any time soon, but Campbell, drawing especially on Fanning, suggests the way forward is to adopt his four-step method, combining semantics of the verb, lexeme, and context, to determine the *Aktionsart* (kind of action) of verbs (pp. 120–24). This method is a starting point for future discussions of the interpretation of Greek verbs, but it does not solve the remaining differences of opinion mentioned above.

Campbell’s discussion of “Idiolect, Genre, and Register” (chap. 6) addresses the relationship of idiolect to register and genre. Idiolect might be simply described as an author’s writing style; genre refers to the forms of literary works; and by register Campbell means “a configuration of meanings that is associated with a particular situation” (p. 143). He argues and demonstrates that these three categories are helpful for the study of “aspectual patterns” and other parts of speech, especially in the Gospels (pp. 134–35), because these three “have exegetical implications for the language choices made by individual authors in particular text-types” (p. 26).

Campbell turns to the topic of discourse analysis in chapters 7–8. Of all the topics addressed in the book, Campbell feels this may be “the one with most exegetical potential” (p. 26). In chapter 7 he introduces the topic, briefly surveys four major schools, and analyzes cohesion, which “refers to the way a text hangs togeth-

er” and is the “central concern of discourse analysis” for the school of Halliday and Hasan (pp. 152–53). Although this approach to discourse analysis is the most integrative of the four schools surveyed in this chapter, it was developed in English and there is no comprehensive application of the theory to the Greek of the NT. Campbell gives examples of the impact this approach could have on the study of NT Greek, and he calls for others to take up the work of applying this approach to NT Greek.

Chapter 8 introduces the reader to the important discourse analysis approaches of Stephen Levinsohn and his most significant disciple, Stephen Runge, both of whom are eclectic in their linguistic theory. Campbell helpfully summarizes their approaches and gives brief critiques, primarily that their analysis is focused on discourse features at the level of the clause and sentence and does not extend to the paragraph and document level. However, because they discuss discourse features, it “makes their work immediately more applicable for the average New Testament student” (p. 191).

The issue of the “Pronunciation” of NT Greek is taken up in chapter 9. Campbell summarizes the evidence that the Erasmian system of pronunciation, which is the pronunciation used by the majority of teachers and students of NT Greek, is not the way Koine Greek was pronounced in the first century. Rather, modern Greek pronunciation is closer to the Koine. Out of respect for the Greek language, its speakers, and its history (p. 192), Campbell calls for a change to modern Greek pronunciation, and he provides a helpful “Guide to the Pronunciation of Koine Greek” from John A. L. Lee (pp. 201–3) for those who desire to move in that direction.

In the final chapter (“Teaching and Learning Greek”) Campbell argues for the immersion method of learning NT Greek, and he points to Randall Buth as a pioneer and leader in this area.

This book developed out of a class that Campbell taught for several years at Moore Theological College. It is not for the beginning Greek student, but on the other hand it is also probably not for the specialist in linguistics. One of his goals in writing the book was to make the discussion of advances and issues in Greek accessible to non-specialists, so that students, pastors, and teachers might understand and use the advances that have been made, especially over the past three decades. He has admirably accomplished that goal, and I predict a wide range of readers, including many scholars, will find the book helpful. I could envision using this book for second-year or third-year undergraduate Greek students and for graduate-level students, supplementing it with other readings. I recommend this book to anyone who is looking for an introduction to current issues in NT Greek.

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*Jesus Wept: The Significance of Jesus' Laments in the NT.* By Rebekah Eklund. Library of NT Studies 515. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015, xv + 207 pp., \$112.00.

Over a decade ago, Nicholas Wolterstorff argued that the absence of lament in the life of the church today has to do with the Christian tradition's long-held and deep suspicion of it. Wolterstorff noted both Augustine's and Calvin's stifling of lament through theologizing. Although they came to this conclusion for different reasons, both giants of the tradition disparaged the use of lament—the former because of his neo-platonic disdain for bodily experience, the latter because of the NT's call to endure suffering patiently. This reticence in the tradition to foster a lamenting church is aided today by a market-driven consumerism that pervades the evangelical church (see also Keith Campbell's assessment in the recent article "NT Lament in Current Research and Its Implications for American Evangelicals," *JETS* 57 [2014]: 770). Worship music and hymnody that expresses the elements of biblical lament, namely, imaginatively naming suffering, is nearly impossible to find in today's corporate worship even within liturgical traditions.

Rebekah Eklund's thesis, then, that lament forms a constituent part of the NT gospel is remarkably important. This is the case even in view of the growing movement among Christians of all stripes of an interest in recapturing the biblical practice on lament for the church. In the spate of recent books on lament, the NT remains conspicuously absent except in rare exceptions. In his survey of NT lament research, Campbell, who himself has a monograph on NT lament (*Of Heroes and Villains* [Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2013]), refers to Eklund's work as "the most comprehensive NT lament theology to date" ("NT Lament in Current Research," p. 765) and comments further that her "impressive theological grasp of the NT lament should set the pace and provide the way forward for all subsequent research" ("NT Lament in Current Research," pp. 768–69).

Eklund's revised Duke Th.D. dissertation under the direction of the late Allen Verhey represents a prescient voice on "the role that lament plays in the witness(es) of the New Testament as a whole" (p. 3). Her conclusion is "the New Testament thoroughly incorporates the pattern of Israel's lament into its proclamation of the gospel, especially in its description of Jesus' passion. Furthermore, the New Testament consistently refracts lament through the lens of Jesus' resurrection. The New Testament authors embed the longing of lament (for God's vindication) into the framework of inaugurated eschatology" (p. 2). Furthermore, "Christian lament joins in with Jesus' speaking of lament, in longing for the completion of what Jesus' ministry, death, and resurrection began—the return of Christ and the full arrival of God's kingdom" (p. 170).

Eklund's argument for the continuing place of lament in the NT is worked out over six main chapters with an introduction and conclusion. Chapter 1 presents a brief discussion of lament in the OT with particular focus on the lament psalms. Although acknowledging the form-critical conclusions regarding OT lament, Eklund does not believe lament must rigidly follow the form to be called lament. She opts for "a broader and more flexible definition" (p. 6). According to Eklund, the central problem with which lament wrestles is the apparent hiddenness of God

in the face of suffering. It is rooted in a sure sense of God's relationship to his people and the tension that conviction creates when God seems not to be holding up his side of the relationship. The two categories of lament, as Eklund describes them, are protest and penitence, but she concludes "no neat division exists in the lament psalms between penitence, petition, protest, and complaint" (p. 15).

Eklund defines NT lament as "a persistent cry for salvation to the God who promises to save, in a situation of suffering or sin, in the confident hope that this God hears and responds to cries, and acts *now* and *in the future* to make whole .... New Testament lament is a liminal practice, one that participates in the tension of the 'now' and the 'not yet'" (pp. 16–17, italics hers). In addition, "because the pattern of lament intertwines so closely with the passion of Jesus and extends into the eschatological longing of the church, it is an integral part of the gospel" (p. 17). Finally, in this foundational chapter Eklund describes two main categories of laments in the NT: (1) quotations/allusions to OT laments; and (2) texts that evoke the function and ethos of lament, with the latter including narrative embodiments and the longing of lament.

The second chapter presents a study of the key lament texts in the passion narratives of all four Gospels. Eklund admits that lament is concentrated in the NT around the passion of Jesus, and the focus of her chapter is on three scenes: the Garden of Gethsemane, the tomb of Lazarus, and the crucifixion. Eklund provides an exegetical treatment of each of these episodes concluding: "Despite their significant differences, all four gospels preserve the tradition that the pattern of Old Testament lament decisively shaped Jesus' final actions and words" (p. 23).

In the next three chapters (chaps. 3–5), Eklund considers Jesus's lament in relation to three elements of his divine-human identity with a view to uncovering the unique force of each for Jesus's laments. Chapter 3 deals with Jesus's lament in the relation to his *Jewish* humanity, as one who is in solidarity with the suffering of humanity (Son of Adam) and as one who became Jewish flesh (Son of Abraham and David). Here Eklund emphasizes that lament is "the primary mode of conversation between God and the human creature" in the experience of suffering. In terms of lament as a universal human expression, lament is the cry of a sufferer to another (be it the community, the enemy, God) in hopes of experiencing a concrete change that will either lessen or ease the suffering (pp. 56–60). Yet Jesus cries the human suffering in the language of Israel's laments in the book of Psalms. Thus, in Israel's lament God is the primary audience of Jesus's lament because it is Israel's God "who hears cries, has compassion, rescues out of slavery, brings home from exile, and delivers out of death" (p. 62). She observes that this "places lament within a particular covenantal relationship between YHWH and humanity" (p. 62). Israel's lament presumes God is an active hearer (p. 64). "In the lament psalms prayed by Jesus, the dual themes of God's apparent absence and God's faithful, saving presence are stubbornly held together" (p. 64).

Chapter 4 takes up the theme of Jesus's lament as the Messiah—the king, priest, and prophet. Here Eklund is interested in how Jesus's messianic identities inform and shape his laments as well as those of his followers. She uses the traditional three-fold offices because "these offices highlight a different aspect of Jesus'

laments in relation to his role as the deliverer of Israel” (p. 67). At forty-one pages, this chapter represents the longest of these three central chapters (chap. 3 is 15 pp.; chap. 5 is 26 pp.). As King, Jesus the Messiah-King “*answers* the prayer of lament (being sent from God as the deliverer of Israel); and he takes on the role of the righteous sufferer of the psalms, *participating* in and *embodying* the prayer of lament” (p. 76, italics hers). What this means, importantly, is that the laments become Jesus’s own. He fulfills the lament Psalms by speaking and living them; “Jesus does not simply quote them” (p. 77). He is the “true and ultimate speaker of Israel’s laments and praises” (p. 77). Eklund observes the eschatological nature of Jesus’s use of Israel’s laments, which point to the restoration of Israel as well as the subversive nature of the kingship represented by a suffering king.

In regard to the priestly element of Jesus’s messiahship, lament represents a fundamental aspect of Jesus’s messianic service. First, it reveals his solidarity with all humanity particularly in the book of Hebrews. Second, Jesus was qualified for his high priestly service through suffering. To make this point Eklund discusses Heb 5:7, connecting it to its echoes in the Gospel tradition. She sums up, “Jesus is equipped through his human experience to hear cries for help and to respond in mercy” (p. 91).

Finally, Jesus laments as a prophet. Prophetic lament entails either an intercessory complaint and petition on behalf of the people or an attempt to avert God’s punishment or a form for grief over Israel’s unfaithfulness. According to Eklund, Jesus completes rather than continues the intercessory aspect of the prophetic lament. Most interesting is her observation that Jesus reorients this lament “away from imprecation and toward intercession,” maintaining all the while lament’s demand for justice (p. 92). Regarding the intercessory nature of prophetic lament, Jesus participates in it when he grieves over Jerusalem (p. 92).

Chapter 5 considers Jesus’s lament as divine lament, a substantial chapter both biblically and theologically as Eklund considers the theme of God’s mourning in the Bible over Israel’s unfaithfulness, the theological debate about God’s “impassivity” (God’s suffering), and the Spirit’s role in Christian prayers of lament in the “already-not yet.” In the discussion, Eklund astutely but ironically notes that in the debate about God’s impassibility, divine *apatheia*, both sides agree on the central point: “the absolute necessity of God’s unbreakable love for and involvement with the world, especially human creation” (p. 116). The defenders of the traditional doctrine as well as the recent detractors, most notably Jürgen Moltmann, dubbed by Eklund, “suffering God theologians,” “intended to demonstrate God’s steadfast love for humanity, but through very different theological paths” (p. 116). Moreover, the differences between the two camps reveal the different emphases in the Gospel accounts themselves, giving rise to these two opposing positions. Eklund, in her quest for a canonical reading, seeks to keep the two canonical positions together, dereliction and trust, the very *form* of biblical lament. Still the unprecedented presentation of God in the canonical Gospels, she highlights, is a “God crucified” (p. 128).

The final two chapters (chaps. 6 and 7) sum up for Christian practice the implications of the arguments put forward in the previous chapters. In chapter 6,

Eklund argues that NT lament, in contrast to OT and Jewish lament, is revised by the inaugurated eschatology of the NT: the church laments in the “already-not yet.” Eklund illustrates this insight with discussion from statements in Matthew’s Sermon on the Mount, 1 Thess 4:13, and the NT’s call to “patient endurance.” Of the latter, she states, “Placing patient endurance alongside lament sets it into its proper frame, since both lament and patient endurance arise from roots of suffering and hope” (p. 160). The complementary nature of lament and patient endurance in the life of a Christian redresses Calvin’s minimization of the practice of lament referenced by Wolterstorff at the beginning of this review.

Eklund’s book is a stellar example of a piece of theological interpretation of Scripture that evinces a grasp of the historical as well as the theological elements of the biblical text, always with a view to the text’s meaning for the contemporary world. Much more than a model of a hermeneutical approach to Scripture, however, *Jesus Wept* calls the church back to the fundamental and irreplaceable practice of lament in the Christian life by convincingly arguing for the role and function of lament in the NT. Eklund gets the last word: “As a Christian eschatological practice, lament is a liminal practice. It is ‘shaped by the incongruities between what is and what should or might be’ .... Those who lament stand on the boundary between the old age and the new and hope for things unseen” (p. 171).

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*The Gospel of Matthew and Judaic Traditions: A Relevance-Based Commentary.* By Herbert W. Basser with Marsha B. Cohen. The Brill Reference Library of Judaism 46. Leiden: Brill, 2015, xxxii + 794 pp., \$301.00.

Approaching the Judaic context of the Gospel of Matthew requires a degree of care in attention to the sources used and the methods employed for the task. In this volume Basser provides readers with a lengthy preface that describes the history and nature of this ambitious project (pp. ix–xviii). This “relevance-based commentary” thoroughly reworks his *The Mind behind the Gospels: A Commentary on Matthew 1–14* (Brighton, MA: Academic Studies, 2009) and includes his new work on Matthew 15–28. For the precise aim of this project Basser turns to a reviewer of the prior volume, who explains that Basser “seeks to highlight similarities and parallels between Matthew’s gospel and other pieces of Jewish literature in their interpretation of biblical verses, use of idiom and motif, and theologies” (p. ix). The inherent difficulty in such an undertaking is identifying what “Judaic traditions” the author has in mind and what the role of that material may be in relation to interpreting Matthew. Therein lie some of the problems of this commentary that neither a lengthy preface (pp. ix–xvii) nor a general introduction (pp. 1–21) clarify with much satisfaction. Basser’s primary corpus of literature stems from the rabbinic era, which begins on a literary level around 200 CE with the Mishnah and extends centuries thereafter in the Talmuds, Tosefta, etc. The manner in which such material can be employed for interpreting the NT has been discussed at least since the in-

famous Strack-Billerbeck (Hermann L. von Strack and Paul Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch* [6 vols.; Munich: Beck, 1922–1961]). That work became notorious for its seemingly endless collation of parallels to NT texts and, most problematically, giving insufficient attention to the dates and provenances of Jewish sources called upon. Copious citations of rabbinic texts are pressed into service for reading the NT, anachronistically imposing a much later and often contextually foreign concept found in the Rabbis upon an earlier text in the NT. In the ensuing decades scholars have increasingly recognized the impropriety of this enterprise and sometimes have tended to ignore rabbinic materials altogether. The important work of David Instone-Brewer (*Techniques and Assumptions in Jewish Exegesis Before 70 CE* [TSAJ 30; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1992]) has rescued the Rabbinic literature from the proverbial rubbish bin of NT interpretation by devising a careful and thorough method for discerning what components of this vast and complex corpus of literature may date to before 70 CE. The importance of this work is that it allows interpreters to begin to identify material from the Rabbis that may derive from the similar context of the NT. In essence, it sifts through large swaths of literature and distills what may (and may not) be useful for interpreting the NT.

The difficulty with Bassler's project is that it does not exhibit any familiarity with the discussion or even the importance of identifying earlier traditions within rabbinic materials. Bassler's only critique of Strack-Billerbeck's *Kommentar* is that it is simply too "cluttered with irrelevancies" to yield much fruit. Instead, Bassler explains or perhaps rationalizes his voluminous attention to rabbinic material by underscoring the shared "cultural idiom" between that corpus and the Gospels. The concern is not to identify parallels or borrowed motifs but to expose the "irrefutable evidence that there exists an entire literature, spanning the ages, through which the Jewish imagination has constructed vivid images to express profoundly Jewish sentiments" (p. xi). Its relevance for Matthew lies in the content that it provides as "a prism for viewing Matthew's imagery" (p. xi). The author seems disinterested in the anachronisms to any substantive degree other than simply to assert that the "practices of religious Jews is not very different from those of their ancestors" (p. xi).

There is a degree of reductionism in the introduction as well in that, perhaps like that of E. P. Sanders before him, Bassler uses rabbinic material to gain access to the "Jewish mind" to understand the "Jewish ideas that pervaded the cultural matrix" of Matthew's context (p. 21). Whether one can access this through rabbinic sources is doubtful, and the language of what "pervaded" that setting is overstated. As George W. E. Nickelsburg has indicated in many settings, we possess only a very small handful of pieces of a very large puzzle of Jewish thought from the Second Temple period, and any reconstruction of that thought must be tentative. Furthermore, claims to religious practices that are "not very different" from those of their ancestors fail to account for the fundamental historical developments within Judaism after the destruction of the temple (70 CE) and the Bar Kokhba revolt (132–135 CE). These necessarily create significant obstacles to Bassler's presumption of general continuity. Some groups fell almost entirely out of existence (e.g.

Sadducees, Zealots, etc.), temple worship was eradicated, and much of Judea was under Roman occupation. The writers and communities associated with *4 Ezra* and *2 Baruch*, both written shortly after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE, recognize the tragic *discontinuity* of their experiences from the situation prior to the first revolt. The continuity that Bassler seems to presume is for them something to be found in the eschatological future.

Nevertheless, Bassler continues his quest for “parallel style, form, and structure” (p. xiii) in order to bring “the sense of Matthew to life by selecting materials to show what an informed reader would derive from reflecting on these materials” (p. xiv). In his estimation, correspondence in form between Matthew and rabbinic traditions “helps us to find the intended meaning of [Matthew’s] rhetoric” (p. xvi). In response to those “who sneer at using rabbinic materials to help interpret the Gospel,” he merely flags what he perceives to be inadequacies of alternatives (p. xvi).

After discussing the theoretical frameworks of the project, Bassler devotes the bulk of his attention to twenty-eight chapters of introduction and commentary corresponding to the chapters of the Gospel of Matthew. The introduction provides an overview of the Matthean chapter and points of correspondence with various Jewish sources, whereas the commentary narrows its focus on particular verses. Despite the challenges that permeate the methodological scope of the project as a whole, these observations are often quite illuminating and fruitful. For instances, the Matthean periodization of history in the first chapter (1:1–18) occasions Bassler’s examination of the “tripartite periodization of world history” in Jewish sources, primarily but not exclusively rabbinic. Indeed, while favoring the rabbinic corpus in the preface and introduction, Bassler attends to a wide range of literature from the Second Temple period itself, often citing writings from Qumran, Josephus, Jubilees, *1 Enoch*, and many others. Though the Second Temple material is often mingled indiscriminately with the later rabbinic material, it is nonetheless a valuable addition.

In looking at the genealogy, Bassler observes that the climactic attention given to David in Matthew’s genealogical register is placed on Solomon in rabbinic material (p. 33). After Solomon, Israel’s glory fades into exile. Where Rabbis examined biblical genealogies messianically, there was an anticipation of strength, security, and peace (p. 35). From this Bassler says Matthew presents Jesus also as establishing strength and peace (citing Matt 11:25–30, though perhaps overlooking Matt 10:34). Bassler also provides an illuminating comparison and contrast between Matthew’s citation of Exod 20:13 in Matt 5:21 and that of the Rabbis, who insist one could not be punished for any act unless it has been made clear in Torah that it was forbidden (p. 139). Bassler claims Jesus’s statement about the abiding authority of Torah (Matt 5:21, 28, 34, 39, 44) “in effect means to exercise total self-control” (p. 141) and finds support in the speech of Eleazar to Antiochus (4 Macc 5:16–17, 18–19, 23–24). Though “self-control” may not be the most fruitful point of correlation, the comparison warrants attention for the interpreter of Matthew. For Jesus’s instructions to disciples to raise the dead (Matt 10:8) Bassler looks to *Lev. Rab.* 10.4 to

show that not only certain holy people but also their disciples were able to raise the dead (p. 255).

The vast majority of this is a fascinating collage of ancient texts—some rabbinic though others much earlier and dating to the Second Temple period. The difficulty is discerning precisely how a volume such as this could be used. There is a tendency to interpret Matthean texts in light of a seemingly indiscriminately amalgamated collection of Jewish texts, collections that merge Second Temple and rabbinic material, to illuminate Matthew's text. The similarities and/or differences between how Matthew and rabbinic traditions understood a text from the Hebrew Bible, for example, or a concept such as Sabbath observance, at most lays out points of similarities and differences. It cannot be taken back in time and context by centuries to illuminate the intent of the Gospel author. This book has great merit and has a place alongside other Judaic studies of Matthew's Gospel. However, perhaps like Strack-Billerbeck before it, users should be cautious about what ancient textual bases are used to inform the author's interpretation of Matthew.

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*Peter: False Disciple and Apostate according to the Gospel of Matthew.* By Robert H. Gundry. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015, xx + 119 pp., \$20.00 paper.

When a noted scholar, who combines meticulous exegesis with a strong commitment to the theological authority of Scripture, sets out to prove that the Gospel of Matthew presents Peter as an eternally lost apostate, you know you have an interesting book. In this brief but detailed study Robert Gundry builds the case against Peter relentlessly and with no "ifs, buts, or maybes." Peter is damned, one of the false disciples who will be thrown into outer darkness at the end of the age. This is *Matthew's* Peter, to be sure, not necessarily the actual historical figure. What is at stake here, then, is not so much the status of Peter as the intentions and message of Matthew.

Following a brief introduction Gundry presents his case in two main stages. The first consists of a detailed examination of every reference to Peter in Matthew, taken in the order in which they appear, together with a consideration of instances where Matthew omits a Markan reference to Peter (chaps. 2–6). A second essential part of the argument is a thorough survey of the Matthean themes of false discipleship and persecution (chaps. 7–8). The examination of Peter passages in the first part of the book shows that he fits the profile of a false disciple developed in the second—one who falls away under the threat of persecution and thus suffers eternal condemnation. A final chapter recapitulates the argument and offers brief comments on historical implications with respect to Matthew's first-century setting and theological implications with respect to the unity and pastoral function of the NT canon. A still briefer afterword offers suggestions as to why the church through history has consistently failed to understand Matthew's portrayal of Peter; these include apologetic harmonizing, the tradition of Peter's martyrdom, the com-

fort provided by a picture of restoration after failure, Peter's coming to be viewed as the first pope, and a widespread aversion to the doctrine of divine judgment. Here is Gundry's final word on the church's reading of Matthew: "It remains to be seen whether an unblinking exegesis of the Petrine passages in Matthew will overcome interpretive and ecclesiastical traditions and the attractiveness of a Peter who offers us a mirror image of our flawed but redeemable selves" (p. 108).

Gundry's survey of Matthew's Peter passages is marked by close attention to narrative details, grammar, and word choice as well as to the evangelist's redactional activity vis-à-vis parallel material in Mark. To give just a sampling of his judgments: that 10:2 identifies Peter as first among the disciples ("first Simon, who is called Peter") hints at his fate as one of the first who will be last; his request in 14:28, "if it is you command me to come to you on the waters," is an expression of fear and doubt and may even recall the devil's testing challenge in the wilderness, "if you are the Son of God . . ."; that the Father has to reveal Jesus's identity to Peter in 16:17 is to his discredit; Jesus's statement "You are Peter" in 16:18 does not represent Jesus as giving Peter a new name; when Jesus says he will build his church "on this rock" he does not refer to Peter but to his own teaching (which is likened to bedrock in 7:24 and 26); and Matthew's replacement of Mark's ἐπιβαλῶν with ἐξελθῶν ἔξω (going outside) in 26:75 turns a picture of repentance into a foreshadowing of Peter's eternal perdition in outer darkness. Although Gundry acknowledges that Matthew nowhere *explicitly* identifies Peter as a false disciple, he is quite confident that the Gospel's overall depiction of his words and actions demands that we see him as such.

With respect to the themes of false discipleship and persecution, Gundry lays out extensive evidence showing that these are genuine Matthean concerns, that according to Matthew the false can lie hidden among the true, that disowning Jesus is one mark of false discipleship, and that false disciples will be judged eternally. He also briefly argues one additional point, that failure to demonstrate true discipleship is an irreversible sin. Once salt loses its saltiness it cannot be restored (5:13).

Gundry offers two tentative suggestions about the historical situation in which Matthew developed his anti-Peter agenda: he wrote before Peter's martyrdom in the mid-60s (since Peter could hardly have been portrayed as an apostate after that), and he may have written from Antioch where he may have been influenced against Peter by the dispute over Peter's refusal to eat with Gentiles. As for theological implications, Gundry insists that the contradictory depictions of Peter in Matthew and the other Gospels must be allowed to stand side by side, because to choose one over the other would undermine the canonical authority of Scripture. What counts is not the Bible's historical or even theological unity but its pastoral impact. Matthew provides a necessary sharp warning; Luke and John counteract despair.

While Gundry's exegesis might be engaged with respect to various points of detail, I wish to raise six more fundamental questions. First, does Gundry add an extra element to Matthew's teaching about false discipleship while at the same time overlooking his teaching about forgiveness? The supposition that once a disciple denies Jesus that disciple can never thereafter repent and find forgiveness is essen-



tial to Gundry's argument, but his survey of the apostasy theme turns up no such affirmation. Jesus's question about unsalty salt ("with what shall it be made salty?") does not really speak to the issue. In addition, weighing in on the other side is the significant Matthean theme of disciples repenting and receiving forgiveness—regularly, repeatedly, and for all sins except blasphemy against the Holy Spirit (6:12; 12:31; 18:15, 22).

Second, does Gundry miss the shape of Matthew's progressing narrative? The first Gospel is more than a collection of events and sayings tied together by thematic links. It has a plot with a beginning, middle, and end. The question is not whether Peter denies Jesus, makes all kinds of mistakes, and otherwise reveals himself to be a sinner, but whether his failure in the high priest's courtyard is the defining moment of his life or Matthew's last word about him. To put this in terms of characterization, is Peter a round character who experiences inward struggle, change, and dawning self-awareness or is he a flat character or type? Two factors are radically underestimated in Gundry's analysis. One is the whole series of narrative analogies leading up to Peter's denials. In the sea-walking incident, in his resistance to Jesus's statement about suffering, in the transfiguration episode, and in Gethsemane, Peter tries, fails, and is still kept on board as a disciple. A second factor is the supremely important picture of Jesus's post-resurrection meeting with the *eleven* disciples in 28:16. Each of the canonical Gospels finds a way to indicate Peter's restoration; this is Matthew's.

Third, does Gundry miss the *tone* of Matthew's portrayal of Peter? Emotional tenor can be a subtle thing to detect, but in passage after passage Peter's mistakes and failures appear to go hand in hand with or even grow out of positive feelings toward Jesus. He wants to go toward Jesus (14:28; not "command me to walk on the water" but "command me to come *to you*"), expresses concern for Jesus (16:22), tries to honor him (17:4), and desires to be loyal to him (26:33–35). Gundry's exegesis works against the emotional feel of these passages.

Fourth, does Gundry's close-grained analysis of Matthew's redactional activity miss what is most obvious? Matthew's most obvious compositional move with respect to Peter is the addition of 16:17–19, in which Jesus emphatically affirms his future role of leadership in the church. A second large feature of Matthew's redaction is that apart from 16:17–19 his essential characterization of Peter (Peter's basic traits and pattern of discipleship) remains very close to that of Mark. Nor is it that far off from Peter's basic characterization in Luke and John. Both of these factors are impossible to explain in a work designed to portray a non-restored Peter.

Fifth, where is a plausible life-setting for the agenda Gundry envisages? This is a huge missing piece in Gundry's discussion of Matthew's intentions. His brief comments about a pre-60s date and an Antiochene provenance are hardly sufficient.

Finally, can the particular kind of inter-Gospel contradiction Gundry describes reasonably exist within a pastorally workable canon of Scripture? It is common enough for theologians to argue that historical and even theological contradictions need not vitiate the Bible's value as God's word for the church. Yet Gundry's affirmation of the simultaneous authority of Matthew's Peter-as-apostate teaching and the other Gospels' Peter-as-saved picture takes this approach to Scripture to a

new level. It is one thing to affirm theological paradox or even (as some may wish) the presence of out-and-out contradictory theological principles that nevertheless serve a necessary pastoral function within the canon; but it is something quite different to say that *one person*—and a universally known leader at that—is both damned and saved, both a completely deceived false sheep and the greatest of Christ’s under-shepherds. That could not possibly have worked in the first century and it cannot work today.

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*The Followers of Jesus as the ‘Servant’: Luke’s Model from Isaiah for the Disciples in Luke-Acts.* By Holly Beers. Library of NT Studies 535. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015, xvi + 213 pp., \$112.00.

The theme of Jesus as the Isaianic servant in the Synoptic Gospels is well-worn ground. But what of the disciples? Are they portrayed as Isaianic servants as well? Holly Beers, Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Westmont College, answers in the affirmative for Luke and Acts. The thesis of *The Followers of Jesus as the ‘Servant,’* stated crisply in the first sentence, is that “Luke builds aspects of his portrayal of both Jesus and the disciples in Luke-Acts on the human agent of the Isaianic New Exodus (NE) in Isaiah 40–66, the servant” (p. 1). In the book’s six chapters Beers makes a case that is generally convincing, as long as you are willing to grant a few premises and not be distracted by some extraneous evidence.

In the brief introductory chapter Beers gives a truncated *Forschungsgeschichte*, leading to the conclusion that there is still need for a comprehensive analysis of the servant motif in Luke-Acts. Chapter 2 adds an unexpected but welcome dimension to an otherwise standard exegetical discussion as Beers offers a critical evaluation of *intertextuality*. She first criticizes the epistemological roots of the radically text-centered variety of intertextuality championed by, for example, Julia Kristeva, arguing instead for a “storied critical-realist” epistemology that preserves authorial intention. She then appeals to speech-act theory and Richard Hays’s brand of intertextuality to establish her view of what Luke is doing with Isaiah, which is “to *(re)interpret* his post-Jesus world by claiming that the Isaianic restoration is present in Jesus and his followers” (p. 30; italics hers). While the critique of Kristeva is too brief to be substantive, nevertheless Beers’s epistemological self-consciousness is refreshing and helpful. Practically, her endorsement of Haysian intertextuality means that she will consider not just clear citations of Isaiah in Luke and Acts but allusions and “echoes” as well.

Chapter 3 considers the presence of the servant in Isaiah. Beers sidesteps historical-critical questions and assumes the literary unity of the book such as it was understood in the Second Temple period. She walks briskly through the relevant portions of Isaiah 40–66, focusing not primarily on the *identity* of the servant but rather on his *function* in bringing about the new exodus and the restoration of the world. This will be crucial later on in the book, as highlighting the connection be-

tween the servant and the new exodus allows more Luke-Acts passages to count towards the thesis. Similarly important is her decision to include Isaiah 61 as a servant passage, since without this text she loses the significance of Jesus's synagogue sermon in Luke 4. Beers also notes the climax of the servant's mission in his vicarious suffering in 52:13–53:12, as well as the interplay between a singular *servant* and multiple *servants* in 54–66. This latter point will buttress her later claims regarding the disciples. A weakness in this chapter is an over-reliance on secondary sources rather than exegesis of the text; at the very least more verse references supporting the points made would have been helpful. Nevertheless, her arguments are generally persuasive, but if one finds them not to be, this will greatly affect the evaluation of her thesis.

In chapter 4 Beers examines the servant in the Second Temple Jewish literature. The survey is comprehensive in scope; in addition to, for example, the DSS and apocrypha, Beers also helpfully includes the LXX as an interpretation of the MT. Her overall aim is to establish warrant for her argument regarding Luke's use of the material by demonstrating that other Second Temple literature used it in a similar way. Specifically, she wishes to show that authors in this period interpreted the texts eschatologically, while re-appropriating the new exodus and servant themes in complex ways, including both individual and corporate interpretations of the servant. Beers is clearly a maximalist here, which is probably necessary to make the points regarding Luke-Acts she wishes to make. Moreover, many of her parallels rely on conceptual rather than verbal links. Some are more convincing than others; while her point regarding diverse eschatological interpretation of Isaiah is solid, the evidence for corporate use of the servant, while far from lacking, is less overwhelming when the sources are checked.

The maximalist impulse continues in the following chapters as Beers turns to the NT. Chapter 5 looks at the presence of the servant theme in Luke as she walks through the Gospel section-by-section. Beyond clear citations and allusions, the major criterion, of which we shall say more below, is the presence of isolated *words* associated with the servant and new exodus passages. That is, she considers instances of not just *παῖς* and *δοῦλος* but words such as *εὐαγγελίζομαι*, *ἄφεις*, and *παραδίδωμι*. A few conceptual parallels are invoked as well. Here her two earlier moves—viewing the servant as the agent of the new exodus and including Isaiah 61 as a servant passage—pay off, widening the sphere of influence of the servant in Luke. She also deals with one of the strongest objections to her thesis, which is the apparent downplaying of vicarious suffering in Luke's picture of the servant. Beers deftly attempts to turn this “bug” into a “feature” by arguing that Isaiah's servant was never really just about atonement anyway, but also about features such as “communal peace and social justice” (p. 121). Luke, she argues, was aware of this and so presented a more balanced servant portrait that could also more readily apply to the disciples.

Chapter 6 is the crucial chapter for her thesis as she looks at Acts following the same sequential format. Acts 13:47 with its citation of Isa 49:6 is of course discussed in detail, as the “light to the nations” mission of the servant is explicitly taken up by the disciples. Yet beyond this, Beers rightfully highlights some com-

mon Acts words, such as *μάρτυς*, *ὁδός*, and *εὐαγγελίζομαι*, all of which, when considered in context, can plausibly be related to Isaianic servant passages. She also emphasizes key themes such as Jew-Gentile progression, continuity with Jesus's mission, and the disciples' suffering, which can likewise be traced back to Isaiah. This is not to say that the disciples are the same as Jesus; Beers carefully distinguishes between Jesus as the servant *par excellence* and the disciples who are servants in a lesser sense. Overall the evidence in this chapter is surprisingly strong, notwithstanding some problems, as discussed below. Finally a brief concluding chapter contains a summary of her argument as well as a few miscellaneous issues, such as the ending of Acts.

Beers's case is well argued and largely convincing, given the buy-in of key assumptions and a maximalist approach to the material. If one is willing to grant that Isaiah's servant and new exodus are inextricably linked, that Isaiah 61 is a servant passage, and that an interplay between a *servant* and *servants* is a feature both of Isaiah and its Second Temple interpreters, her conclusions regarding not only Jesus but the disciples will follow. Moreover Beers avoids an easy pitfall of a study of this kind by nuancing and qualifying her thesis properly, making clear that the servant theme is only one important part of Luke's variegated portrait of Jesus. Additionally, she takes care to interact along the way with those who disagree with her positions on key texts.

However, although I believe she makes her case, a distracting weakness of the study is the overly broad standard for what qualifies as servant material in Luke-Acts. Essentially, for Beers, *any* important Isaianic keywords count, including hopelessly generic terms such as *κηρύσσω*, *παραδίδωμι*, and *ἄφεσις*. Unless one wishes to view Luke-Acts as a purely literary creation devoid of historical referent, which Beers makes clear she is not doing, one must consider what other words would have been available to an author to describe the historical events they were trying to portray. For many of her putatively Isaianic echoes in Luke-Acts there were simply no other words available (e.g. to describe preaching, betrayal, or forgiveness). Luke is not using these words to indicate Isaianic servant-fulfillment, but simply because, well, these things happened. While this has important implications of its own for Isaiah's significance, it goes beyond the thesis Beers is trying to prove. Rather than a hodgepodge approach the book would have been considerably strengthened by instead focusing on the most compelling allusions and echoes, while relegating the weaker material to footnotes or excurses.

Nevertheless, this does not invalidate the thesis but merely rather detracts from its force. Overall Beers has successfully brought attention to an overlooked theme of Luke-Acts with important implications for ecclesiology.

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*Gospel of Glory: Major Themes in Johannine Theology.* By Richard Bauckham. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015, xvii + 237 pp., \$24.99 paper.

The author of this anthology, Richard Bauckham, is a celebrated NT scholar, formerly holding a teaching post in St. Andrews, Scotland, but now residing in Ridley Hall, Cambridge, while devoting himself to research and writing upon early retirement. While the scope of his past study represents a broad spectrum of subjects, including works on Moltmann, ecology, systematic theology, 2 Peter, Revelation, and Second Temple Jewish literature, recently he has penned a number of important works on the Fourth Gospel. In a sense, this book is a culmination of his contributions to the study of the Fourth Gospel up to the present, but it also stimulates readers to await more eagerly his much-anticipated volume on John's Gospel for the New International Greek Testament Commentary series.

Chapter 1 is devoted to the theme of "individuality." By that, the focus is placed not on the importance of individuals exclusive of the communal interest but on the responsibility of each individual in response to the divine invitation to have a personal and intimate relationship with Christ. This aspect has been duly noted and applied vigorously in various Christian ministries at different levels. Unfortunately, NT scholarship has largely ignored that grain of truth, and Bauckham is to be commended for taking up a careful examination of the theme with such a rigorous exegetical force. As a corrective to the communal theory that has eclipsed post-WWII Johannine scholarship, this chapter provides a sober call to a more realistic reading of the Fourth Gospel.

Chapter 2 investigates the "one" motif over against the Jewish background of the Shema (Deut 6:4). "One" in association with the biblical Godhead signifies uniqueness and unity, and this theme has implication for humanity as well. The oneness motif is intricately integrated not only in the relationship between the Father and the Son but also between believers. The heart and climax of Johannine soteriology is marked by the inclusion of human beings into the loving relationship between the Father and the Son. In turn, that unity in effect results in the "oneness of believers, reflecting the oneness of Jesus and the Father ... the key to Johannine ecclesiology" (p. 40). This loving relationship is extended toward the world in the famous John 3:16 passage and in the missional ideas of John 17. Such an insight runs counter to the sectarian and exclusive nature of the hypothetical Johannine community.

In chapter 3, following upon the seminal work of David Hill's *Greek Words and Hebrew Meanings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), Bauckham takes up the study of a Johannine keyword, "glory," which he recognizes as heavily influenced by the Septuagintal use of the word *kabôd* especially in view of Isa 52:13. A meticulous word study ensues so as to illustrate nuances and meanings that help to express John's theology of the cross and resurrection as the glory of God disclosed in Christ.

Chapter 4 is entitled "Cross, Resurrection, and Exaltation." These three significant soteriological events in the life of Christ bring light to explore specific meanings of four keywords: love, life, glory, and truth.

The fifth chapter examines various Johannine passages that have been appropriated for a sacramental reading of the text (3:5, 6:31–59, 19:34). His own finding is that the Fourth Gospel does not promote an outward expression of sacraments. Rather, the idea that the fundamental aspect of salvation through Christ is unequivocally stressed through the imagery of Christian rites can be drawn only by implication. “The Gospel refers to sacraments only in secondary overtones, if at all” (p. 107).

In chapter 6, Bauckham takes up a dialogue with Bultmann and Brown. In contrast to Brown and other scholars, Bauckham argues that the similarity between the Fourth Gospel and the Qumran scrolls can be attributed to a conceptual development from the common scriptural and religious traditions of early Judaism. With regard to the work of Bultmann, Bauckham appreciates the necessity of decision with regard to John’s dualism. However, the point of contention to be raised is whether dualism and/or duality is a major theme. Bauckham argues, on the contrary, that it is only a framework through which the incarnation of the divine Son can be portrayed. Dualism is, thus, relegated to a mere narrative device so as to get across the Johannine central concern, which is soteriology.

Chapter 7, “Dimensions of Meaning in the Gospel’s First Week,” takes up one fourth of the entire book, ranging over fifty pages. It demonstrates the intricate and tight literal artistry of the correlation between the first and last sections of the Fourth Gospel in a way that conveys Johannine messages at various levels and dimensions.

The eighth and last chapter investigates the so-called discrepancies in the portrayals of Jesus between the Synoptics and the Fourth Gospel. In contrast to the simplistic harmonious attempts of early and medieval theologians and the reductionistic approaches of some modern quests for the historical Jesus, Bauckham proposes a reading of the Johannine Jesus that takes into account the canonical perspective of the four Gospels. In light of the explicit incompleteness and implicit complementarity of John’s Gospel, Bauckham argues that the Fourth Gospel provides not a contradictory but a complementary reading to the Synoptic depiction of the historical Jesus.

In the last two chapters in particular, Bauckham is able to demonstrate persuasively the palpable theological intention and competent literary skills of the fourth evangelist. A minor quibble is whether his reading is over-eclipsed by traditional Lutheranism. In places, it seems to be a Christological concern rather than a soteriological one that sets into motion certain Johannine features (e.g. dualism). Although this book is dedicated to six esteemed British Johannine scholars (Westcott, Hoskyns, Dodd, Robinson, Lindars, and Barrett), none of them appears as a substantial dialogue partner. However, it is certain that Bauckham will emerge at the same level of preeminence as theirs in the years to come. Since this book challenges current mainstream Johannine scholarship at several fronts, it stopped

me to ponder frequently. It also merits perusal for the keen insights it provides. Readers will gain a deeper appreciation for and understanding of John's Gospel.

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*The Genre of Acts and Collected Biography*. By Sean A. Adams. Society for NT Studies Monograph Series 156. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013, xiii + 319 pp., \$99.00.

*The Genre of Acts and Collected Biography* is a revised version of Sean A. Adams's doctoral thesis completed at the University of Edinburgh under the supervision of Larry Hurtado. As the title indicates, the purpose of this work is to determine the genre of Acts, and Adams's central argument is that the various features of Acts correspond most closely to the ancient genre of collected biography.

Adams begins his study by surveying previous proposals regarding the genre of Acts, noting that it has been classified as history, novel, epic, and biography (pp. 5–22). He claims, however, that these prior efforts have proved inadequate because they have not provided a thorough account of the literary features associated with each genre and they have attempted to make genre determinations on the basis of cursory comparisons and thematic or content parallels (p. 22).

Thus, in order to develop more effective criteria, Adams devotes the following chapter to the discussions of genre theory in six ancient authors, and he attempts to identify the formal features that ancients considered in locating the genre of a work (pp. 27–49). Adams also discusses the concept of genre hierarchy in the ancient world, noting that within prose writings history was typically valued the most (pp. 49–53). He cautions against viewing genres in a rigid way, highlighting the prevalence of genre development, mixing, and innovation (pp. 53–57), and he suggests that the power relations between the genres could result in pressure for the lower genres to adopt features from the genre at the top of the hierarchical scale (pp. 64–66).

The subsequent chapter then focuses on the history of biography as a genre. Adams claims that one of the problems with earlier taxonomies is that they do not recognize the importance of *collected* biography as a genre, despite the fact that “collected biographies were the dominant form of ancient biography” (p. 80). He then traces the subdivisions of individual biographies (pp. 80–92), and he describes three types of collected biographies: (1) works intended to illustrate virtue and vice; (2) works that focus on outstanding and distinguished figures; (3) works on schools, successions, and sects that traced the development of one particular group over time (pp. 92–109). Following this, Adams provides a description of the broad features of collected biographies. The primary distinguishing feature that he notes is that collected biographies give a central place to their principles of organization (pp. 109–10). In this chapter's conclusion, Adams claims that biographies are distinct from histories in that they focus on individuals and include biographical data, and collected biographies are distinct from individual biographies in that they present

the lives of the individual subjects “within the larger developmental arc of the specific school or tradition in focus” (p. 114).

The next chapter essentially lays out Adams’s case for viewing Acts as a collected biography. This case is divided into four sections devoted to different aspects of Acts: opening features (pp. 120–25), subject (pp. 125–32), external features (pp. 132–52), and internal features (pp. 152–70). It is evident throughout this section that Adams views the genre of history as the main alternative to his proposal, and he particularly emphasizes aspects of Acts that show correspondence to collected biography in contrast to history. Along these lines, he mentions six main features: the reference back to the Gospel of Luke and the remark about the deeds of an individual in the preface (pp. 122–25); the short length of Acts in comparison with histories (pp. 137–40); the structure of Acts with its chronological scheme and focus on individuals (pp. 140–42); the manner in which Acts’ setting follows the characters (pp. 152–53); the absence of standard historical *topoi* such as war (pp. 153–56); and the middle style common to collected biographies but not histories (pp. 156–60). He admits, however, that some features of Acts look more like history than collected biography: whereas collected biographies regularly devote discrete sections to the individuals described, Acts is a continuous narrative (pp. 129–30; 133–34); the use of speeches in characterization is more frequent in history than biography (pp. 149–51); and biographies ordinarily do not emphasize geographical setting to the extent that Acts does (p. 171). Nevertheless, Adams insists that these unusual features may be explained as the incorporation of attributes from the genre at the top of the genre hierarchy into a work lower down on the scale (p. 171).

The following two chapters attempt to demonstrate the interpretive fruit of this approach by illustrating Acts’ focus on delineating the true successors and disciples of Jesus. The first of these chapters claims that the labelling of the apostles as witnesses in the opening scene of Acts shows them to be “holders and propagators of tradition” (p. 179). Adams then goes on to detail the various ways in which Acts identifies true disciples (pp. 184–97), and he suggests that the accounts of several characters are intended to indicate their status as outsiders to the Christian movement (pp. 197–204).

The next chapter then focuses on Acts’ depictions of Peter and Paul, attempting to demonstrate “how Luke made use of extended narrative sections to show their importance within the early church, and that they are the key holders of the Jesus tradition” (p. 206). Adams suggests that these two leaders in particular are used by Acts to further the book’s agenda of disciple delineation: “by having Peter and Paul, the dominant figures of the Christian movement, confront and/or pass judgment on opponents, Luke clearly indicates the exclusion of those persons from the Christian community” (p. 223). Finally, Adams suggests that the ending of Acts fits within this agenda by drawing attention away from the fate of Paul to the message to which future disciples must maintain fidelity (pp. 242–44).

The concluding chapter provides a synopsis of Adams’s argument for Acts as a collected biography, claiming that the ordering principle of Acts is to delineate and trace the relationships between Jesus and the disciples (p. 248). Adams suggests that a failure to appreciate this point has resulted in interpretive missteps by those



who underestimate Luke's interest in the delineation of groups, and he points out that this proposal lays the groundwork for viewing Luke-Acts as a two-volume biographical work (p. 256).

The virtue of Adams's work is that it goes much farther than Charles Talbert's earlier efforts and provides the strongest case yet for the view that the genre of Acts is biography. Adams frequently displays his mastery of ancient biographical literature, and his chapter on the history of biography as a genre impressively advances discussion in this area of study. Adams's fluency in this literature enables him to point out both when Acts matches the main trends of this genre and when the exceptional features of Acts find parallels in other ancient biographical works.

The quality of Adams's interaction with ancient biographical literature, however, contrasts with his interaction with ancient histories. Adams typically deals with histories in general terms and rarely points to historical works that match Acts' departures from major historical trends, even though such examples can be found. For example, Josephus's *Jewish Antiquities* matches Acts with its focus on important individual characters in chronological succession, and it contains multiple connecting prefaces that point back to the deeds of individuals in a previous book (*Ant.* 8.1; 13.1; 14.1–3; 15.1–2). Adams's failures to acknowledge such parallels will sow doubts in the minds of attentive readers.

A second shortcoming is that Adams fails to discuss the possible impact of the literature with which Acts shows the greatest familiarity: the OT. Several of the proposals that Acts is a history claim that its distinctive features can be explained as the imitation of historical literature from the OT, but Adams never gives any consideration to this alternative to his claim that Acts is a collected biography influenced by contemporary histories.

It is evident that Adams recognizes the biggest obstacle to his proposal: Acts' use of a continuous narrative in contrast to the discrete sections devoted to individuals in collected biographies. In fact, he claims that this feature is the cause of the current scholarly confusion, stating that it "blurs the generic boundaries between biography and history" (p. 211). One wonders, however, if ancient readers would have also had the same trouble identifying Acts as a collected biography given that it lacks the clear segmentation ordinarily found in this genre and has in its place the familiar continuous narrative form found in histories. Although some collected biographies used extended narratives, Adams points to no clear parallel cases in which the genre of history influenced a collected biography to neglect segmentation to the degree that Acts does.

These issues, however, do not mean that Adams is inherently wrong, only that a more thorough case is needed if his proposal is to carry the day. Nevertheless, Adams does an admirable job in making his argument, he presents a plethora of valuable information about ancient biographical literature, and we are all in his debt for this learned and informative study.

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*Paul and the Gift*. By John M. G. Barclay. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015, xvi + 656 pp., \$70.00.

I, like many Pauline scholars, have been eagerly anticipating Barclay's *Paul and the Gift*. In fact, if memory serves, I think it was close to seven years ago—when I was a doctoral student—that I first learned of Barclay's work on a book concerning Paul and grace. Some of his articles, along with so many from doctoral students at Durham, have given some indication of where his larger argument might go. So when I received my copy, I wondered if my long anticipation and high expectations might be disappointed. In no way, however, even where one might disagree, has this book disappointed my expectations. Barclay's study provides new and convincing interpretive angles for the interpretation of the history of Pauline research, the diversity of gift-language in Second Temple Judaism, and divine gift-giving in Paul's letters to the Galatians and Romans.

The book is divided into four parts. In part 1 ("The Multiple Meanings of Gift and Grace") Barclay, first, explores the gift broadly construed within an anthropological perspective. Here he largely relies on Marcel Mauss's important ethnographical research on gift-giving to show that gifts are "neither a single phenomenon nor a stable category" (p. 11). That insight provides the foundation for Barclay's shortest chapter, "The Perfections of Gift/Grace," which is probably also the most important for understanding his contribution. Here he asks the question "What is a gift?" and develops a taxonomy comprising of six perfections of the gift. This classificatory schema is used to analyze the history of Pauline interpreters on grace, Second Temple Jewish notions of grace, and Paul's letters to the Galatians and the Romans. The six perfections of grace include: (1) superabundance: this involves its amount, importance, or permanence; (2) singularity: the giver is *only* benevolent and nothing else; (3) priority: the gift is given spontaneously and precedes any earlier gift of the recipient; (4) incongruity: the gift is given in such a way that it does not recognize or correspond to the worth of the recipient; (5) efficacy: the gift is powerful to accomplish its intended purpose; and (6) non-circularity: the gift does not require reciprocation. Authors, ancient and contemporary, can and do use the language of gift and grace in such a way that they perfect (by which Barclay means "to draw out a concept to its endpoint or extreme," p. 67) one (but not others) or a combination of concepts of grace. As Barclay says, "*To perfect one facet of gift-giving does not imply the perfection of any or all of the others*. Thus, one could speak of divine gifts as superabundant or absolutely prior without implying that they are also incongruous with the worth of the recipient. Alternatively, God's grace may be figured as wholly and completely incongruous, without at the same time being 'pure' in the sense of seeking no return" (pp. 75–76, italics his). That scholars have often spoke of "grace" as if it was a given or simply an obvious concept has resulted in confusion with respect to Pauline theology, studies of Judaism, and Paul's letters.

Barclay first puts his taxonomy to use in analyzing some high points in the history of the interpretation of Paul. The sketch is highly selective, and, while it would be absurd to expect something comprehensive at this point, I do wonder

why certain interpreters were included or excluded from the sketch. Nevertheless, the sketch does effectively demonstrate that interpreters of Paul frequently disagree with one another “because each is concerned to draw out a different perfection of this multifaceted concept [i.e. of grace]” (p. 186). In other words, even interpreters as different from each other as Augustine and Pelagius both emphasize the importance of divine grace but they perfect grace in different ways. Perhaps most important is Barclay’s contention that E. P. Sanders’s analysis of Judaism rightly understood that grace was everywhere present in Second Temple Judaism but that the work is flawed in assuming only the perfection of the priority of grace (i.e. grace as God’s election of Israel preceding obedience of the Torah). Barclay says that at the center of Sanders’s project “is a lack of clarity concerning the very definition of grace” (p. 157). This confusion led “Sanders to homogenize Second Temple texts that arguably advance *differing* conceptions of divine mercy or grace” (p. 158). Barclay’s discussion of Lou Martyn (and his influence on other so-called “apocalyptic” interpreters of Paul) is also valuable in its demonstration of a theological construal of Paul that is concerned to stress the incongruity, priority, and efficacy of grace. Barclay’s taxonomy is able, then, to show not only *that* Pauline interpreters disagree with each other over the concept of grace but also more importantly *why they differ*.

In part 2 (“Divine Gift in Second Temple Judaism”) Barclay examines five Second Temple Jewish texts (or authors) in light of his taxonomy in order to show that their articulations of divine grace “resist reduction to a simple matrix of analysis” (p. 191). The Wisdom of Solomon, for example, speaks of God’s gift-giving in terms of superabundance in that God is full of beneficence for all things he has created. The author does not, however, speak of grace as incongruous, since “God is supremely and abundantly good that he guarantees a system of moral and rational symmetries, whereby the foolish and unrepentant wicked get what they deserve, and the gifts of God reach their proper beneficiaries” (p. 211). This notion of superabundant (but non-incongruous) grace is necessary for the author’s conviction that God rules the world in a moral manner. The Qumran *Hodayot* is similar to Wisdom in that it speaks of God’s mercy and kindness with the language of abundance but repeatedly speaks of humanity as worthless recipients of God’s mercy. The text, then, perfects abundance *and* incongruity. All of the Second Temple Jewish texts examined by Barclay speak of God as a merciful gift-giver, and the differences between these texts “do not lie in the *degree of emphasis* that they give to this theme” (p. 313, italics his). In this regard, Sanders was right to criticize those who saw Judaism as a religion of legalistic works-righteousness, but Barclay also emphasizes that these “texts are irreducibly diverse; to characterize them all as products of ‘religion of grace’ would hardly be illuminating” (p. 313). Thus, the *meaning* of God’s grace is not a phenomenon that can be assumed as self-evident, and Barclay demonstrates that the way in which these authors speak of grace is inextricably related to their larger vision of God and God’s relationship to Israel and creation. Furthermore, Sanders identified one perfection of grace (priority of grace, i.e. election) and thereby offered a one-dimensional treatment of Second Temple Judaism. Sanders was right that grace is found everywhere in Second Temple Judaism, but he did not adequately recognize that *grace is not everywhere the same*.

In parts 3 and 4 Barclay offers a reading of Galatians and Romans by situating Paul and the Christ-gift within these Second Temple theologians of grace. For the sake of space, I will focus here on his reading of Galatians. Barclay subjects Paul's texts to the same analytic taxonomy, and the result is a powerful exegetical, social, and historical analysis. Paul reworks aspects of his Jewish heritage from the standpoint of his "Christological configuration of the gift of God" (p. 333). The Pauline antinomies (God/humanity; Christ/Law; non-circumcision/circumcision; etc.) derive from the Christ-gift. This Christ-gift is given as God's gift that is given *without regard to worth* (p. 350). It is worth quoting Barclay at length:

By its misfit with human criteria of value, including the "righteousness" defined by the Torah, the Christ-event has recalibrated all systems of worth, creating communities that operate in ways significantly at odds with both Jewish and non-Jewish traditions of value. This incongruous gift has subverted previous measurements of symbolic capital, establishing its own criteria of value and honor that are no longer beholden to the authority of the Torah. (p. 350)

The Christ-gift is given without recognition of worth (incongruous) and has thereby relativized every other system of determining worth, the foremost of which is the Torah. Paul's argument is, then, (similar to Martyn and Campbell) retrospective in that Paul argues backwards from the Christ-event to the recognition that the Torah cannot create worth. Barclay criticizes salvation-historical readings of Paul, foremost of which are N. T. Wright's and James Dunn's proposals, readings that see Paul as emphasizing continuity between the narratives of Israel and Christ. For Barclay "the Abrahamic stories are not the interpretative frame within which the Christ-story is to be understood, but the reverse: the good news about Christ is the frame in which 'pre-announcements' may be identified and interpreted. Paul's carefully chosen verbs [Gal. 3:8] signal simultaneously the *historical* priority of the announcement to Abraham and the *hermeneutical* priority of the Christ-event" (p. 415, italics his). Yet Barclay's retrospective hermeneutic also signals his rejection of the traditional understanding of "works of the law" as a soteriology that attempts to procure righteousness through obedience to the law. Rather, Paul "objects to the enclosure of the Christ-event within the value-system of the Torah, because for those whose lives are reconstituted in Christ, the supreme definition of worth is not the Torah but the good news" (p. 444). Thus, there is nothing wrong per se with Judaism or the Torah. However, it is no longer the ultimate authority or criterion of worth now that the gift of Christ has relativized every system of worth.

Barclay further shows how the Christ-gift results in new systems of virtues and values and how Paul uses these new systems to create social practices among his communities that correspond to the values of the Christ-gift. While social identities such as gender, social-status, and ethnicity still continue, the giving of the Christ gift means that they no longer carry the "evaluative freight" that would encode "distinctions of superiority and inferiority" (p. 397). Thus, Paul's call for mutual love and burden-bearing "targets habits of intra-communal rivalry that were characteristic of ancient Mediterranean society" (p. 432). This has important consequences for rejecting the broader society's evaluations of status and worth.

I did, however, have a couple of questions and concerns about the work. First, it makes sense to treat Romans and Galatians together in light of their many similarities and I fully understand the need to keep the length of the book manageable, but I wondered if the exclusion of the rest of Paul's letters lends itself to a certain one-sided portrait of Paul. Barclay's final words (p. 574) indicate the possibility he may rectify this lacuna in a future work. I hope so. Will the portrait of Paul and the Christ-gift work in the same way for the Corinthian correspondence? What about the Pastoral Epistles? Or does Paul's language of grace and the Christ-gift take different forms? I had similar questions with respect to Barclay's selection of Pauline interpreters. How would the portrait of Paul have changed if he had chosen, say, Tertullian, Origen, and Chrysostom in place of Augustine, Luther, and Barth? Second, I heartily agree with Barclay's understanding of the hermeneutical significance of the Christ-event (in ways similar to Martyn and Campbell), but sometimes this seems to manifest itself in Barclay using language that I am not sure does justice to the evidence. Is it quite right to say that as "a believer, Paul is a 'Jew' who (in his terms) no longer remains 'in Judaism'" (p. 360)? Barclay's language gives the impression that Paul saw himself as making a break with Judaism. Here I think he might have benefited from Matthew Novenson's "Paul's Former Occupation in *Ioudaismos*" (*Galatians and Christian Theology* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014]). Barclay gives a strong explanation, in my view, for passages like Gal 3:28 and 5:6 that stress discontinuity between the Christ-gift and Torah/Judaism but a more difficult time with passages like Rom 3:1–2 that stress the value of circumcision for Israel.

*Paul and the Gift* is a truly stunning achievement. In less than 600 pages Barclay provides a convincing analytic for understanding differences in the history of Pauline interpretation, places Second Temple Jewish notions of divine grace on firmer footing, and provides a reading of Galatians and Romans that is filled with exegetical, social, and hermeneutical insights. Perhaps the true genius of the book is its simplicity in developing an appropriate taxonomy for understanding the language of grace and the different ways that interpreters perfect and combine perfections of grace.

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*Reading Romans in Context: Paul and Second Temple Judaism.* Edited by Ben C. Blackwell, John K. Goodrich, and Jason Maston. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015, 192 pp., \$19.99 paper.

A volume by nineteen Pauline scholars, with a foreword by Francis Watson, that draws on at least fifteen different authors from Second Temple Judaism and that works through the whole of the book of Romans is a collection that could cast light in so many directions that the resultant image is too dazzling to comprehend. However, a clear structure aids the reader. Chapters methodologically follow the book of Romans, with each chapter focusing on a single issue, which is first considered in a relevant text from Second Temple Judaism before the corresponding

account in Romans. This simple structure has the aim of demonstrating “how the ideas in the comparator text illuminate those expressed in Romans” (p. 21). There is a wider purpose too: the book aims to “demonstrate for nonspecialists the benefit of studying Scripture alongside extrabiblical texts” (p. 15).

The light that the contemporaneous texts shine on Paul differs in each case, and the first three essays demonstrate one way in which Paul engages with ancient categories. Wesley Hill discusses the eschatological Messiah in *Psalms of Solomon* 17, suggesting that Paul has redefined this concept in the Christology of Rom 1:1–17 by emphasising the pre-existence of Jesus and his subjugation of the Gentiles for their redemption; Jonathan A. Linebaugh discusses the points of contact between Rom 1:18–2:5 and the Wisdom of Solomon in terms of God’s wrath for the idolatrous, which for Paul includes Israel; and Sarah Whittle debates “circumcision and covenant identity” in Rom 2:6–29 and *Jubilees* 15, with Paul’s eschatological redefinition of covenant identity as inward heart circumcision instead of outward ethnic identity (p. 47). All three authors suggest that Paul redefines ancient categories in debate with them. Hill stresses why this happens: “Paul is a creative, original thinker whose vision of Jesus . . . makes Paul see the key terms and ideas he inherits from Judaism in a new light” (p. 36). The fact that Paul can be located within Second Temple Judaism, as important as that fact is, does not here explain how we should modify our understanding of Paul in that light: each of these first three authors interpret Romans in light of Jesus not Second Temple Judaism. The next chapter—Jason Maston and Aaron Sherwood’s discussion of works of the Law in 4QMMT and Rom 3:1–20—further illustrates this. They describe how the phrase “works of the Law” is deployed in the two texts, but it is Paul’s use of Ps 143:2 that suggests a new role for Torah in Paul’s thought. Thus, while 4QMMT does provide some historical context, it is not necessary for understanding “works of the Law” in Paul.

Nevertheless, the theological continuities and discontinuities between Second Temple Judaism and Paul are clearly presented throughout this volume. Jonathan A. Linebaugh considers God’s righteousness in the *Epistle of Enoch* and Rom 3:21–31; Mariam J. Kamell examines Abraham’s faith in Sirach 44:19–21 and Rom 4:1–25; and Mark D. Mathews considers suffering in the *Community Rule* and Rom 5:1–11. Each author suggests that Romans presents a different account, sometimes profoundly so, from that in Second Temple Judaism. Not only does Paul’s account of God’s righteousness differ from the *Epistle of Enoch* but his presentation of Abraham’s faith “is a profoundly different account” from Sirach (p. 72), and his account of suffering differs both from the *Community Rule* and the Deuteronomic tradition that both texts interpret. In the next two chapters we can see how consideration of the differences between Second Temple Judaism and Paul can shine light on Romans itself. Jonathan Worthington considers Philo and Rom 5:12–21 under the twin rubrics of the relationship between Adam’s sin and the nature of death and of the role of Adam in each author’s respective argument. This focused argument leads to the suggestion that putting the two texts in discussion shines light on “God’s gracious gift in Jesus” (p. 85). Joseph R. Dodson argues that a consideration of the narrative personifications in the Wisdom of Solomon and Rom 6:1–23

reveals a lesser to greater relationship between the two, and thus “to a renewed appreciation for the gospel” (p. 92).

Some issues are naturally illuminated more than others by a comparison of Second Temple Judaism and Romans. Jason Maston’s examination of the anthropological and eschatological “two ways” paradigm in Sirach brings clarity to Paul’s critique of this way of understanding the Law in Rom 7:1–25. However, a more detailed account of the identity of the speaker in this complicated text could bring more exegetical depth to this discussion. In his suggestion that 4 Ezra and Rom 8:1–13 ask similar questions regarding freedom from sin, Kyle B. Wells can focus on what is unique about Paul’s answer: the giving of Christ’s Spirit. Orrey McFarland considers differences in the accounts of election, mercy, and God’s faithfulness in Rom 9:1–29 and Philo. In establishing that “election [is] based on mercy” for Paul, a reading based on the Christ event, McFarland likewise emphasises Paul’s distinctiveness, this time from Philo (p. 120). David Lincicum too considers Paul and Philo, but from the perspective of how they appeal to Deut 30:11–14. Although Philo stands in continuity with the scriptural text, Paul interprets it “retrospectively from his perception of the Christ event” in Rom 9:30–10:21 (p. 127).

One of the many advantages of this volume is a demonstration of how Paul’s views reflect much of the wider background that we find in Second Temple Judaism. Ben C. Blackwell argues for consistency between Rom 8:14–39 and the *Greek Life of Adam and Eve*. Both are, he suggests, similar interpretations of Adam’s fall from glory in Genesis. John K. Goodrich discusses whether all Israel will be saved in Rom 11:1–36 and Tobit, suggesting that both share the same concerns, differing only in when the inclusion of Gentiles occurs. When Ben C. Dunson considers Rom 12:1–21 and 4 Maccabees, he argues that both texts suggest that the transformation of behavior comes about through “right thinking” (p. 136). However, the gift of the Spirit to renew the mind has a greater role in Paul’s thought than in the Second Temple Judaism text where “the creational capacity for rationality” is prioritised (p. 139). Dean Pinter considers Rom 13:1–14 and Josephus, suggesting that Paul’s views on the relationship of God’s people to the rest of society are typical of Second Temple Judaism, as manifested particularly in the paying of taxes. Nijay K. Gupta suggests that 1 Maccabees helps us interpret the “sociocultural context” of Rom 14:1–15:13, thereby resolving the apparent puzzle of why Paul addressed the question of food (p. 152). Although David E. Briones’s consideration of gift-giving in Rom 15:14–33 and Tobit raises again the question of Paul’s account being “similar to and yet distinct from” Second Temple Judaism (p. 159), Susan Mathew makes a persuasive case for parallels in leadership roles for women between the wider context of synagogue inscriptions and Rom 16:1–27, particularly in the context of how leaders benefit others.

Each chapter ends with suggestions for further reading: first, other ancient texts that might also shed light on the issue; second, English translations and critical editions; and finally, secondary literature. While the suggestions for secondary literature include interesting and relevant texts, these are not always the key texts in the field. An annotated bibliography might have been more helpful in setting out why these texts were chosen. In addition, in such a wide-ranging volume there are

certain idiosyncrasies. I am unable to determine, for example, why the NETS is preferred as the suggested English translation of primary texts in the chapter on Romans 7 and then the NRSV in the chapter on Rom 8:1–13, nor why the García Martínez and Tigchelaar critical edition of the Dead Sea Scrolls is preferred on page 57 and the Parry and Tov edition on page 79. However, the inclusion of suggestions for both primary and secondary texts does point the reader to the wider world of Second Temple Judaism.

Although this volume is clearly concerned with providing a window on certain literature, the surprise might be that this window is orientated towards Second Temple Judaism rather than Paul. Whether or not this indeed was its aim, *Reading Romans in Context* is of great value to the reader who is coming to the world of Second Temple Judaism for the first time. Light is shone on various possible interrelationships between Paul and his world, such that the reader will find much that is of use heuristically when reading Romans in context.

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*Bodily Resurrection and Ethics in 1 Cor 15: Connecting Faith and Morality in the Context of Greco-Roman Mythology.* By Paul J. Brown. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2/360. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014, xv + 312 pp., €79.00 paper.

In this dissertation completed at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School under Eckhard Schnabel, Paul Brown, lecturer in biblical studies at Trinity International University, investigates (1) the probable religious misconceptions of those Corinthians who (according to 1 Cor 15:12) denied their own future resurrection; (2) how Paul responded to such claims; and (3) how Paul correlates future bodily resurrection with present moral obligation. Concerning the latter, Brown admits that his “research is not primarily concerned with demonstrating that there is a real connection between Paul’s resurrection convictions and his ethical instruction; the study explores how Paul argued for the veracity and nature of the future bodily resurrection in light of the Greco-Roman mores of those who denied the future resurrection, and also proposes how Paul’s convictions called for the moral obligation” (p. 2).

The book begins with an introduction in which Brown situates his research in relation to other studies on NT and Pauline ethics. After reviewing modern investigations on NT ethics (including leading English-speaking and German works), he concludes that though “a connection between the future bodily resurrection and present ethics has been suggested by numerous scholars ... there has been little by way of a sustained argument to explicate the notion of the correlation between the future bodily resurrection in 1 Cor 15 and ethics” (p. 26).

Next, in chapter 2, Brown surveys various modes of afterlife taught in Greco-Roman philosophy and religion. The overview covers such beliefs as continued existence in the grave, continued existence in the underworld, migration of the soul



into other places and beings, celestial immortality, fleshly immortality, and nihilism. Brown concludes that in Greco-Roman antiquity “the breadth of the possibilities [concerning the afterlife] was wide but that resurrection as Paul understood it was not one of them” (p. 65).

In chapter 3, Brown surveys and responds to the three main existing explanations for the Corinthians’ denial of the future resurrection of believers. He first addresses the proposal for the church’s adoption of an over-realized eschatology, rightly showing that this view does not comport with Paul’s argument (esp. 1 Cor 15:1–19). Secondly, Brown analyzes the view that the Corinthians denied an *embodied* afterlife. Thirdly, he evaluates the view that the church denied the afterlife entirely. Brown rightly demonstrates that these latter two positions would make it impossible for the Corinthians to have believed that Jesus himself was raised bodily, a doctrine the church in Corinth does not seem to have denied. These views also make senseless Paul’s appeal to the baptism of the dead (1 Cor 15:29).

In place of these unsatisfactory explanations, Brown proposes that the Corinthians’ eschatology was heavily informed by Greek mythology, namely the belief that, apart from mythological heroes, humans should not expect to experience a beatific afterlife. Brown explains, “Whether in the classic Greek poems, in plays, or in the necropolis, the ubiquitous message communicated was that death was final. There was little hope of anything more than continuing living activities in the underworld, if that. Resurrection was not an afterlife option” (p. 89). This popularly conceived mythological belief structure, Brown proposes, “is the wellspring that caused some to deny the bodily resurrection” (p. 84): “it was only the heroes, the ones who were worshiped and sometimes immortalized bodily, who attained a special destiny and thus, the Corinthians could deny their own future resurrection while still embracing the resurrection and worship of Jesus, the Messiah, as one with hero status” (p. 94). The influence of this popular mythology on the church, Brown suggests, “allowed for a belief in the resurrection of Jesus, but neither assured them of their own resurrection nor was connected to their present behavior” (p. 102).

With this context in view, Brown focuses his attention in chapters 4–6 on 1 Corinthians 15 in order to show how Paul’s resurrection discourse offers a corrective to the Corinthian church’s erroneous eschatology and ethical neglect. Brown’s approach is a somewhat straightforward, sequential exegesis of the chapter that addresses a variety of exegetical difficulties along the way. Chapter 4 focuses on 1 Cor 15:1–11 and argues that Paul was trying to show how Jesus’s bodily resurrection places him, “at the very least, in the same category as Greco-Roman heroes, who were immortalized bodily and living beatific afterlives” (p. 112). In terms of Paul’s argumentative strategy, Brown contends that Paul sought here (and even further in the ensuing paragraphs) to overturn Homeric influence on the Corinthians by replacing their belief structure with an overtly scriptural narrative: “For a people influenced by a Homeric narrative for afterlife expectations, establishing a standard founded upon a Scripture-based narrative was strategic for convincing the deniers of the resurrection of the veracity of a future resurrection and not just a resurrection of Jesus and perhaps a few apostolic heroes” (p. 138). In the case of 15:1–11, it

is not only Paul's appeal to Jesus's death and resurrection but also that these events are "in accordance with the Scriptures" (15:3–4) that serves to reorient the thinking of the Corinthians. In other words, the Christ event is not to be incorporated into just any narrative; it belongs properly within the narrative laid out in the Jewish Scriptures, and recognizing its place within that particular storyline is paramount to resolving the Corinthians' eschatological confusion. Moreover, Brown argues that in defending the veracity of Jesus's resurrection in 15:1–11 Paul implies that future resurrection entails ethical obligations. For example, pointing to his own life, Paul states in 15:10 that divine grace enabled him to serve God productively. For Brown, this biographical remark doubles as a call for imitation: "Paul unfolds a model of noble living in his own life that shows the Corinthians what a life of moral obligation looks like" (p. 138).

In chapter 5, Brown turns to 15:12–34 in order to show how Jesus's resurrection implies that believers, too, will be bodily resurrected. According to Brown, it is by means of the believer's union with Christ (being *ἐν τῷ Χριστῷ* as opposed to *ἐν τῷ Ἀδάμ*, 15:22) that, for Paul, provides the logical link for the general resurrection of believers: "Their in-Christ union is what affords them participation in the future resurrection" (p. 149). Furthermore, it is only by establishing a scriptural protology and cosmology, reaching back to Adam and the entrance of death into the world, that Paul is able to reinforce his scripturally-based eschatology—by stressing the universal reign of death, Paul illustrates how Jesus's resurrection both enables the resurrection of those who belong to him (15:20–23) as well as anticipates the final defeat of all inimical powers, including death (15:24–28).

Brown also provides a helpful discussion of the enigmatic reference in 15:29 to the baptism of the dead (pp. 152–61). Brown argues that Paul draws on the Corinthians' participation in this practice not to endorse it but to demonstrate that such practices imply the possibility of a general resurrection. Beyond this, Brown believes that 15:29 signals a hinge in Paul's argument to ethical imperatives grounded on the veracity of the resurrection: "the Greco-Roman beliefs that encourage a denial of the resurrection by some resulted in sinful behavior that Paul needed to redress" (p. 172). Although Brown stops short of speculating on the specifics of this behavior, he ventures a guess as to the logical basis for the ethical imperatives: the believers' "in-Christ status guaranteed a future resurrection which, in turn, evinces an heroic status that called for a noble lifestyle imitating Paul, the apostles, but ultimately Jesus, the Messiah" (p. 173).

In chapter 6, Brown explores the nature of the resurrection body (15:35–49). He argues, as in the two previous chapters, that Paul's strategy is to provide an alternative storyline to the mythological narrative that was distorting the Corinthians' eschatological expectations and ethical motivations. Thus, after employing the seed analogy, Paul once again looks backward in order to look forward, drawing on the creation narrative and Adam's prelapsarian glory in order to make sense of Christ's transformed glory and that of those who are his: "the resurrection, as Paul argues it, ensures that those in the Messiah would be bodily transformed to be, not like Adam or Achilles or Zeus, but like Jesus .... The angelomorphic image of the Messiah, with his righteousness and holiness, was the exemplar whose image the

Corinthian believers should expect to bear in the future and imitate in the present” (p. 220). The monograph closes with a conclusion that summarizes its main points.

This is an impressive study that provides a nearly comprehensive exegesis of one of Paul’s longest and most weighty eschatological discourses. Brown’s proposal on the influence of Homeric mythology on the Corinthians is very plausible, and his suggestion about Paul’s appeal to scriptural narratives in 15:20–28 and 15:35–49 to reorient the Corinthians is quite convincing (though I am less convinced this is what Paul is doing in 15:3–4). It is not finally clear, however, that Brown’s thesis on the relationship between future resurrection and moral obligation is adequately grounded in the text. Brown’s is certainly a coherent and elegant thesis, but it is not as obvious as the author supposes that Paul uses himself or Jesus as an ethical example to follow anywhere in 1 Corinthians 15. Neither is it clear in *this* passage that *union* with Christ implies *imitation* of Christ. This is not to suggest that such a link cannot be established elsewhere in Paul’s letters; in fact, had he turned to Rom 6:1–14 Brown could have made the case rather easily. However, Paul himself does not connect all the necessary dots for us in 1 Corinthians 15, with the result that some level of uncertainty remains on the relationship between eschatology and ethics in this passage. Nevertheless, the patient reader will benefit much from this well-researched volume. Brown’s work here deserves to be considered carefully by Pauline exegetes and NT theologians.

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*Galatians*. By Peter Oakes. Paideia Commentaries on the NT. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015, xv + 240 pp., \$30.00 paper.

Peter Oakes, Greenwood Senior Lecturer in NT at the University of Manchester, provides a helpful and concise commentary for students of the NT. Oakes’s audience is not necessarily the scholar or highly trained individual, since he helpfully defines words that could be confusing for some people. For example, he provides definitions of words like “scribes” (p. 10) and “soteriology” (p. 30). The Greek is transliterated. Most (but not all) of the technical discussions are in footnotes (e.g. see p. 51). The volume contains several side bars that are helpful (see his discussion on the Greek word *adelphoi* [p. 39]). One good example is Oakes’s definition of *Ioudaïsmos* (“Judaism”) in 1:13–14. He mentions in the text that the word is only referenced five times in Greek texts before Galatians. From those texts, he extrapolates his definition: “a way of life characterized by practices that Jews generally saw as being proper” (p. 53). In the sidebar he provides a translation of all five occurrences, thus providing the data/evidence for his conclusion.

More evidence that Oakes is attempting to reach a non-scholarly audience is the way he appears to be trying to walk the reader through all the hermeneutical principles needed for interpreting the letter; he does this mainly in the introduction, but he scatters comments throughout as well. He believes that there were three groups involved with this letter, and he provides a general description of them:

Paul, the Galatians, and Paul's opponents, who are probably Christian Jews encouraging Gentile Christians to adopt circumcision. The opponents have also spoken against Paul and his gospel. Some of the Galatians desire to be circumcised and to adopt other Jewish practices, which has caused disunity in the body (p. 9).

The author utilizes the minimalist position regarding Pauline authorship of NT letters, meaning he compares words and syntax with only the six other undisputed Pauline letters. He does not necessarily ignore the other letters, but he weighs their evidence as being less significant (p. 10). Oakes says the most important context is that of Paul and his readers, which demonstrates a concern for the author's meaning of the text (p. 11).

Regarding his conclusions on some of the introductory issues, he argues against intertwining the decisions about the location of the Galatians (the northern versus southern theory) and the date for the letter, so that scholars can be free to weigh the evidence. In the end, he finds the reference to Barnabas (2:1, 13) as one of the more convincing pieces of evidence for a southern Galatian theory (p. 19). He dates Galatians in the early 50s, after 1 Thessalonians but before 1 Corinthians. He provides a helpful, brief survey of scholarship on Galatians, covering the early church (Jerome, Augustine), through Baur, Sanders, Dunn, Westerholm, Campbell, Martyn, Hays, and Schüssler Fiorenza. This survey places his commentary within the Galatian scholarly framework.

The structure of the commentary is helpful. The discussion of each pericope begins with a section titled "Introductory Matters." This section gives an overview of the pericope to be examined, summarizing briefly the main points. It comprises about 7 percent of the commentary proper (not including the introductory chapter). The second section is titled "Tracing the Train of Thought." Here Oakes goes through each of the verses to explain the meaning, utilizing Greek, backgrounds, and context. This section comprises about 83 percent of the commentary proper. The final section is titled "Theological Issues." Oakes chooses a few topics of theological interest to discuss briefly. It comprises about 10 percent of the commentary proper.

The following are some notes of interest regarding specific interpretations. Oakes believes that 1:4 contains a legitimate reference to substitutionary atonement. Following the research of Bruce Longenecker, he decides that the reference to remembering the poor in 2:10 is not a reference to the collection for the poor saints in Jerusalem. Regarding the ever-controversial *pistis Iesou Christou* in, for example, 2:16, Oakes sides with the objective genitive, preferring the translation "trust in Christ." He weighs the evidence fairly from each side but believes it is more likely that "*pistis Christou* expresses the relationship between Christians and Christ than between Christ and God" (p. 88).

His discussion on 3:28 is intriguing. He says that it is not simply about equal soteriological grounds for different groups of people (which is a "weaker" interpretation). Instead, it is about unity in diversity. Paul is not arguing for the elimination of distinctions; his opponents are actually arguing that. Being unified amidst preserved social diversity is the aim. A main piece of evidence for this view is that Paul does not conclude that they are all "saved" or "considered righteous" but that they

are “one” in Christ Jesus (pp. 128–29). In reply, while certain sections of Galatians 4–6 surely explain some of the sociological implications of this declaration, it seems that Oakes may be minimizing two aspects of 3:28 that are important. First, since the Greek word for “one” is masculine and not neuter and since the prepositional phrase “in Christ” follows, this is a statement about union with Christ, hence a soteriological statement. Second, while the coordinating conjunction *oude* is used between two of the sets (Jew and Greek, slave and free), a different coordinating conjunction is used in the final pair: *kai*. This is likely an allusion back to the Septuagint of Gen 1:27. The explanations of this passage by A. Andrew Das (*Galatians* [Concordia Commentary; Saint Louis: Concordia, 2014], 383–88) and Douglas J. Moo (*Galatians* [BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013], 254–55) balance the soteriological and sociological implications in a more nuanced manner.

Oakes concludes that Paul’s expression of falling “away from grace,” in contrast to “some Christian theological systems,” refers to them “losing” their salvation (p. 161). He calls this a reversal of the process of salvation. It would have been beneficial for him to expand his thoughts on this interpretation some more.

A few more specific critiques should be mentioned. Oakes provides his own translation of Galatians, helpfully explaining some of his translation choices throughout. However, some of his choices are idiosyncratic and/or overly literal. For example, the phrase “who hindered you” in 5:7 is translated “who cut in on you” (pp. 7, 163). I find the phrase “cast the evil eye” as a translation of *ebaskanen* in 3:1 simply unhelpful, though he defends it at length (pp. 7, 163–64). For some reason Oakes decided to leave *paidagōgos* untranslated. He simply transliterates the Greek word. He does a good job explaining why it does not mean “teacher,” or Paul would have used *didaskalos*; he also explains why it does not mean “jailer,” since there was no sense of punishment associated with it. However, he does not offer an actual translation of the Greek word itself.

Sometimes Oakes spends so much time discussing the different opinions on a debated issue that, at the end of the discussion, the reader is left unsure of his actual conclusion. Therefore, he should have spent more time explaining, justifying, and clarifying his interpretation. Finally, there is no real conclusion to the book. The ending is so abrupt that it left me wishing he had included some final thoughts.

In conclusion, Oakes provides a commentary that maintains a good balance of integrating Greek and historical backgrounds into his contextual interpretation. The length makes it usable for a course, and his (typically) non-technical explanations will still benefit those with little or no Greek training.

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*Philippians: A Mentor Commentary*. By Matthew Harmon. Ross-shire, UK: Christian Focus, 2015, 502 pp., £22.99.

Matthew Harmon, Professor of NT Studies at Grace Theological Seminary, has struck an extremely helpful balance with this commentary on Philippians.

While neither becoming lost in scholarly cul-de-sacs nor avoiding tough questions, Harmon focuses on the text of Paul's letter and its application. His commentary is a sensitive and thoughtful guide to Philippians that will be appreciated by pastors, scholars, students, and (perhaps especially) by those who are some combination of the three.

The commentary's introduction is thorough and balanced. Harmon accepts, along with the majority of current scholarship, the unity of the letter. He understands Paul to have written from Rome to thank the Philippians, to encourage their reception of Epaphroditus, and to update them on his status, calling for them to adopt a similar joyful, gospel-shaped mindset and lifestyle amid suffering, which he himself exemplifies. Harmon's discussion of Paul's circumstances is remarkably clear, enlisting particularly the work of Michael Thompson ("The Holy Internet: Communication between Churches in the First Christian Generation," in *The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences* [ed. Richard Bauckham; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998], 49–70) to help reconstruct the possible scenarios in which the back-and-forth between Epaphroditus, the Philippians, and Paul might reasonably have occurred over the long distance between Rome and Philippi. He draws a measured assessment of the possible influence of the imperial cult on our interpretation of Philippians, and the imperial aspect of the setting does not appear to carry much weight in Harmon's exegesis through the body of the commentary. With regard to Paul's opponents, Harmon identifies a number of groups whom Paul addresses in Philippians, from civil authorities to "pagan neighbors" to potential "Judaizers" (pp. 49–50).

Each section of the body of the commentary begins with a brief introduction and summary of the contents of the passage, followed by verse-by-verse exposition that includes discussion of Greek in the body of the commentary. Secondary source interaction is generally reserved for the footnotes. Finally, each section finishes with "Suggestions for Preaching/Teaching and Application." This section reiterates a "main point" for the passage and then provides a suggested outline for a verse-by-verse exposition, followed by theological or practical reflections on the passage to help a preacher or teacher onto the right track. By structuring each section in this way, Harmon achieves a rare synergy in this volume between rigor and accessibility, between exegetical detail and practical wisdom for teaching.

It will be helpful to sample a few contested issues in the letter. Harmon considers Christ in 2:5–11 to be an "exemplar," though he translates the difficult elision in 2:5 in a way that was once wrongly seen to exclude the passage's exemplary function ("Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who ..."). He understands ἐπέχω in 2:16 to have the sense of "hold fast" rather than "hold forth," focusing on the Philippians' gospel-worthy behavior, not in this case their evangelistic outreach. In 3:1, Harmon takes the minority position that the "same things" that are "safe" for Paul to write to the Philippians are his repeated commands to "rejoice." Paul's comment that they are a "safeguard," argues Harmon, may stem from his self-consciousness about so belaboring the theme of joy (p. 306). The objective genitive ("faith in Christ") reading of πίστις Χριστοῦ is favored in 3:9, and Harmon adopts a traditional "Old Perspective" Protestant reading

of Paul's "righteousness" discussion in that chapter, restricting his limited engagement with new(er) perspectives, mainly as represented by N. T. Wright, to the footnotes. Harmon's arguments are concise and generally convincing, but the footnotes will point interested readers to fuller and more technical discussions at the points where Harmon's arguments are necessarily brief.

One particular strength of the commentary is Harmon's clear and thoughtful analysis of Paul's use of the OT in Philippians. Philippians has too often been neglected in studies of the use of the OT in the NT, but Harmon brings the sophistication and sensitivity that mark his previous work on the OT in Galatians to this commentary, while avoiding unnecessary technicality. For example, he sees a possible echo of Isa 64:1–2 in Paul's declaration that his imprisonment is known to be "in Christ" among even the praetorian guard (1:13). He affirms an intentional echo of Job in Phil 1:19, where Paul is confident of his vindication before God despite his present unjust suffering. The Isaianic "Suffering Servant" is, for Harmon, not only "foundational" to the famous so-called "Christ-hymn" of Phil 2:6–11, but it also informs Paul's concern that he might "run in vain" in 2:16. Also helpful is the excursus on the "OT backgrounds of the Christ-hymn" (pp. 59–66), which will serve as a useful entree into the questions concerning this text. Despite his view that the congregation included few Jews, Harmon takes a rather maximalist approach on this question, positing quite a bit of scriptural knowledge on the part of the Philippians that would allow them to benefit from Paul's subtle OT allusions. A reader with a less optimistic assessment of the Philippians' capacities to appreciate Paul's use of the OT might hesitate to accept some of Harmon's suggestions in this area, but his focus is properly on Paul's own communicative intentions, and his textual arguments are sober and well-supported.

The so-called "Christ-hymn" has received easily the most scholarly attention of any passage in Philippians, but Harmon manages the rare feat of containing his commentary on that passage to under forty pages, which leaves him the space for more development in other parts of the letter. Harmon rightly casts the underappreciated sections commending Timothy and Epaphroditus as "examples of the Christ-like mindset." He is also rightfully conservative in his exposition of the conflict between Euodia and Syntyche, which he understands as "an example of the kind of disunity plaguing the Philippian church" (p. 396). In Paul's discussion of his partnership with the Philippians in chapter 4, Harmon sees a repudiation of patron-client and reciprocity norms, rather than an adaptation of them, as has been popular recently.

The year 2015 has been a good year for Philippians commentaries, but Matthew Harmon's offering will prove to be the most useful to the most readers. Harmon interacts with a range of scholarship, in both English and German, while maintaining a clear line of argument in the body of the commentary, which sets this apart from other more technical commentaries. Similarly, although Harmon also interacts regularly with the (alas, transliterated) Greek text of the letter, his grammatical discussions are pithy and relevant. The most attractive feature of this commentary is its wide utility. It will be helpful both for the preacher and for the scholar, appropriate for preparation for a small-group Bible study or as a jumping-off

point into scholarship on Philippians. Harmon's commentary may not have the novelty of Fee or Fowl or the comprehensiveness (and virtual unreadability) of Reumann, but it is a solid, well-researched commentary that should stand among the primary commentaries on Philippians for many readers.

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*The Last Years of Paul: Essays from the Tarragona Conference, June 2013.* Edited by Armand Puig i Tàrrach, John M. G. Barclay, and Jörg Frey. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 352. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015, ix + 608 pp., €164.00.

This substantive volume contains essays from the Congress on "The Last Years of Paul's Life," which convened in Tarragona, Spain, in June 2013. While the various contributors do not always agree with one another, the scholarship in this volume is often nothing short of breathtaking. In a day when the definition of "scholarship" is often diluted, including popular or semi-popular-level work, here is a volume that sets an incredibly high standard of what true scholarship is all about. In particular, this means thorough, even exhaustive, engagement with the primary sources, which as a result makes a genuine contribution to the field of knowledge in a given area, in the present case the last years of Paul.

I became aware of this volume when completing work on a commentary on the letters to Timothy and Titus for the Biblical Theology for Christian Proclamation series. While not contributing greatly to the biblical-theological dimension of these letters (with Wright's essay serving as a notable exception, see below), the present volume does shed important light on several historical questions related to Paul's final years and thus to the circumstances surrounding the writing of 1–2 Timothy and Titus.

One of the editors, John Barclay, opens the volume by masterfully summarizing what we know and do not know about Paul's final years (pp. 1–14). Barclay's essay is an example of mining the primary sources for all the relevant information and attempting to put the evidence together into a coherent hypothesis like the pieces of a puzzle. That said, I do not find Barclay's solution to the problem of Paul's final years compelling, namely, that "Paul was convicted and executed perhaps in 62 CE, either for *seditio* or for *maiestas* in relation to the emperor" (p. 13). According to Barclay, Paul's mission ended in disaster: his "Gentile mission had not been completed in its extension to Spain, his churches were not recognized by Jerusalem, and Israel was further from, not nearer to, faith in Christ" (*ibid.*). Paul's final years, so Barclay, could thus be classified as "a saga of disappointment and failure" (p. 14), and the "last years of Paul were peculiarly traumatic, and many projects that he had hoped would come to fruition fell dramatically apart" (*ibid.*).

Barclay realizes that his thesis is "deliberately provocative" (*ibid.*). In fact, the remainder of the volume is characterized by considerable diversity of opinions and theories regarding Paul's final years. On the one extreme is Romano Penna ("The



Death of Paul in the Year 58: A Hypothesis and Its Consequences for His Biography,” pp. 533–52), who proposes that Paul was martyred as early as AD 58. As Rainer Riesner (“Paul’s Trial and End according to Second Timothy, 1 Clement, the Canon Muratori, and the Apocryphal Acts”) documents (p. 407), most other scholars date Paul’s martyrdom anywhere between the years 62 and 68 (Riesner himself favors 63 or 64).

Rather than providing brief summaries of every essay, I have chosen in the remainder of this review to focus on a few key contributions and to treat them in greater detail. Easily the most fascinating and theologically fruitful essay in the entire volume is N. T. Wright’s “Paul’s Western Missionary Project: Jerusalem, Rome, Spain in Historical and Theological Perspective” (pp. 49–66). In vintage fashion, Wright provides a veritable theologico-historical *tour de force* in probing the missionary strategy Paul pursued in his final years. Interestingly, Wright locates Paul’s motivation in “Jewish apocalyptic,” understood not as pertaining narrowly to the end of the world but as a broad “strategy for both narrating and living the counter-imperial story in which Israel’s God, the creator, dethrones the present world rulers and exalts a messianic figure in their place” (p. 53). In Christ, a “new moment” had come, which constituted “the long-awaited fulfilment of ancient prophecies and promises,” ensuing, in keeping with prophecies such as those found in Daniel 2 and 7, “after a historical sequence characterized by a succession of world empires” in the “fullness of time” (Gal 4:4; p. 54). As an “apocalyptic thinker,” Paul espoused an eschatology “rethought around Jesus as Israel’s Messiah and around the fresh gift of the divine spirit,” which “necessarily involved an important though oblique confrontation with the last great world empire, that of Rome” (*ibid.*).

“If we want to understand what Paul thought he was called to do in the last years of his life,” Wright contends, “we need to place his vision of creation renewed in fulfilment of the Abrahamic promises and under the sovereignty of Israel’s Messiah at its heart” (p. 57). This, in turn, involves understanding Paul’s statement regarding a future mission to Spain in Rom 15:24, 28 in the buildup to this passage in the book of Romans. In Rom 4:13, Paul affirms that God’s promise to Abraham and his offspring pertained to their inheritance of *the world*, not merely geographical territory in the Middle East. In keeping with the universal rule promised the future Davidic king and the OT vision of glory (i.e. sovereignty) being given to him over all creation (Psalm 8), Paul, in Romans 8, shows the retold exodus story coming to a climax. This fleshes out Paul’s gospel, which he understood to be not merely about Jewish restoration but about the redemption and renewal of creation. Thus the gospel is not merely about justification by faith but also about the announcement of the universal lordship of Jesus Christ, the long-awaited Messiah who had now come, died an atoning death, and risen triumphantly. Paul’s argument climaxes in Rom 15:7–13, which, in turn, lays the foundation for Paul’s missionary strategy enunciated in verses 14–32. What is instrumental to this strategy is Paul’s self-designation, unique to the letters to Timothy and Titus, of being a herald (*κῆρυξ*; 1 Tim 2:7; 2 Tim 1:11) whose role was to make an initial announcement (cf. *εὐαγγέλιον* word group in Isa 40:9; 52:7). In this vein, Paul conceived of his mission in terms of announcing “Jesus as Messiah and Lord *across the key parts of Caesar’s*

*empire*” (p. 61). Thus, having made initial proclamation in Asia, Macedonia, Achaëa, and Illyricum, Paul intended to proceed to make initial proclamation of Jesus’s lordship at the end of Caesar’s earth, Spain.

With regard to painstaking historical research, first prize may go to John Granger Cook (“Roman Penalties Regarding Roman Citizens Convicted of Heavy Charges in I CE,” pp. 271–303), though there are other noteworthy essays featuring extensive engagement with primary sources (e.g. Valerio Marotta, “St. Paul’s Death: Roman Citizenship and *summa supplicia*,” pp. 248–70). On pp. 288–303 of his essay, Cook provides a detailed table listing Roman citizens sentenced to execution in the first century AD, including information on the reigning Roman emperor, the judge, the defendant, the charge, and the sentence. Particularly relevant for the study of Paul’s final years is the information provided on pp. 298–99 detailing other known executions under Emperor Nero. Based on primary sources such as Tacitus’s *Annals*, we are told of 15 executions that were ordered during Nero’s reign on the grounds of alleged crimes such as conspiracy, sedition, and other charges, resulting in exile, forced suicide, crucifixion, or decapitation. Thus in AD 65, with Nero presiding as the judge, Subrius Flavius, tribune of the Praetorian Guard, was sentenced for conspiracy to be executed by a tribune, and his head was severed with two blows (Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.67.4). This kind of background information provides significant validation for the traditional testimony according to which Paul was beheaded under Nero.

Sparks fly in a pointed interchange between Rainer Riesner (“Paul’s Trial and End,” pp. 391–410) and Jens Herzer (“The Mission and the End of Paul between Strategy and Reality: A Response to Rainer Riesner,” pp. 411–32). Among other things, Riesner contends that Luke served as redactor of the letters to Timothy and Titus as vol. 3 of Luke-Acts, redacting 2 Timothy shortly after Paul’s death as his spiritual testament with the use of personal memories and some written material by the apostle. In response to Riesner’s highly conjectural reconstruction of Paul’s final years, Herzer assigns Riesner’s contribution to the genre of *Vermutungswissenschaft* (“guesswork”; Martin Hengel’s term). I largely agree with Herzer’s critique of Riesner’s rather idiosyncratic reconstruction. Herzer’s own (cautious) summary has it that Paul was unable to embark on his mission to Spain and that “he died under unknown circumstances in Rome during the reign of Nero” (p. 431).

These brief soundings from representative essays in this first-rate collection are no substitute for a careful reading of the essays themselves. No scholar working in Pauline studies, including the letters to Timothy and Titus, can afford to neglect this volume. While the conclusions reached by the individual contributors are highly diverse, in its thoroughgoing engagement with the primary evidence the volume sets a very high standard for scholarship that those of us who write commentaries and other derivative works will do well to emulate.

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*Hebrews and Divine Speech*. By Jonathan I. Griffiths. Library of NT Studies 507. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014, xvi + 200 pp., \$112.00.

This revision of a dissertation (Cambridge, 2010) undertakes to show that the writer of Hebrews “presents God’s word, which finds full expression in the incarnate Christ, as the central means by which salvation is made available and the place of divine rest is accessed” (p. 2). Salvation “can, in a true and substantial way, be made available through transmission of the divine word and be appropriated through a right response to that word” (p. 164). Ultimately, according to Griffiths, the writer of Hebrews “believes that through his discourse ... he himself communicates that divine word and effects an encounter between his hearers and the God who speaks” (p. 2). Hebrews as a sermon is a “secondary or derived form” of divine speech as “an exposition of God’s scriptural word in light of his personal word in Christ” (p. 166).

After presenting a streamlined survey of previous studies, Griffiths proposes three lines of inquiry (pp. 2–7) that he will address concurrently as he exegetes select passages: (1) What is the relationship between divine speech, Christology, and soteriology? (2) Does the writer of Hebrews think of his own sermon as a form of divine speech? (3) Is there a defined “λόγος concept” (or concepts), and is the word λόγος (and ῥῆμα) used to express it? The third question becomes methodologically controlling. Acknowledging among other things the need to guard against confusing words and concepts, Griffiths narrows the passages to be investigated to those using the words λόγος and ῥῆμα.

To pause and comment on this much, we may observe that the connection of the words λόγος and ῥῆμα (question #3) to the Christological question (question #1) is immediately clear. The connection between that vocabulary and the question as to whether the writer of Hebrews thinks of his own sermon as divine speech (question #2) is less obvious but becomes clear. Griffiths will make the case that the writer’s use of the word λόγος in 4:13, 5:11, and 13:22 for his own sermon coordinates with the contextual use of the same word for God’s speech (pp. 165–66), thus supporting a positive answer to the second question. These connections notwithstanding, it is in principle unsound to have made the occurrence of these *words* the leading criterion for the selection of passages to be examined. Even so, while the problem is not benign, it is not a fatal. The words λόγος and ῥῆμα will in Hebrews take us to key passages, and, since Griffiths gives due consideration to context (historical, intellectual, and discourse [pp. 8–35 *et passim*]), the sampling of texts is up to the load-bearing work of his thesis.

As for the context, in Griffiths’s view Hebrews is a sermon written to a community that is inclined to “revert to Judaism” at a time when the temple still “presented a physical draw,” thus before AD 70. The author, unknown by name, viewed the OT as a living text, a means through which God continues to speak. More generally, he stands at the center of “the mainstream of primitive Christian theology.” Parallels with Philo should not be exaggerated; they evidence a “common indebtedness to traditions of Hellenistic Judaism” (p. 15). The discourse context conforms to the genre of a homily; Hebrews “constitutes the only complete

extant synagogue homily from the first century” (p. 22). Griffiths acknowledges how little we know of first-century “homilies” but concludes that the later Jewish evidence is sufficient to establish both the definition of the genre and Hebrews’ correspondence to it. Structurally this particular homily is a “series of scriptural expositions following the threefold word of exhortation pattern” (p. 28). Thus 1:1–13:19 comprises eleven cycles, each of which begins with “exempla” (clear OT citations that form the primary focus of a cycle), proceeds to “explanation and application” (exposition and application of the OT in light of Christ), and ends with “exhortation” (which may also employ an OT citation but in a supporting role).

These aspects of the discourse context—genre and structure—are evidently of particular importance to Griffiths but both raise concerns. It is not problematic to style Hebrews as a “sermon” for a modern audience, but the unknowns surrounding the historical characterization (cf. Craig R. Koester, *Hebrews* [AB 36; New York: Doubleday, 2001], pp. 80–82) make Griffiths’s genre assignment an unstable pillar for an argument. The threefold structuring pattern, which is separable from the genre assignment (pp. 20–21), works reasonably well in places but is a procrustean bed in others (e.g. 2:5–3:3; 3:4–13; 4:12–16); where it reveals the author’s meaning in Griffiths’s eyes, it might be construed as generating the reader’s meaning in the eyes of others. It would not have been possible for Griffiths to avoid indicating his views on these matters, since he places great stress on them, but neither the specific genre assignment nor the threefold structuring pattern seems necessary to his overall conclusions.

For example, Griffiths’s project is bent on outlining “the writer’s [Hebrews] conception of God’s speech and his own [Hebrews] strategy for effecting an encounter between his addressees and God’s word” (p. 2). To get there, Griffiths believes it is “necessary to conclude that in identifying his sermon using the term *λόγος* at 4.13, 5.11 and 13.22 [the writer of Hebrews] intends to identify his sermon as a form of divine speech” (p. 166). It is evident that other human agents also speak God’s word (4:2; 13:7). Presumably—Griffiths argues—individuals did not become agents of divine speech by default or without intention. The only model for such activity that is (implicitly) supplied is that of Hebrews itself, precisely as a sermon that proceeds as an exposition of Scripture as clarified through the threefold pattern (pp. 166–67; note the closing emphasis of p. 169). If I have understood Griffiths, the combination of the genre (homily) and threefold structuring pattern is material, seemingly crucial, to the effecting of the encounter with God’s word; the surface structure of Hebrews conveys this in part through a technical use of the word *λόγος*. At points Griffiths qualifies, but the overall emphasis on the genre, structure, and divine speech tends to imply a strong correlation.

However, the lines connecting these dots are messy. If we grant both that Hebrews belongs to the homily genre and that it also presents itself as participating in divine speech, all we have shown is that the homily genre does not disqualify a discourse from the privilege of participation in divine speech. Presumably, moreover, the conclusion that Hebrews presents itself as participating in divine speech could be sustained in correlation with a range of decisions about the genre. In the same vein, based on the assumed correlation of genre and divine speech we would

need to be as restrained about a theology of the homily genre (a theology of preaching) in the case of Hebrews as we would be about a theology of the epistolary genre in the case of, say, Romans. Surely Hebrews is not a sermon about sermons and preaching as such. This is not to deny that there is a strong correlation in Hebrews between what could be called a “gospelized” exposition of the (OT) Scriptures—intending the word “exposition” in a broad sense that spans several genres—and the implied participation of the expositor in the act of divine speech. It is also evident that the writer of Hebrews thought of his discourse as an instantiation of the mutual, daily ministry of exhortation; it would seem clear enough from the thread running through 3:13, 5:12, 10:25, and 13:22 that he thought of his discourse as exemplary of what he expected from his readers in substance, though not necessarily in form. It is not thereby demonstrated, however, that participation in divine speech depends on the homily genre or that it privileges that genre. Likewise, that the writer formed his discourse as an exposition of OT texts can be and has been accounted for by a variety of structural theories (for more on the payoff of Griffiths’s view of Hebrews’ structure, see pp. 34–35 *et passim*). Finally, that the writer involves himself in the conceit, as it were, of conflating his exposition with the Scriptures he cites, alludes to, and echoes—thus implicating his exposition in the act of divine speech—is evident whatever we conclude about how the word *λόγος* is used; this conflation (as well as the idea that the Son *is* the substance of God’s speech) seems built into the whole logic of 3:7–4:11, for instance, while a technical meaning for *λόγος* ranges from possible to probable depending on the text.

In the context of these arguments, to which we can say *sic et non*, Griffiths adds another worth highlighting: He believes he has supplied “exegetical support” (p. 168) for the conclusion that Hebrews presented itself as a word of God on par with the (OT) Scriptures. If that is what Griffiths intends, this claim fails to convince, but then I admit that I struggled with Griffiths’s wording at this point. He characterizes what Hebrews is doing as giving “scriptural warrant” and “exegetical support” for the claim that both the OT Scriptures and Hebrews itself are identified as the “word of God.” Yet that seems simultaneously to assume and to prove that Hebrews itself is Scripture, while entertaining the possibility that “Scripture” is something that may or may not be “word of God.” Whatever is the case with this last point, one can find some of Griffiths’s conclusions compelling while having doubts about his arguments, particularly with respect to his judgments on the genre and structure of Hebrews.

I hasten to underscore that this is a fine work of scholarship that fronts and examines a major emphasis of Hebrews and a crucial theme for theology. Hebrews is indubitably a discourse that centers on God’s saving speech—that is, his speech in and as the Son, in the form of the promise delivered in the word of the proclaimed gospel (1:1–4; 4:12–13; 12:25–29). Yet this broad affirmation requires testing and refinement, which is what Griffiths pursues. His successive, close examinations of 1:1–4; 2:1–4; 4:2–16; 5:11–6:12; 6:13–7:28; 11:3; 12:18–29; and 13:7, 17, 22 are necessary reading for all exegetes. As often happens, a thematic study becomes a kind of tinted lens that amplifies the chosen color, possibly in misleading ways.

Yet such a lens can also help us see what should not be missed. For example, the verb *μεσιτεύω* in 6:17 is routinely taken as “guarantee, vouch for,” but Griffiths makes a strong case for translating it as “mediate” (pp. 111–14). The upshot (pp. 120–21; cf. p. 162) is that according to Heb 6:17, “God acted as mediator between himself and his people through the person of Christ by establishing Christ as priest.... The writer has already associated Christ’s ontology very closely with God’s word, even from the opening verses.... God’s oath is none other than his word spoken to Christ in establishing him a priest and spoken in Christ as he achieves his priestly and mediatorial work through his life, death, and exaltation.” To say this is to ascribe some potent, almost coded wording to the writer of Hebrews, but Griffiths’s argument has force to it.

Griffiths closes the volume by suggesting several lines of research that can build on his study: Hebrews’ cosmology, its implicit *logos* Christology, its conviction that its own exposition was a form of divine speech, its representation of early homiletical practice. He proposes that modern discussions of hermeneutics and theologies of preaching can engage his work with profit. It is indeed to be hoped that either Griffiths himself or others will refine, deepen, and extend his work. Of particular interest would be a deeper comparison between Hebrews’ and John’s *logos* Christology and a further exploration of what makes Hebrews’ “conceit” of sharing in divine speech formally or materially distinctive vis-à-vis other Jewish and early Christian texts.

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*Faith and the Faithfulness of Jesus in Hebrews.* By Matthew C. Easter. Society for NT Studies Monograph Series 160. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014, xvi + 263 pp., \$99.00.

In this recent monograph, Matthew C. Easter seeks to “investigate manifestations of faith” in Hebrews. In his “Introduction,” which is both the first chapter and the first part of the book, Easter briefly summarizes the occurrences of words from the *πιστεύω* root in Hebrews (e.g. *πιστῖς*, *πιστός*; pp. 4–6); then, he attempts to define these words, analyzing their use in other literature and noting some “cautions” about how this root has been poorly understood in the past. Somewhat buried in his discussion of the “πιστ- words” is Easter’s note that he will not be organizing his study around occurrences of the root but will instead be examining the “concept” of faith. He acknowledges: “I am less concerned with the definitions of *πιστεύω*, *πίστις*, and *πιστός*, *per se*, than I am with how these words function in the argument of Hebrews” (p. 9).

In the remainder of this chapter, Easter offers a summary of the “few” previous studies on faith in Hebrews. These studies understood faith in Hebrews in terms of four dimensions (pp. 11–12): (1) it is Christological—“faith is either enabled or modeled by Jesus, and (for some interpreters) directed toward Jesus as object”; (2) it is ethical—“faith [emphasizes] the characteristics of obedience, endur-

ance, and/or perseverance”; (3) it is eschatological—“faith is directed in hope to the eschaton”; (4) it is ecclesiological—faith has a “corporate dimension.” Previous studies put forth *one* of these dimensions (or in some instances two) as the focus of faith in Hebrews, but Easter hopes to show that all four are at work. To bring these dimensions together, he proposes to analyze the author’s construction of narrative identity. By examining the implicit narrative or story that the author constructs for his readers, Easter hopes to show the story of humanity with and without Christ. The remainder of this monograph, therefore, is organized in terms of the human story.

“Part II: The Default Human Story” begins with chapter 2, “The Pessimistic Human Story.” The “pessimism” to which Easter refers is the author’s presentation of the “default human story”—the human story without Christ—as a story that ends in eschatological death for every person. To establish this claim, Easter begins with a discussion of the citation of Psalm 8 in Heb 2:5–9, as well as its surrounding context. After extensively summarizing prior scholarship, Easter argues that purely Christological readings fail to recognize the necessity of extending this Psalm to humanity, which also will (eventually) be crowned with glory and honor. Easter then outlines the role of the concept of “sin” in three of the so-called “warning passages” of Hebrews (2:1–4; 3:7–4:11; 5:11–6:12). Easter argues that, while sin leads to death, death is not always the result of sin.

The next chapter, “The Eschatological Hope Unrealized,” offers God’s intention for humanity. “Eschatological hope,” for Easter, is “(1) a place in the heavenly realm; (2) an enduring place; and (3) reserved for human beings with enduring lives” (p. 79). In this chapter, Easter progresses a relatively recent proposal that the language of perfection in Hebrews (at times) refers to the possession of a resurrection life. To illustrate the connection between the eschatological hope and resurrection life, Easter turns to chapter 11 and the so-called “Hall of Faith.” Moving through the examples from Israel’s history, Easter shows that the episodes selected by the author of Hebrews have a common thread: death. Some in the story “accept” death, some “avoid” it, and others “look beyond” it to “future hope” (p. 85).

“Part III: The Rewritten Narrative” begins with chapter 4, “Shared Destinies: The Hopeful Conclusion Realized in Jesus.” After demonstrating the problem for humanity inherent with the necessity of resurrection, Easter offers Jesus as the logical solution. Jesus, now in possession of a resurrection life, offers this to humanity, but, as Easter demonstrates, this is only possible because he too becomes a part of humanity. Then in chapter 5, “The Faithfulness of Christ,” Easter first outlines Hebrews’ presentation of Jesus as model of faith in Hebrews 12, taking considerable time to establish the underlying imagery at work in this text, weighing both athletic and martyrological options, which he concludes are both operative. Easter then jumps backward to Heb 2:13. This text features Jesus speaking the words of Isa 8:17 as if they are his own. In this speech, he professes his trust in God. Easter deals only briefly with this text, but he makes certain to highlight the connection of Jesus’s profession of faith with his suffering and death, since Jesus appears to make this speech on the brink of death. The final text to be addressed in this chapter is Heb 5:7–9. Although contested, Easter presents a compelling reading of Jesus’s

prayer as a prayer to be saved out of death through the resurrection, but this occurs only after “he learns obedience through the things that he suffered” (5:8).

Whereas chapter 5 dealt with 3 (albeit short) passages, chapter 6 (“The Stories Meet: Faith in Hebrews 10:37–39”) deals only with 3 verses. Most of this text is a citation from Hab 2:3–4, which Easter argues is Christological. For him, the “righteous one” is both Christ and the faithful ones from humanity. To substantiate this view Easter draws upon a number of Pauline interpreters but seems to minimize the fact that no major Hebrews scholars (to my knowledge) support this reading. On the contrary, they identify the “coming one” from Hab 2:3 with Christ. This feature, which is at odds with Easter’s reading, is absent from his discussion despite its consensus among other readers of Hebrews.

Easter concludes with “Part IV: Participating in the New Story.” This part is essentially comprised of a summary chapter (chap. 7: “Human Faith in Hebrews”) and the “Conclusion” (also chap. 8). In these two chapters, Easter recapitulates his program and also assigns portions of his narrative framework to the dimensions of faith outlined in chapter 1 (see above). In the prior, Easter, just as in chapter 1, maps his work onto the work of previous scholars.

Readers turning to Easter for a fresh reading of a passage in Hebrews that interests them will not be disappointed. He offers useful explanations of previous positions and then cogently outlines his own interpretation, which in many cases is a fresh or minority position; however, the innovation of Easter’s positions is not entirely clear. Both David M. Moffitt and Christopher A. Richardson share a number of Easter’s readings (some of which they originated), but at some key points are not cited. Since Easter’s *thesis* appeared at roughly the same time as these two monographs, it is understandable that they might not be integral to the structure of his work; however, Easter’s *monograph* appears 3 years after either publication date. At the very least, Richardson’s monograph, rather than his thesis, should be cited. Apart from some quibbles over the length of some sections relative to others, my only critique of note pertains to the purported subject of Easter’s work. Rather than outlining “faith” or “faithfulness,” it seems that the common thread throughout the chapters is actually “anthropology” or even “salvation.” Those engaged in serious study on Hebrews would be well-served by browsing the table of contents, as Easter’s interpretations of individual passages are often very useful.

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