

BOOK REVIEWS

The History of Ancient Israel: A Guide for the Perplexed. By Philip R. Davies. Bloomsbury Guides for the Perplexed. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015, xiii + 186 pp., \$29.95 paper.

The history of ancient Israel is one of the most controversial issues in the OT, and numerous books have dealt with this issue. Among the most recent and popular are Israel Finkelstein, Amihai Mazar, and Brian Schmidt, *The Quest for the Historical Israel: Debating Archaeology and the History of Early Israel* (Atlanta: SBL, 2007); H. G. M. Williamson, *Understanding the History of Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Bill Arnold and Richard Hess, *Ancient Israel's History: An Introduction to Issues and Sources* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014); and N. P. Lemche, *Ancient Israel: A New History of Israel* (London: T&T Clark, 2015). Philip R. Davies, Professor Emeritus of Biblical Studies at the University of Sheffield, also participates in this perennial issue by writing the current volume in the Bloomsbury's Guides for the Perplexed Series, which aims to offer "clear, concise and accessible introduction to thinkers, writers, and subjects that students and readers can find especially challenging" (p. ii). In actuality, this book is a combined and shortened version of Davies's two recent books: *The Origins of Biblical Israel* (New York: T&T Clark, 2007) and *Memories of Ancient Israel: An Introduction to Biblical History* (Louisville: WJK, 2008).

The book begins with an orientation in which Davies outlines the background to recent archeological developments in the investigation of ancient Israelite history, critiquing the unreliability of inscriptional texts and archeological data. He then pauses to consider what the terms "history" and "Israel" mean by suggesting a combination of archeological principles, literary-critical methods, and social-scientific theory.

The rest of the book consists of four main parts: "History," "Israel," "Ancient History and the Social Sciences," and "Constructing a History of Ancient Israel." In the first part (chaps. 2–4), Davies defines what history means. He claims that history is not the past activities of humans but collective memories about accounts of what probably happened by some causes, which he calls "cultural memory." After this, Davies overviews history-writing in the ANE and in Greece, proposing that biblical historiographies were influenced by Greek and ANE cultures because, as he believes, the biblical narratives were recorded from the fifth century BCE onward. In dealing with biblical historiography (chap. 4), Davies offers the first history (Genesis-Kings) and the second history (Chronicles, Ezra-Nehemiah). He further divides the first history into two components in terms of theme and subject matter: Genesis-Joshua and Judges-Kings, insisting that these two components portray two different "Israels." The first component describes a twelve-tribe nation while the second illustrates two "houses" that originated from a Judah-Benjamin rivalry which later developed into two kingdoms (Judah and Israel; p. 40). In the second history, Davies asserts that Chronicles focuses on the single

unified twelve-tribe people, following the Pentateuchal tradition while Ezra-Nehemiah focuses on Judahites, portraying the leaders of Samaria as hostile enemies. Davies comments, “They are not only different histories but histories of different Israels” (p. 43).

The second part of the book (chaps. 5–6) deals with the question of the basis upon which Judah comes to be “Israel” chronologically (p. 66). Davies claims that ancient Israel in Genesis-Joshua is described as a single political entity composed of twelve tribes while ancient Israel in Judges-1 Kings reflects Israel subjugating Judah to show an extended rivalry between Saul and David. In the post-monarchic era, however, Israel in 2 Kings was depicted as a sinful nation ultimately going to its destruction while Israel in Chronicles was a reborn Israel consisting of a Judah-centered community that embraced the other ten tribes. As to the question, “On what basis does Judah come to be ‘Israel?’” Davies proposes a hypothesis that after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BCE, Bethel under the tribe of Benjamin had become the official cultic center of Judah until the rebuilding of the Jerusalem temple, and the revival of the old rivalry led to two different Israels between Jerusalem and Samaria (p. 95).

In the book’s third part (chaps. 7–8), Davies affirms that archeology cannot tell whether it is dealing with “ancient Israel” because distinguishing ethnicity is difficult to determine from material remains. He instead adopts a sociological approach proposed by Fernand Braudel to recreate the totality of society, offering the concept of “cultural memory” as a collective memory and its characteristics such as the matter of identity and confabulation.

Davies concludes the final part (chaps. 9–10) with describing minimalists as those who have studied the biblical narratives from “an overly skeptical and even nihilistic” perspective (p. 139). After this, he introduces some books that may be beneficial for further studies.

Davies’s book is provocative and often stimulating. However, several critical comments are in order. First, although the Guides for the Perplexed Series is for “clear, concise, and accessible introduction” to a given topic, this book is not introductory at all because of Davies’s unique writing style that sometimes makes it difficult for readers to follow his logical flow. He also often introduces new concepts or terms without explaining them properly.

Second, when Davies argues for or against a given issue, one may wish that he would provide more convincing pieces of evidence. For example, in his archaeological discussion, Davies insists that the word *dwd* in the Tel Dan inscription is unlikely to be a personal name but what he offers as supporting evidence is that no such name is found elsewhere, so connecting this word with King David is only conjecture. His argument here is neither persuasive nor logical.

Finally, it is quite surprising to find numerous grammatical and typographical errors (e.g. p. xii; p. 7; p. 37; p. 76; p. 86; p. 89; p. 117; p. 126; p. 140; p. 151). One may also find it difficult to read unduly long sentences (e.g. 8 lines on p. 7, 10 lines on pp. 144–45). Thorough editorial correction is surely necessary in any subsequent edition.

Despite several significant weaknesses, Davies's current volume provides several helpful discussions of essential issues related to biblical historiography from the minimalist perspective and proposes a hypothesis about the postexilic tradition of the Benjaminites connection with Bethel and the Samaritan temple that calls for further research.

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Spirit Hermeneutics: Reading Scripture in the Light of Pentecost. By Craig S. Keener. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016, xxvii + 522 pp., \$48.00.

Craig Keener, F. M. and Ada Thompson Professor of Biblical Studies at Asbury Theological Seminary, has written a "biblical theological reflection supporting an experiential reading of Scripture" (p. 1). This reflection is intended to incorporate the author's charismatic-Pentecostal perspective with its emphasis on the present-day, subjective experience of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2-like ways into a philosophy of hermeneutics. This explains the subtitle "Reading Scripture in the Light of Pentecost." The work shows the growing acumen of Pentecostal and charismatic scholars in elucidating their point of view.

Keener himself is a biblical scholar who is comfortable at meetings of the Society of Biblical Literature with its many non-Christian scholars, at home in non-Pentecostal evangelical circles where he has long taught, and at home with Pentecostals and charismatics, Keener himself being a practitioner of tongues and prophecy. From this unique vantage point, he can be critical of failings in all three groups.

Keener criticizes some of his own Pentecostal/charismatic brethren for their extreme subjectivism and taking Scripture out of its historical and literary context and argues they need to learn to do grammatical-historical exegesis and test their experiences against Scripture. That said, in Keener's view, subjective experience nonetheless is a part of life and is often how the Holy Spirit worked in the book of Acts. Thus, subjective experience should be incorporated into a Spirit hermeneutic. Evangelicals from the Keswick Movement perspective, for example, recognized the need for a subjective, book-of-Acts-like experience of the Spirit even before the 20th-century Pentecostal revival began.

Keener takes to task critical scholars who are naturalists and therefore completely discount the miraculous in the Bible for adopting an approach to Scripture that is inconsistent with biblical teaching. Included in this discussion are case studies, some from Keener's own experiences in Africa, that provide experiential evidence of the reality of demon possession and the miraculous. He is also critical of those Bible scholars who profess to be Christians but whose historical-critical methodology has been too much influenced by scientism and the anti-supernatural rationalism of the academy, adopting a hermeneutical methodology that hinders a genuine experience of the Spirit in one's personal life. Spirit hermeneutics means

reading the Bible as Christians, and as such the reader must be open to the supernatural workings of the Spirit and not approach the Bible as a rationalist critic.

Keener criticizes cessationist evangelicals who say miraculous gifts such as tongues, prophecy, and miracles cannot operate today. Such theologians arbitrarily neglect certain biblical teachings and fail to give proper weight to the collective experience of millions of Pentecostals and charismatic Christians in Africa and South America and elsewhere among whom miraculous gifts continue to operate. Cessationists seem to be influenced by the naturalism of the West and its prejudice towards “inferior” non-white cultures in their desire to explain away the experiences of the supernatural among Pentecostals. Instead, Keener argues, they ought to have an attitude of receptivity, acknowledging at least the possibility of the continued working of the Spirit in these ways. Those like Keener who have experienced God’s miraculous working in their lives are naturally more open to the continuationist as opposed to cessationist viewpoint. Moreover, the effectiveness of the Pentecostal movement in the worldwide expansion of the church shows the missional nature of charismatic gifts like tongues and their value in prophetic empowerment for cross-cultural mission.

While Keener does criticize various other approaches, the book does not come across as a polemic. Rather, the work is quite irenic and positive. Most of the theoretical reflections on hermeneutics are such that non-Charismatics like myself are likely to nod in agreement. One such point is the need to be sensitive to a range of cultures and be open to learn from Christians of other cultures who can point out blind spots of Western Christians. Another example is Keener’s observation that since books are written to communicate, one cannot simply leave out the author and author’s intent in favor of the text or the reader the way postmodern hermeneutics does but instead must seek what the author intends to communicate. Keener also finds fault with the postmodern notion that various contradictory ways of reading a text are of equal merit since Jesus himself indicates that there is a correct way of understanding his parables. Nevertheless, postmodernism in Keener’s view makes a positive contribution by including in hermeneutics the reader’s “experience” of the text. A point of broad agreement is the need for the biblical canon to serve as a corrective to unwarranted interpretations based on perceived subjective guidance of the Holy Spirit and the need to read the Bible as “truth” while having a nuanced understanding of what does and does not constitute error and thus avoid needless harmonization of every detail.

Since Keener is a professor at a Methodist seminary, I am surprised that he did not mention the Wesleyan Quadrilateral (proposed by United Methodist theologian Albert Outler) that makes Scripture the ultimate authority but posits that Scripture should be read in the light of tradition, reason, and experience. It seems such an approach could mesh well with Keener’s approach to hermeneutics, using the Quadrilateral’s emphasis on experience to bring in charismatic Pentecostal experience but its emphasis on Scripture and reason to chasten Pentecostal excesses.

As a minor quibble, the work has many endnotes that are explanatory rather than simply documenting sources. It would have been much easier for a reader to

consider the content of these expansionary notes if footnotes rather than endnotes had been adopted by the publisher.

Keener assumes his readers already know the basics of hermeneutics. This work is not a how-to book on hermeneutics but is more a work of hermeneutical theory that goes beyond the basics. Keener elucidates a Pentecostal hermeneutic of great erudition, wisdom, and philosophical sophistication. It would not be well suited to most undergraduates except in an advanced, senior level course for Biblical Studies majors. It would serve well as a supplemental textbook in a graduate level course on hermeneutics and as a resource for anyone wanting to integrate the immediate, subjective work of the Holy Spirit into one's theory of hermeneutics.

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Intercultural Theology, vol. 1: *Intercultural Hermeneutics*. By Henning Wrogemann. Translated by Karl E. Böhmer. Missiological Engagements. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2016. xxii + 431 pp., \$45.00.

Translated from the German, this work is the first in a three-part series on intercultural theology by Henning Wrogemann, chair for mission studies, comparative religion, and ecumenics at the Protestant University Wuppertal/Bethel in Germany. Subsequent volumes, still awaiting translation and publication in English, address theology of mission and theology of religions. In terms of related works, Wrogemann's work resembles K. C. Abraham's edited volume *Third World Theologies: Commonalities and Divergences* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1990) as well as Stephen Bevans's and Roger Schroeder's *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2004).

Opting for the term *intercultural theology* instead of *mission studies*, Wrogemann's aim in this book is to "take into account the broad scope of world Christianity" (p. 20). He asserts that intercultural theology will make "an important contribution to the processes in which Christians see themselves within the pluralized society of Europe and around the world" as "various forms of Christianity are analyzed from an intercultural perspective according to their particular characteristics ... what they take for granted both culturally and contextually ... what they view as problematic, and ... their particular assumptions and priorities" (p. 395–96).

In the first of five parts, Wrogemann introduces the concept of intercultural theology. In part 2, he discusses the concepts of culture and hermeneutics with some attention to cultural semiotics (symbols), the history of biblical interpretation, globalization, and modern science. Part 3 offers a brief survey of global contextual theologies with a focus on African theology and a particular emphasis on Christology. In part 4, Wrogemann surveys the history of Christian mission, discussing how Western missionaries have approached the relationship of the gospel and Christian theology with local cultures. He begins with the sixteenth-century Roman Catholic *tabula rasa* ("blank slate") approach, progressing toward more recent attempts at indigenization and appropriation. Finally, in part 5, he seeks to summarize princi-

ples of intercultural theology by addressing themes such as inculturation, syncretism, post-colonialism, and ecumenism.

What are the strengths of this work? First, it is quite apparent to the reader that Wrogemann has spent many years reflecting on the meaning of intercultural theology. He has left hardly a stone unturned in his engagement with the literature from global scholars who represent various cultural backgrounds and Christian traditions and who work in the fields of mission studies, global theology, and cultural studies. Each section of the book offers students a deep reservoir of resources for continual research.

Second, Wrogemann presents his arguments for intercultural theology within the concrete contexts of the global church. This is evident from the opening chapter, in which he describes the work of a Tanzanian Lutheran pastor ministering to the spiritually oppressed in his congregation. In this sense, Wrogemann emulates the values of African theologian Tite Tiénou, whom he cites in chapter 13: “[Tiénou] criticizes the theology pursued at the university level because in his view it is far removed from congregational praxis and also elitist, since it does not consider the context of poverty, suffering, and injustice to any real extent” (p. 208). Though Wrogemann’s analysis throughout the work is quite erudite, his concrete case studies throughout the work—particularly African theology in part 3—drive the reader to pursue a street-level, congregational theology.

Third, and related, Wrogemann consistently appeals to Christian mission history to illustrate concretely the dynamics of intercultural theology. Current approaches to intercultural theology are surely the product of generations of mission practice and missiological reflection, and there is much value in seeing how we have arrived at where we are today. A historical approach also reveals different contexts (e.g. Christendom, postcolonial, premodern, modern, postmodern) in which Christian missionaries and global cultures have interacted.

In addition to these affirmations, I have a few constructive critiques. First, in terms of the book’s organization, the author takes a rather miscellaneous approach in presenting his arguments. While the multi-disciplinary approach (cultural, historical, theological) is praiseworthy, Wrogemann tends to toggle between disciplines which makes the overall flow of the argument difficult to follow at times. Though I have praised him for the historical work in the volume, at times the book moves rather abruptly from a discussion in cultural theory back to history. Perhaps if chapters and sections were more clearly delineated along the lines of these noted academic disciplines, it would enable the reader to track the broader argument more closely.

Second, I thought the chapter on the history of hermeneutics in the West could have been more expansive. In just a couple of paragraphs (pp. 45–46), Wrogemann jumps from Augustine to John Cassian to Luther to nineteenth and twentieth-century theologians. While Augustine’s hermeneutical thought from his famous work *On Christian Doctrine* ought to have been emphasized, John Cassian (ironically an Eastern Christian who migrated from Scythia to Egypt to Gaul in his monastic career) is not typically remembered as a leading exegete in the history of interpretation. Jerome, Gregory the Great, or Thomas Aquinas would have proba-

ably been better choices for this discussion. I also wonder why Wrogemann limited his survey to the Western church because Eastern church leaders such as Origen, Basil of Caesarea, Theodore of Mopsuestia, and Ephrem of Syria contributed greatly to biblical hermeneutics and early global theology. In particular, Wrogemann's broader argument for intercultural theology would have been enriched by a discussion of analogical reasoning in early Eastern Christian hermeneutics.

Finally, speaking of biblical hermeneutics, I was expecting to read more in this volume on how the global church reads, interprets, preaches, and applies Scripture in its various contexts and how theology is cultivated in context. I found the noted chapter on Tiénou's congregational hermeneutical values to be very helpful in this way and I think more similar discussions would have strengthened the book.

In summary, Wrogemann has presented a rich work to the church and the academy on intercultural theology. Professors and graduate students (both German- and English-speakers) in missiology, biblical studies, and theology will most benefit from this study. Because of the many case studies and concrete historical examples, missionary theologians will also have a useful resource as they help facilitate the cultivation of local theologies.

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Being Human in God's World: An Old Testament Theology of Humanity. By J. Gordon McConville. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016, xii + 228 pp., \$27.99.

A number of years ago, I had the privilege of being invited to participate in a colloquium on Adam Smith's *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. No papers were read, and no books were published as a result. Rather, it was a gathering of scholars from different disciplines (economics, history, theology, philosophy, Bible, and English) and different backgrounds for the purpose of discussing a book of some significance. The purpose was to grow in our own understanding of Smith's work as we contributed to the growth of others.

J. Gordon McConville's work reminds me of that colloquium, in that it is to a great extent a conversation informed by the OT about what it means to be human. It is not so much a work of biblical theology—though the subtitle leads the reader to think that—as it is a work of biblical spirituality (as McConville indicates in the preface). It is certainly very different from H. W. Wolff's *Anthropology of the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974).

In some sense, the book may be considered an extended reflection on Psalm 8:4, "What are human beings that you are mindful of them?" (NRSV), as McConville revisits this verse throughout the book. Following the introduction, the book falls into two large parts. The first five chapters are more general considerations drawn especially from Genesis 1–3. Chapter 1 discusses the image of God. Chapter 2 reflects on what it means to be "like God." Chapters 3 and 4 meditate on what it is that constitutes a human being, especially in community. Chapter 5 is

something of a reflection on hermeneutics, asking how we are to read the Bible in the various ways in which it speaks of being human.

The second large part of the book, chapters 6–10, fleshes out the implications of the first part. Chapter 6 deals with the implications of the human being as embodied, that is, how does the human relate to time, place, and God. Chapter 7, drawing on the notion of “rule” in Genesis 1, turns primarily to the discussion of human politics. Chapter 8 deals with male and female. Chapter 9 addresses work and creativity. Chapter 10, in something of a conclusion, reflects on the issue of human transformation, drawing in particular on the Psalms.

None of these topics is particularly surprising, and the organization follows the pattern laid out in Genesis 1–3. What does surprise the reader is the breadth of literature to which McConville refers. It is in this way that McConville’s work is like the colloquium I mentioned above. He has, as it were, conversed with people from a wide variety of backgrounds and specialties in order to deepen his own thinking on the issues. Of course, he has drawn on the work of various OT scholars but also on the works of others outside the field. These include such people as the essayist and novelist Marilynne Robinson and the philosopher Mary Midgley. One of McConville’s most frequently-cited “conversation partners” is the feminist theologian Phyllis Trible. This broad conversation contributes greatly to the depth of the book.

The conversational character of the book, however, leads to an overall tentativeness. The “Conclusions” at the end of each chapter are summaries, not conclusions. The final chapter is just that—a last chapter—not an overall conclusion to the book. It is as if McConville leaves everything open-ended in order to invite the reader into the conversation.

I have two broad concerns regarding the book. The first is the book’s very tentative nature. That is a strength, as just noted, but it is also a weakness. The second concern has to do with the breadth of McConville’s conversation. While he has drawn on a number of unexpected conversation partners, those partners are entirely contemporary and Western. There is no interaction with the history of discussion on these matters, particularly with regard to church teaching. Including those voices would have deepened the book, though it would no doubt have made it larger.

I also have a number of more particular concerns about the work. For example, in his discussion of embodiment, though dealing with the human being in place and time, he does not deal with the Sabbath, which is an important time element in the OT. As another example, in his discussion of work and creativity, McConville pays no attention to the mundane and ordinary. He speaks much of Bezalel but seems not to remember that for every Bezalel there were a thousand shepherds whose work was necessary though not creative. A final concern relates to his treatment of male and female in light of the current discussions of gender. One would think that the mere fact of humanity being created as male and female would contribute something significant to the discussion, but McConville provides little here.

These concerns aside, I found the book worth reading, and worth reading again. In the colloquium I attended, not everyone had their views changed but they had their views clarified and sharpened; this is the benefit of McConville's work. In interacting with it, the reader will have his own views clarified and deepened.

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What Does the Bible Say about Suffering? By Brian Han Gregg. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2016, 174 pp., \$18.00 paper.

Suffering is a worldwide phenomenon. The answers to suffering are wide ranging and often not satisfying. To introduce this subject from the biblical perspective is commendable and needed even in the 21st century because of the lack of understanding about what the Bible really says about suffering. Yet this task is daunting in light of various answers the Bible presents. Brian Han Gregg selected twelve biblical passages that “reveal a variety of meaningful ways to engage the problem of suffering” (p. 159). However, he concludes that his exposition of twelve biblical texts about suffering “still involves a great degree of mystery” (p. 165).

Why would the author write a whole book when he knew from the beginning his twelve approaches would not solve the problem of suffering? Regardless of the answer to this question, he is in good company. Many theologians and philosophers have come to the same conclusion. One of them was Paul Ricoeur, a well-known French philosopher who wrote about “a mystery of iniquity” (*Symbolism of Evil* [New York: Harper & Row, 1967], 346). Even Paul, while inspired by God, wrote in 1 Cor 13:12 that “we know in part . . . now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror.”

The value of this book is found in its effort to introduce readers to manifold biblical answers to the suffering they encounter on a daily basis. Since there is no single answer, Gregg chose twelve passages that in his mind present a comprehensive picture of suffering in our world. Each chapter begins with an interpretation of a biblical text from the OT or NT. The exposition of texts builds a biblical framework that provides grounds for practical reflection. Gregg's pastoral experience enhances the explanation of suffering based on real-life situations of his parishioners.

The first passage is Deut 3:15–20 where Gregg uncovers the principle of “two ways” (p. 21). Those who are faithful to God will be rewarded. Those who turn away from God and serve other gods shall perish. Suffering, then, is the justice of God as a divine response to sinful people. Accepting the “two ways” solution to suffering is quite appealing because of its simplicity and quick conclusion. However, this is only one approach in a definite situation of gross sin. Our God is merciful and does not always judge us according to what we deserve. Gregg insists that a one-size-fits-all approach does not do justice to the biblical revelation regarding suffering.

The next four chapters consider the stories of Cain and Abel, Joseph, Satan and Peter, and Job. Peter and Job were two giants of faith who had to deal with Satan, who wanted to tempt them and destroy them. Satan's activity was closely related to suffering and evil in their lives. Their response offers great encouragement for believers because their suffering did not destroy their faith. On the contrary, it brought them closer to God as they resisted the devil.

The rest of the book deals with passages that yield themselves to theological discourses on the topic of suffering in Rom 8:18–25, Heb 12:1–13, Exod 17:1–7, 2 Cor 4:7–12, 2 Cor 1:3–7, Phil 2:5–11, and Col 1:24. Here we find that suffering is the path to spiritual growth and increased trust in God. He is testing our faith during those times when we feel the pain we cannot avoid. When we pass the test, we experience God's power and comfort. Such assurance is available to us, and we can share it with others who may doubt it.

Including Phil 2:5–11 focuses on the all-important aspect of Christ's suffering. Jesus Christ suffered and sacrificed his life for our salvation. Comparing how Christ suffered for us, with how we suffer while living for him, will never result in self-pity and resentment. In fact, we can follow the example of Paul who shared in the sufferings of Christ as he desired to know him better (Phil. 3:10).

Gregg's approach to explaining twelve biblical themes of suffering can help many people who need guidance in the midst of questioning God's power in their sorrows and pain. However, I had the impression that I read twelve sermons that comprehensively covered the whole spectrum of human sufferings from the biblical perspective. Other equally pertinent passages in the Bible would have enlightened the topic of suffering.

Gregg writes, "Any hope of grappling with suffering must begin and end with the biblical witness" (p. 13). He should have supported his conviction by including a section with his reasons for the biblical superiority in dealing with the theme of suffering. If done convincingly, readers might be more persuaded to go to the Bible to continue their own research.

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Women of War, Women of Woe: Joshua and Judges through the Eyes of Nineteenth-Century Female Biblical Interpreters. Edited by Marion Ann Taylor and Christiana de Groot. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016, 288 pp., \$35.00 paper.

The book *Women of War, Women of Woe* "features nineteenth-century British and American women's reflections on eight female figures in Joshua and Judges: Rahab, Achsah [Caleb's daughter], Deborah, Jael, Manoah's wife, Jephthah's daughter, Delilah, and the Levite's concubine" (p. 15). There are eight chapters, in that "each figure merits a chapter" (p. 15). Thirty-five different knowledgeable, intelligent, and creative authors produce a total of 58 reflections. The reflections on Rahab, Deborah, Jael, and Jephthah's daughter occupy about 70% of the book's main part, which is preceded by an 18-page introductory essay by the book's editors

summarizing the book's content, contributions, and purpose: "to fill the painful lacuna of missing female voices in the history of biblical interpretation" (p. ix).

The editors' voices themselves are not confined to this essay. They provide an introductory summary of the story of each of the eight biblical figures, as well as a summary and analysis of the contributions of the ensuing reflections on that figure. In addition, they introduce every reflection with a brief biography of the nineteenth-century author and a summary and commentary of each contribution. The nineteenth-century authors, unfortunately, are not allowed their full voice, in that they are intermixed with the commentary of the editors every step of the way. The book has much value in exposing the current generation to the faith, insight, and hermeneutical method of women of the past. The majority of these women held that the Bible is God's word and taught that the OT narratives point to Christ and teach lessons of piety. Reading their writings was refreshing in our age of skepticism and higher criticism. However, their voices are noticeably altered by recruiting them to promote a feminist agenda. As an example, in introducing Etty Woosnam's reflection on Rahab, the editors comment, "Woosnam suggests that while 'men' continue to attribute old sins to reformed characters, God forgets our sins" (pp. 41–42). Their evaluation, which indicts men for failing to forgive as God forgives and suggests that women are untainted by this particular sin, refracts the sound of Woosnam's own voice. Woosnam, in the following sentence of her reflection, says that "the *world* thus brands us indelibly" (p. 44, italics mine). The world does not forgive as God does. Men and women are together in this. It is ironic that in an attempt to equalize male and female, the editors feel the need here to subordinate men. This is but one instance of the book's least amiable quality.

At a more basic level of critique, there is too much summary and too much commentary which, again, subtly undermines the book's stated purpose. The authors attempt to allow the women to speak, but they have not allowed the women to speak for themselves. The length of the book could have been significantly shortened, and the extra space could have been used to bolster the platform of the speakers by way of more detailed biographical sketches. The godliness and general admirableness of the authors, as sketched in the biographies by the editors, effects an eagerness to hear what they had to say.

The reflections themselves are diverse. As was stated, most (but not all) of the women held to the authority and inspiration of the Bible, and this comes through in their writings. The methods of interpretation include literal/historical, typological, allegorical, and spiritual. They are also pointedly practical, applying the teachings of the texts to the lives of Christians in their day and all days. Many of the reflections confront the difficult issues of the texts (e.g. Jephthah's sacrifice and Rahab's deception). The forms of the reflections are also wide ranging: poetry, drama, biography, catechetical teaching, commentary, lament, and others. These features give the book value in terms of history, providing a glimpse into the lives of nineteenth-century Christians and their appropriation of the Bible. It also provides a history of interpretation and demonstrates that Christians separated by time, culture, and space share a common faith that causes our common humanity to

wrestle with difficult issues in a way that upholds God's word. There is also a creativity and beauty in these voices.

The editors have done a service for their readers in compiling such a diverse group of biblical reflections by women of the past, which is part of a larger project to collect women's writings on female figures of the Bible. In 2006 a collection was published on women in Genesis, *Let Her Speak for Herself* (ed. Taylor/Weir; Waco, TX: Baylor University Press) and there is a recent volume, *Women in the Story of Jesus* (ed. Taylor/Weir; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), continuing the project. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to hear the multitude of faithful voices from a single source, and I expect future volumes will hold the same value as this one.

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The Temple and the Tabernacle: A Study of God's Dwelling Places from Genesis to Revelation. By J. Daniel Hays. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2016, 208 pp., \$19.99 paper.

J. Daniel Hays is dean of the Pruett School of Christian Studies and professor of biblical studies at Ouachita Baptist University. In this latest work, Hays leads the reader "through the Bible chronologically, examining theologically how God's presence, power, and holiness engage with people" through temples, sanctuaries, and other holy places (p. 11). Throughout, the consistent theme is that these places of worship "draw their significance not from their physical structure but from the fact that God is present in them, relating to his people who come to worship him" (p. 10).

The opening chapter walks through various terms and concepts related to temples and tabernacles, including *mishkan*, *'ōbel*, *mō'ēd*, *miqdash*, *qodesh*, *bayit*, *hekal*, *debir*, *hieron*, *naos*, *oikos*, *bagios*, and *skēnē*. Four key concepts are emphasized in this opening chapter. First, the terms indicate that temples and tabernacles are viewed as "the residence of God, stressing his presence" (p. 18). Second, as the residence of the divine king, the temple and tabernacle are "where God reigns and rules as king, stressing his power and his sovereignty" (p. 18). Third, these places are holy because of God's presence. Fourth, the temple and the tabernacle are places "where people can approach God and worship him" (p. 18).

In chapter 2, Hays explores the portrayal of the garden of Eden as a divine residence where God dwells and engages with humanity. Common themes reflected in both the garden and the tabernacle/temple are explored. The discussion is judicious, avoiding the overreach that can be found in less cautious treatments.

The ark and the tabernacle are the focus of chapter 3. The relationship between God's presence and his deliverance is central to the chapter. One of the most insightful sections of this chapter is the exploration of Moses's encounter at the burning bush as an echo of the garden of Eden and a foreshadowing of Mt. Sinai. The mix of nuanced treatments of the biblical text alongside excellent archaeological and architectural details is a significant and powerful feature of the book.

As expected for a book covering the temple and tabernacle, a significant portion of this chapter is dedicated to a survey of the key tabernacle furnishings. The discussion is even-handed, with a good balance between archaeological, historical, and theological perspectives. The discussion of the ark includes a helpful study of atonement.

Having previously written on the narrative depiction of Solomon's reign, Hays combines a nuanced treatment of the narrative with a comprehensive study of the temple's key features in chapter 4. Here he also explores key similarities and differences between the Exodus account of the building of the tabernacle and the construction of Solomon's Temple. As with the discussion of the tabernacle, Hays includes an extensive discussion of the furnishings found in the temple.

In chapter 5, Hays works through God's departure from the temple in Ezekiel. This chapter might easily have been excluded from a typical work on the temple. However, with Hays's emphasis on the theological significance of the temple and tabernacle—God's presence with his people—it is a natural fit. Yet, this chapter is not exclusively theological. Hays demonstrates how a deep understanding of the architecture of the temple aids in understanding the scenes described in Ezekiel. He also provides a useful exploration of the cherubim and other divine attendants associated with the temple. The discussion of divine attendants is beautifully illustrated with photos of cherub-like creatures from the cultures surrounding ancient Israel.

Chapter 6 surveys the building of the Second Temple. The survey is followed by an exploration of the narrative differences between the building of Solomon's Temple and the Second Temple. The most significant difference is that the glory of God is never seen returning to the temple, and "this signals that a very significant change has taken place. God still promises his presence (Hag 2:4–5), but he shifts to focusing on the presence of his Spirit among them, rather than his actual residence in the most holy place of the temple" (p. 130).

The chapter continues with a survey of the history of the Second Temple from Ezra to Herod and then spends extensive time exploring Herod's expansion of the temple. A comparison of the key differences between the architecture and furnishings of Solomon's Temple and Herod's expansion is illuminating. Like earlier chapters, this portion of the book makes excellent use of photos and architectural drawings to bring the temple alive for the reader.

Having covered the building itself, Hays turns in chapter 7 to the role the temple plays in the NT. The primary emphasis in this chapter is on Jesus as the return of the presence of God to the temple. A full-page illustration of the second temple is correlated with events from the Gospels (pp. 168–69). This section is indicative of one of the book's greatest strengths. Hays seamlessly weaves together attention to the details of the building itself, with its use in the narratives of the gospel, while simultaneously showing the theological significance of the various events that take place at the temple. The chapter concludes with a consideration of the interpretive options of Ezekiel's temple vision and a brief survey of the return to the presence of God in the garden found in Revelation 21–22.

Chapter 8 brings the book to conclusion with a concise survey of the theology of God's presence from Genesis to Revelation. Moving from survey to application, Hays calls the reader to consider God's presence with his people now and to see how we are pointed "to the future, when we will gather around the throne in the new heavens and new earth, experiencing God's presence in its consummated fullness, praising God together with all the saints forever and ever" (p. 189).

Abundantly illustrated, well-researched, and highly approachable, this work is an excellent survey of the temple and tabernacle structures. But its real strength is that the survey is not solely archaeological or architectural. Hays powerfully combines the archaeological material with a nuanced treatment of key texts and a compelling theological vision of God's presence.

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Belonging in Genesis: Biblical Israel and the Politics of Identity Formation. By Amanda Beckenstein Mbuvi. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2016, xii + 167 pp., \$49.95 paper.

Amanda Beckenstein Mbuvi's present work is the fruition of ideas first explored in her doctoral dissertation (p. xi). As the subtitle suggests, the author focuses on identity formation in Genesis, a subject that touches on everything from biblical criticism to postcolonialism and race theory. Since Genesis subordinates national ways of conceptualizing identity to theological ones, taking a careful look at identity in Genesis ultimately impacts ideas about how one understands the categories of race, ethnicity, and nationality in a postmodern era.

Chapter titles include: (1) "Playing by Different Rules: Reading Genesis through Its Deferrals"; (2) "(Un)conventional Genesis: Two Ways of Reading Identity and the Divine Word"; (3) "Family Storytelling: The Relationship between Genesis and Its Readers"; (4) "The Theology of Genealogy: A Boundary Breaking Foundation for Identity"; (5) "The Social Ladder and the Family Tree: Competing Approaches to Structuring Identity"; and (6) "Fruitfulness: The Emergence of a New Identity beyond Insider/Outsider Dichotomies." The main body of the book is followed by a brief seven-page bibliography and general and Scripture indices.

Some of the main points the author raises follow. By reading Genesis through its deferrals, one discovers that family is central. The emphasis on family delays the focus on nations, even as geographical displacement—exemplified by the life of the patriarchs—delays the rise of a stable national community. Indeed, "Creation, family, and displacement present identity as something contingent and in progress" (p. 1). Rather than embracing the fixed categories of modern communal identity, Genesis speaks of identities in process, developing through relationship with God and active negotiation or struggle with other people (p. 3).

Mbuvi notes that conventionally the Bible has been read with a Eurocentric focus, which uses the divine words to confirm its own views of identity. In its place, she calls for a YHWH-centric reading that defines individual and communal identi-

ty as contingent, revolving around the divine word and embracing all reality. When applied to Genesis, principles derived from the practice of “family storytelling” show that ideas of lineage and descent lie at the heart of Genesis (p. 43). Stories about ancestors both shape identity and provide resources for succeeding generations who identify with biblical Israel to work through their own challenges. A fresh look at the theology distilled from the genealogies in Genesis reveals that they link Israel not just back to Abraham but to an inclusive kinship network that includes all of creation (p. 67).

While interacting with Genesis on Ham’s curse and the Table of Nations passages, the author argues for interpreting Genesis as a family tree instead of a fixed social ladder. The family tree in Genesis is not a puzzle to be solved based on modern notions of fixed ethnicity but a way of expressing the multiplicity of identity. Neither does Genesis envision family in absolute terms of insider/outsider dichotomies as so often interpreted but instead the book of beginnings focuses on connections across lateral relationships of difference.

The author should be applauded for her reminder that the picture of identity and belonging presented in Genesis challenges modern definitions of race in profound ways. It is hard to dispute the notion that the family tree in Genesis not only unites people in a “single strain” but also links that common humanity to the rest of creation—plants, animals, and soil (p. 151). As Mbuvi puts it, the modern social ladder may unfairly box people into certain fixed categories that create division, but Genesis suggests that such differences really point to the essential connection between every individual. Thus, though Ishmael and Isaac are clearly separated in the narrative, their separation is also carefully placed in the context of their common heritage in Abraham. In sum, family in Genesis is comprised of the chosen “raceless” whose identity transcends the fixed definitions of human social convention and is derived from and defined by the very word of God. Such ideas can have a powerful impact in the social/political arena, not to mention in the church.

While there are clearly some positives in Mbuvi’s approach, the work raises several concerns as well. One is her dependence on the critical definition of “biblical Israel” to derive the theological basis for her entire thesis. In lockstep with biblical criticism, the author states, “I am not making a claim about the historicity of Genesis but rather referencing Israel’s story from a narrative/canonical point of view” (pp. 2–3, n. 4). The important fact that biblical Israel as portrayed in Genesis subordinates national identity to theological ideas about the same is significantly weakened when divorced from any connection to a historical Israel. If the events in Genesis did not happen as detailed, then what authority do they really have to address postmodern concerns about race, or anything else for that matter? Recognizing the force of this problem may be why Mbuvi flatly argues that “biblical Israel functions as an important reference point for a lot of people” (p. 2).

In the postscript of her work, the author states, “Decolonizing the Bible recovers a powerful and authoritative subversive voice that speaks right to the heart of the problem of race” (p. 152). A decolonized Bible may be subversive in the way the author envisions but one can hardly see how it could be authoritative and compelling. The idea advanced in the book that we need to decolonize our understand-

ing of the Bible raises a second issue, which is the book's intent of promoting a YHWH-centric versus Eurocentric understanding of race and identity in Genesis and (one assumes) the rest of the Bible. One could make a good case that the book's author is simply exchanging a problematic "colonialist" or "Eurocentric" view for one that is "postcolonial," and that YHWH-centric is just another name for a new critical way of reading that is in vogue and reflects the "spirit of the age" every bit as much as so-called "colonial" readings did.

One final observation might be made regarding selectivity in reading Genesis alone. Mbuvi's focus on the family in Genesis in critique of modern ideas of race and class was quite illuminating. However, her suppression of nationhood and nationalism based in Genesis might not fare so well in the rest of the Pentateuch with its obvious focus on the nation of Israel, albeit a divinely chosen and instituted one.

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Reading Ruth in the Restoration Period: A Call for Inclusion. By Edward Allen Jones III. Library of Hebrew Bible/OT Studies 604. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016, 224 pp., \$95.99.

The book of Ruth is a seemingly simple and straightforward short story with an easily understandable plot. A Bethlehemite family living in the pre-monarchical period of Israelite history chooses to migrate from the land of Judah to Moab to escape the consequences of a severe famine. Once there, the family experiences heartbreaking tragedy and economic loss. First, the father Elimelech dies unexpectedly. Not long thereafter, his two sons, who by then had taken Moabite wives, also die. Naomi, now bereft of her husband and her two sons, is left destitute with her two Moabite daughters-in-law.

One of the daughters-in-law, Orpah, follows Naomi's urging and returns to her former Moabite home and culture. Ruth, on the other hand, remains doggedly determined to stay with Naomi, choosing to make her own interests subservient to those of Naomi. In spite of Naomi's resistance to this idea, Ruth returns with her mother-in-law to what is an uncertain future in Bethlehem. When she ventures out to glean in order to find subsistence for herself and her mother-in-law, Ruth has a fortuitous encounter with a landowner named Boaz. This prominent citizen of Bethlehem takes notice of her and bestows uncommon favor on the young woman from Moab. Later, when Ruth follows a nocturnal plan devised by her mother-in-law to secure the favor of Boaz, he surprisingly accepts his role as a kinsman redeemer and Ruth's appeal for marriage as well.

A complicating factor in the plot develops when as a matter of conscience, Boaz approaches a nearer kinsman redeemer who has first rights to the property Naomi wishes to sell. This unnamed redeemer at first agrees to purchase the land, but then backs out when he realizes there is an accompanying obligation to marry Ruth. This decision clears the way for Boaz to redeem Naomi's property and take Ruth as his wife. The narrator concludes the story by pointing out that Obed, the

child born to Boaz and Ruth, stands in the ancestral line that led to King David, an unlikely development given the hostility and conflict that existed between ancient Israel and Moab.

It is easy to grasp the story line of the book of Ruth. It is not so easy to determine the implied purpose of this book. What exactly is its intended theological message for the believing community of ancient Israel? Or to put it another way, why was the book of Ruth received into the canon of the Hebrew Bible? Is it, as Thomas Paine suggested, “an idle, bungling story, foolishly told, nobody knows by whom, about a strolling country-girl creeping slyly to bed to her cousin Boaz” (*Complete Works of Thomas Paine, Containing All His Political and Theological Writings* [Chicago/New York: Belford, Clark & Co., 1885], 80)? Or is it an idyllic story about romance and the blessings of *hesed* living? Or is it in part a political treatise intended to account for the introduction of Moabite blood into David’s family line? Many commentators favor the latter suggestion, but not the author of the book under review.

The thesis of this cogently argued volume is that the book of Ruth was written in the Restoration/Second Temple period in order to urge Israelites to accept outsiders into their community in the realization that such outsiders might actually be more righteous than some members of the nation who do not live up to the Israelite ideal. Further, such outsiders might bring unexpected blessing to the nation, as Ruth did by unknowingly contributing to the ancestral line of King David. In the view of our author, during this time Israel needed encouragement toward having an inclusive attitude toward outsiders who wished to align with the Restoration community. Jones summarizes the main point of this biblical book as follows: “The author of Ruth starts with the belief that King David is a valued and accepted member of the Israelite community and works his way backwards, literally from the end of his story, to Ruth. If any person would continue to reject Ruth on the grounds of her race, grounds that her actions thoroughly undermine, they must also surrender David to expulsion through his relation to her. As David goes, so goes Ruth, and if Ruth goes, so goes David” (p. 152).

This thesis is carefully developed throughout the book in an irenic and persuasive fashion. The discussion is divided into two parts. In the first section, Jones provides an insightful analysis of the use of characterization in the book of Ruth. In my opinion, this is the most significant part of the book. He shows that with the exception of Boaz, none of the characters of the book fully accepts Ruth. Instead, they attempt in various ways to marginalize her, in spite of her upright behavior and consistent display of loyalty and commitment. The book thus plays a subversive role, showing that righteous behavior involves more than just being an Israelite; surprisingly, Gentiles sometimes display Israelite ideals better than members of the covenant community.

Jones then discusses inner-biblical allusions in the book of Ruth. Here his method is significantly influenced by Jeffrey M. Leonard’s work on inner-biblical allusions (“Identifying Inner-biblical Allusions: Psalm 78 as a Test Case,” *JBL* 127 [2008]: 241–65). Jones finds many correspondences between certain themes in Ruth and earlier OT themes, such as patriarchal migration to the promised land,

the betrothal type-scene, the bed-trick scene, and the barren-mother type-scene. The author of the book of Ruth expects his readers will recognize these implied connections to sacred traditions of Israelite history. The use of this traditional material reinforces the notion that Ruth the Moabitess lives out what Israel was supposed to embody but does not.

The second part of the book deals mainly with two matters: the date of the book and sociological models for exile and return. The issue of the date of the composition of the book of Ruth is crucial for Jones's thesis. Only if Ruth can be convincingly dated to the postexilic period is his argument sustainable. If the book is in fact earlier, his interpretation becomes anachronistic and flawed. Jones is acutely aware of this problem. As he acknowledges, "If there is evidence that Ruth comes from before the Restoration period, the conclusions of this study will be invalid" (p. 121). This presents a serious methodological problem to Jones's approach. There seems to be no way to determine with certainty when the book of Ruth was written. Scholars have proposed dates that range from the monarchic period to the exilic period to the postexilic period to as late as the Maccabean period. We simply do not know for sure when the book was written, nor do we know who wrote it. Given the fact that a fairly strong case can be made for an early date for the book, it seems precarious to rest so much interpretational freight on the disputed possibility that the book is late. Jones's interpretation of Ruth makes good sense if the book comes from the postexilic period. But that is exactly what we do not know for sure. Uncertainty regarding the date of the book is the Achilles' heel for this analysis.

The final section of the book takes up certain parallels between the book of Ruth and modern sociological movements that provide insight to the effects of forced migration and repatriation. Jones calls attention to the sociological categories of restoration activists (RAs) and integration-seeking realists (ISRs), showing how behavioral patterns of these groups might inform our understanding of the book of Ruth.

There is a minor issue with regard to bibliography. Jones's book seems to be slightly dated by about five years. Although the book was published in 2016, in a list of commentaries and studies on Ruth published since the mid-1990s (p. 1, n. 1), nothing more recent than 2011 appears.

This study presents an interesting interpretation of the book of Ruth against the backdrop of the Restoration period of Israel's history. It provides many fresh insights into the book, especially with regard to characterization in Ruth. In spite of reservations concerning the late dating of the book of Ruth, I recommend this volume as a cogent presentation of one way of thinking about the purpose and setting of this fascinating biblical book.

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A Commentary on the Psalms, vol. 3: 90–150. By Allen P. Ross. Kregel Exegetical Library. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2016, 1018 pp., \$49.99.

This is the final volume in a Kregel Academic set issued in their Exegetical Library Series. Ross is professor of divinity at Beeson, joining the faculty in 2002. He has a B.A. in Biblical Studies from Bob Jones University, a Th.M. and Th.D. from Dallas Theological Seminary, and a Ph.D. from the University of Cambridge. Though he has a background in Baptist and Presbyterian churches, he has identified with the Episcopalians since 1979.

With more than forty pages of selected bibliography and a significant index of Hebrew word studies, this work presents itself as a substantial contribution to the analysis, exegesis, and application of Psalms 90–150. Careful scholarship is evident, along with a clear commitment to the integrity of the original text. The author has provided his own translation of the biblical text, which, while acknowledging the familiar English readings, provides a fresh and helpful presentation.

One curious absence from the bibliographic resources is any mention of or reference to Charles Spurgeon's *Treasury of David*. Imitating, in some ways, the approach Spurgeon took to commenting on the Psalms, this volume manages to surpass the usefulness of the old classic. Perhaps the earlier volumes mention Spurgeon. A second curious bibliographic absence is that of J. J. Stewart Perowne, whose two volumes were highly praised by Spurgeon. It is possible that these older works are now forgotten but they deserve to be included.

The ETS's doctrinal basis states: "The Bible alone, and the Bible in its entirety, is the Word of God written and is therefore inerrant in the autographs." In a time when many commentators write with clear contempt of this position, it is refreshing to read an author, clearly supporting this position and demonstrating such accomplished scholarship, who has produced a valuable modern addition to the list of classic commentaries.

This volume examines Books 4 and 5 of the Psalter, and as is commonly noted with the Psalms parallel to the Pentateuch, these Psalms would correspond with Numbers and Deuteronomy. Although the author demonstrates familiarity with modern critical views that generally assign late dates to the authorship of the Psalms, he deftly concludes that traditional dates are more than plausible. For example, considering those who argue a late, non-Mosaic authorship of Psalm 90, he writes: "So the conclusion is that the psalm was written in the post-exilic period concerning the suffering in the exile; it was not simply attributed to Moses, but was written in the style that Moses would have used in the similar situation he had to experience in the wilderness wanderings. The arguments given are plausible, of course, but none of them is convincing. The wisdom motifs do not demand a later date. Because wisdom literature is ancient, the links with Deuteronomy might support a later date only if one concludes that the psalm drew on Deuteronomy and not the other way around, or that Deuteronomy itself is late" (pp. 25–26).

With significant clarity and courage, Ross then defends the traditional view: "So we are left with a choice for the authorship of the psalm: we could say it was written originally by Moses nearing the end of the wilderness wanderings and then

found use in later periods of Israel's existence. Or we could say it was written later during the post-exilic period by someone who wanted to write in the way that Moses would have written it to make connections with the past. The second view seems unnecessarily contrived. There is no more appropriate setting for the writing of this psalm than the time when a whole generation would die by God's wrath against sin, and the next generation would sense the need to seek God's favor, learn how to live wisely, and submit their work to Him for his blessing" (p. 27).

Ross is a refreshingly honest voice in a day when scholars are drawn to critical views without careful examination of the evidence. Undoubtedly, a conservative view can produce an echo chamber but it is very apparent that a liberal view has produced its own. Ross provides a valuable resource because his readers will have access to all of the evidence.

Ross also displays a deft pastoral touch in the applications he draws from the exposition of each psalm. For example, in commenting on the imprecatory psalms, in particular Psalm 137, he states, "It is easy to discard such prayers as primitive or 'un-Christian,' which in some way is true. The new covenant teaches us to love our enemies and pray for them. But saints of all ages have had similar prayers for divine vengeance when powerful nations and governments commit such atrocities in their attempted persecution and annihilation of believers. When the people of God pray for the persecuted church, or for nations and tribes that are being annihilated whether Christian or not, they certainly should pray for a change of heart in the oppressors who need the grace and love of God; but they also should pray urgently for relief for those who are suffering, knowing that that relief is likely to be the outworking of divine justice in the removal of the wicked. As long as the inner desire for God to judge the world is cast in the form of a prayer, then we have surrendered our will to his will to be done. And so when we pray, 'Thy kingdom come, thy will be done,' we are actually praying for the Lord to come and destroy the wicked. And this will also be in answer to the prayer of the martyred saints in glory, who cry out, 'How long, O Lord, until you avenge our deaths?'" (pp. 795–96).

The structure of the commentary follows a simple format with each Psalm: (1) "Introduction," which includes text and textual variants, composition, and context; (2) "Exegetical Analysis," which covers summary and outline; (3) "Commentary in Expository Form"; and (4) "Message and Application." This format is very consistent and helpful in providing the reader with immediate access to the various resources.

Ross has produced an intensive and extensive verse-by-verse commentary; even when dealing with Psalm 119, he devotes 140 pages to it and comments on each stanza in a remarkably consistent manner. He writes, "Psalm 119 has not received that attention that it deserves. For many students of the Bible its massive size and apparent repetition is off-putting. This is reflected in a number of commentaries and studies as well. Leopold Sabourin, for example, says, 'Tedious repetitions, poor thought-sequence, apparent lack of inspiration reflect the artificiality of the sition (sic).' Anderson calls it monotonous, but impressive in many ways. Weiser considers it a purely literary composition that is wearisome in its repetition of motifs—and one that opens the way for later legalism; he offers no commentary

on the text. But most would agree with Brueggemann that it is a massive achievement” (p. 459).

Aiming to produce a resource for pastors and laity, the author writes with clarity. The more technical information is found in copious footnotes. The footnotes, though technical, are still eminently readable and understandable. This volume is to be highly recommended and deserves wide acceptance as a standard.

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Isaiah 40–66. By Marvin A. Sweeney. Forms of the OT Literature 19. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016, xx + 412 pp., \$55.00 paper.

According to the publisher’s website, this commentary is the nineteenth published volume of the Forms of the OT Literature series. FOTL is a highly regarded series in the field of biblical interpretation that “provides a form-critical analysis of the books and units in the Hebrew Bible.” *Isaiah 40–66* was originally assigned to Roy Melugin, but his untimely death in 2008 prevented its completion. The project was reassigned to Marvin A. Sweeney, who is also the author of *Isaiah 1–39* (1996) in the same series. Sweeney uses *Isaiah 40–66* to build upon what he wrote twenty years ago.

The introduction of the volume sets the tone for what follows. Sweeney includes a lengthy discussion of his understanding of the final form of Isaiah and the argument of the book as a whole. He resists the traditional division of chapters 1–39 and 40–66, making the case instead for a division between chapters 1–33 and 34–66. Sweeney contends that Isaiah’s synchronic structure has two major components: the first, chapters 1–33, “focuses on YHWH’s plans to reveal worldwide sovereignty from Zion,” and the second, chapters 34–66, focuses “on the realization of YHWH’s plans of worldwide sovereignty at Zion” (pp. 36–37). Sweeney effectively explains and illustrates this proposal throughout the commentary.

The commentary itself follows a well-defined format throughout: a detailed outline of each unit of Isaiah 40–66 with discussion of its structure, genre, setting, interpretation, and bibliography. There are times when there is noticeable repetition between each section of a given unit. For example, the first sentences under the “Structure” and “Genre” sections of 54:1–17 are almost identical. First, under “Structure,” Sweeney writes, “Isaiah 54:1–17 constitutes a proclamation of the restoration of the covenant of marriage between YHWH and Zion” (p. 220). Then, under “Genre,” he states, “Isaiah 54:1–17 constitutes a proclamation of restoration of the covenant/marriage between YHWH and Zion” (p. 224). Yet again, a slightly modified sentence, under the heading of “Interpretation,” reads, “Isaiah 54 employs a combination of genre elements, motifs, and intertextual references to present its proclamation of the restoration of the covenant/marriage relationship between YHWH and Zion” (p. 227). This repetition makes reading slightly more difficult, but Sweeney is still effective at regularly giving the reader many valuable insights on both the form and meaning of the text.

Make no mistake—Sweeney is an exceptional reader of Isaiah. His ability to read the text both synchronically and diachronically and to explain the implications of each is truly masterful. Thus, he offers some thought-provoking ideas about the settings of each of the units of Isaiah 40–66. For example, he sees the sacrificial elements of 52:13–53:12 as an indication that the passage was used in a liturgical setting in the Second Temple period (p. 214). He also sees the “Anointed One” passage of 61:1ff. as being used in the ordination ceremony of Joshua ben Jehozadak (Zechariah 3; p. 326). These are just two of many examples Sweeney uses to drive the point that Isaiah’s message was “designed to motivate its Judean audience to return to Jerusalem and to support the newly-built Second Temple” (p. 327). He explains that the message of the book is “consistent with the reform efforts of Nehemiah and Ezra, who sought to restore the rebuilt Jerusalem temple as the holy center of creation at large and Israel in particular” (p. 333). Sweeney makes connections between Isaiah and the reforms of Ezra and Nehemiah throughout the commentary.

Many *JETS* readers will be interested in how Sweeney approaches the so-called “Servant Songs” found in these chapters. He does not hesitate in placing them firmly within their larger contexts. He places 42:1–9 in the midst of the larger unit 41:1–42:13, viewing 42:1–4 as a presentation of the Servant Israel and 42:5–9 as a “Commission Speech” (p. 77). He sees 49:1–6 as an “Announcement of a Commission” and 50:4–9 as a “Song of Confidence”: “the servant is Israel personified, and so the servant’s continued trust in YHWH despite the experience of suffering and humiliation becomes the model for Isaiah’s audience to emulate” (p. 201). Finally, acknowledging the difficulties in identifying the genre of 52:13–53:12, Sweeney concludes that it is a “Salvation Speech,” eventually narrowing it to a “Liturgical Instruction” (p. 212ff.)

Interestingly, Sweeney wrestles with the concept of theodicy throughout the commentary, as the text itself defends God’s justice and righteousness. The Israelite community was suffering in the depths of the Babylonian exile and wanted to hear from God. Why and how did this atrocity happen to God’s covenant people? In commenting on 47:6–11 Sweeney notes, “YHWH’s claim to pass judgment on Judah suggests an attempt to conceal the fact that YHWH was not able to defend the people against the Babylonians and chose to blame the victims instead for their own suffering” (p. 154).

Sweeney addresses this theme further at 52:13–53:12, where the servant’s suffering is assigned a redemptive purpose (p. 213). The author observes, “Such a theological understanding is an attempt to make sense of Israel’s experience during the Assyrian and Babylonian periods. It is a form of theodicy that defends the integrity and power of YHWH in the face of claims that YHWH had been powerless before Israel’s enemies and that YHWH had abandoned Israel to its fate” (p. 216). Sweeney concludes that Isaiah’s explanation is inadequate, but that it “represents one step in the effort to understand this issue fully. It is up to us continue the work” (p. 217).

The commentary ends with glossaries (pp. 386–412) that define terms under the categories of “Genres” (e.g. “Announcement of Judgment,” “Confession of

Guilt”) and “Formulas” (e.g. “Messenger Formula,” “Oracle Formula”). This section will undoubtedly be of help to those who wish to familiarize themselves with Sweeney’s literary vocabulary.

Sweeney’s commentary demonstrates the value of a thoughtful reading of Isaiah’s prophecy and a judicious use of form criticism. While one may not agree with every interpretive stand taken, there are many thoughtful proposals that make this volume especially important to students of Isaiah.

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The Message of the Twelve. By Richard Alan Fuhr Jr. and Gary Yates. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2016, 360 pp., \$34.99 paper.

As the title *The Message of the Twelve* suggests, this work presents a case for reading the Minor Prophets as a canonical whole, and although Fuhr and Yates do not argue for a singular *Mitte* at the core of the Twelve, the primary focus is on reading the messages of the Minor Prophets within the overarching context of their historical and especially their literary proximity. Fuhr and Yates advocate that interpreters first treat each of the Twelve as discrete theological units and only then expound into broader intertextuality. This book begins and ends on a refreshing “plea for the church to give greater attention to the Book of the Twelve as a relevant and important part of Scripture” (p. 321), especially as a relevant text for “the church in the turbulent times in which we live” (p. xiii). This perspective is born from observations about the ways the Minor Prophets are often either underutilized or misappropriated by modern readers, and the authors claim to write specifically to students and pastors who might take up their call to study, preach, and teach the Twelve.

The authors divide their approach into two major content sections. The first section lays the foundation for reading the Minor Prophets as the Book of the Twelve. Fuhr and Yates begin by explicating the historical context of Twelve as a literary unity and of the prophets as individual preachers in their respective social environments (Assyrian crisis, Babylonian crisis, and Persian return from exile). The second chapter focuses on how the prophets fit into the theological progression of the OT, using the common tripartite description of the prophets as forthtellers, foretellers, and authors. Chapter 3 focuses on the prophets as authors, highlighting the many literary and rhetorical devices used in their texts, including chiasms, inclusios, various oracles, various accusatory genres, parallelisms and visions, among others. The last chapter in the first section ties the previous three together and offers a historically seasoned and thematically informed argument for reading the Twelve as a canonical unity. Fuhr and Yates rely heavily on proposals by Nogalski, Peterson, Rendtorff, and others concerning how the dual existence of catchwords (similar wording and phraseology) and thematic connections (similar concepts and conclusions) near the seams of the Minor Prophets show evidence of

intentional ordering of the books, especially in light of the fact that, though mostly chronological, the Twelve are not perfectly chronological in order.

Special attention is also given to four specific unifying themes that span across many of the Minor Prophets: "Israel's Failure to Repent in Response to the Prophetic Word," "The Day of the Lord," "The Broken and Restored Covenant," and "The Promise of a New David" (pp. 47–57). In the words of the authors, "The Book of the Twelve transforms the words of twelve distinct prophets into a cohesive account of the Lord's dealings with his people over the last three centuries of Old Testament history" (p. 58).

The second section occupies a much larger part of the work than the second. Comprising 80% of the whole work, Fuhr and Yates turn their attention to an individual treatment and theological commentary on each of the prophets in the Twelve. These examinations of the main messages of the prophets are not surface level, and like many commentaries include contextual information, word studies, and appendix-like sidebars such as "The Working of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament" (p. 105) in the Joel chapter and "Jonah and Jesus" (p. 175) in the Jonah chapter. These commentaries look to the distinctive emphases within each of the Minor Prophets and aim not only to exposit the individual message of each prophet but also to read them in the context of the Twelve and consider a Christian reading of the corpus. Fuhr and Yates specifically emphasize that the prophets must first be understood in their original historical and rhetorical contexts, and only then should a reader bridge the gap to give attention to commonalities to, connections with, and allusions to the NT.

The Message of the Twelve is a much-needed, careful contribution to the rather new but ever-growing conversation concerning the canonical unity of the Twelve. One weakness is that in some of the individual expositional chapters, a reader may get the impression that Fuhr and Yates have temporarily suspended their commitment to observing clear canonical unity in the lack of theological discussion of how books fit into the whole of the Twelve. This was not the expressed purpose of the book but would have been a key inclusion given the verbiage of the first section about the benefits of reading the Minor Prophets as the Twelve. However, this book rightly avoids a possible pitfall of the canonical approach in that Fuhr and Yates preserve the integrity of each Minor Prophet on his own terms before attempting to harmonize a holistic picture. In addition, this book does not force the task of identifying key themes and interpolating them into texts where they do not belong. While this overview does not delve as deeply as more concentrated and specific Book of the Twelve resources, its commitment to exceptional scholarship will lead any careful reader to the appropriate primary sources. In a very appropriate way, this work has ordered and presented a holistic perspective of the many resources attempting to present a holistic perspective on the Twelve.

This work hits its stated audience well, communicates clearly, and builds on the best of modern scholarship. It will very likely become a standard introduction to Book of the Twelve scholarship.

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Micah: A Commentary. By Daniel L. Smith-Christopher. OT Library. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2015, 256 pp., \$50.00.

The book of Micah presents many challenges for interpreters and translators. Micah's use of poetic devices, particularly plays on words, make it difficult to translate. Likewise, verses seeming to advocate opposing positions in immediate succession in the text are difficult to interpret. This work by Daniel L. Smith-Christopher, though not written from a particularly evangelical perspective, is an excellent commentary to survey the field of critical thought on the form and content of the prophecy of Micah.

Smith-Christopher straightforwardly identifies his own perspective as that of a Quaker educated in a Mennonite seminary, producing a strong commitment to nonviolence. His hermeneutical clue to Micah is that the prophet is an Israelite "critical populist" from the village of Moresheth in the lowlands of the Shephelah who advocates a sort of rural, anti-military populism. The peace prophecy in Mic 4:1–5, of course, provides the cornerstone of this anti-war interpretation. Smith-Christopher's Micah is opposed to the military "adventurism" of the power brokers in Jerusalem who provoke wars with foreign powers. Inevitably these stronger countries would invade Judah, starting with the Shephelah. Micah's fellow villagers were farmers and herdsmen in the Shephelah who suffered great economic hardship as a result of these wars, and thus opposed the king and his counselors in Jerusalem provoking foreign nations to war. Since the Shephelah was one of the breadbaskets of Judah, was located along a major north-south trade route, and was close in proximity to the Philistines, this area was constantly vulnerable to foreign invasion. While there are points in the commentary that Smith-Christopher seems to impose this anti-war view on some texts and spends too much time pontificating on more recent political issues, he does build a case that this is a possibly viable hermeneutical clue to understanding Micah as a whole. Smith-Christopher thus sees Micah as being much closer in content to Jeremiah than to the more pro-royalist Isaiah.

The author provides an excellent survey of the historical setting of Micah and offers an extensive bibliography for Micah as well as extensive indexes of Scripture references, topics, and authors. The OT Library is a technical and critical commentary series, and this volume is no exception. Smith-Christopher brings much recent critical thought on Micah to the fore in the commentary, including feminist interpretations of the text. Smith-Christopher does seem to focus repeatedly on about a half dozen recent critical commentaries as his primary resources. The author also draws often from the Septuagint translations of the Micah text and utilizes canon-

cal criticism and the analogy of faith by making extensive references to phrases and statements in other OT writings which are worded similarly to those in the book of Micah. Unfortunately, this volume offers little on the history of interpretation of Micah through the history of the church. The interpretations of the rabbinical tradition, the Church Fathers, the major Reformers, and the older classical Micah commentaries receive short shrift in this volume.

One issue that engages much OT criticism is the presupposition that the parts of biblical prophecy voicing eschatological hope were added by later editors rather than by the original author. Although Smith-Christopher acknowledges this possibility, he makes an argument in virtually every instance for a plausible reading of the text as being written in an eighth-century BCE setting. Another thorny interpretive issue in Micah is how to interpret passages that seem to make arguments in close juxtaposition both for and against something (usually for both peace and war). Smith-Christopher agrees at times with other interpreters who propose that these apparent contradictions are attributable to Micah voicing the sentiments of false prophets and then refuting them. While this approach does provide a plausible explanation for this phenomenon in Micah, it is not obvious in the text. Smith-Christopher does not utilize the “foreshortened future” concept in his interpretations. This commonly used tool in interpreting OT prophecy, in which the near and distant future are juxtaposed without clear delineation, may aid in our understanding of these difficult texts in Micah.

Smith-Christopher provides an excellent summary of translation options on many words in Micah, often by adding or changing one or more consonant or vowel in a word. However, at times he provides so many options with such widely varying meanings that it is a bit confusing to the reader how the original text should actually read. It is the nature of a critical commentary to “drill down” and analyze each sentence word by word, and at points this is very helpful. For example, Smith-Christopher’s analysis of passages such as Mic 6:6–8, which he describes as “one of the most beloved of prophetic texts in the entire canon” (p. 193), is excellent. However, there are points that this virtual atomization of each word loses the flow of the style and message of the prophet. In particular, Smith-Christopher’s interpretation of the marvelous series of plays on words such as in Mic 1:10–15 goes into such microscopic detail that he seems to miss the flow and the meaning of Micah’s lyric poetry, losing the forest for the trees. In short, the work would be enhanced by more literary criticism, which takes more seriously genre and style at the paragraph level and beyond, and is more cognizant of stylistic and thematic issues in the content of Micah as a whole.

Nevertheless, this is a valuable technical commentary, and like most volumes in the OT Library series, is a worthy addition to any OT exegete’s library.

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Malachi Then and Now: An Expository Commentary Based on Detailed Exegetical Analysis. By Allen P. Ross. Wooster, OH: Weaver, 2016, 202 pp., \$9.99 paper.

In *Malachi Then and Now*, Allen Ross brings his already well-demonstrated prowess in expository exegetical study of Torah and Kethuvim into the Nevi'im. Ross introduces his commentary with a brief instructional student-guide, a "how to" method of exegetical exposition. He instructs his students to determine the literary unit of text to be studied, make preliminary observations from careful readings of the biblical passage, use accepted methods of biblical criticism to establish the original form of the Hebrew text, study important theological as well as problematic words in the passage unit, undertake syntactical analyses of important grammatical constructions and their function in the text, pay attention to the literary genre or poetics of the text, develop an expository outline to guide the exegetical interpretation, and determine the theology of the passage—all of which are essential for mastering biblical exposition.

Ross then models his commentary after a simple structure he identified in Malachi; he breaks the three chapters up into seven logical structural units headlined by deductively chosen theological themes in the book: God's Faithful Covenant Love (1:1–5); Worship that Dishonors God (1:6–14); Teaching God's Word Faithfully (2:1–9); Proclaiming the Holy Covenant of Marriage (2:10–16); God's Justice and Faithfulness (2:17–3:5) and His Faithfulness to the Faithful (3:6–12); and Preparing for the Day of the Lord (3:13–4:6). This thematic schema is not only preferred to the verse-by-verse "play" of older commentaries but is specially designed to provide students of biblical preaching, or the advanced Hebrew student, hands-on exegetical practice in biblical texts by using the book of Malachi theologically and exegetically. In every unit, Ross provides grammatical-exegetical comments accompanied by the study of choice words and phrases essential to understanding the text.

What could be read as a monotonously-structured work is really a uniquely designed textbook with two overarching purposes: to provide an expository commentary on the much-neglected book of Malachi and to give advanced students of Biblical Hebrew hands-on practice in the art of exegesis and expository preaching/teaching. To these ends, the commentary follows a predictable path throughout all seven text unit expositions; where repetition seems to be the mother of memory and acquired skills. Translation of each text unit is followed immediately by an excursus on its context and composition in ancient Hebrew religious culture. This is enhanced by thorough exegetical comments on the Hebraic meaning of key grammatical words, phrases, and expressions in the textual unit. A short outline and exegetical summary set the stage for the "Commentary in Expository Form" section, which has its own second-tier outline(s) of theological concepts found in the text unit of Malachi under investigation and always substantiated in other books of the OT. A "Further Expository Ideas and Applications" section that shows Ross's theological thinking concludes the study of each unit.

In every text unit, Ross includes a Christian reading of the Jewish OT texts in measured references to NT texts and theological concepts—most deduced from

the book of Malachi and seen as foreshadowing a NT event or concept. For example, Malachi's discourse on God's marriage and divorce of his people Israel finds application and relevance in the NT's discourses on marriage and divorce (Matt 19:1–6; John 2:1–11; 2 Cor 11:1–3; Eph 5:22–33; Rev 19:7–8; p. 126). This is also true of Ross's exposition on "God's justice and faithfulness," which dovetails with the coming of Messiah (pp. 132–33), showing Jesus as the coming Messiah predicted in Malachi (p. 141)—and the second coming of the son of God/Son of man to hold the world accountable for sin on the day of judgment and punishment (pp. 142, 175–80).

The highly specialized *Malachi Then and Now* is not for a biblical novice; it is a tool for the practitioner of expository biblical preaching. Most monographs on Malachi were published before 1988, so many students will be grateful for this new insightful refresher in biblical exegesis and as a teaching-preaching resource. Ross ably accomplished his dual goal for this modestly-sized commentary. Scholars often accuse biblical theologians of not being consistent on if, how, and when to make or find clear, unambiguous, and irrefutable analogies (or fulfillments) of Jewish Tanakh in Christian NT texts. For Ross and many of us, this is still a work in progress that does not diminish the quality and importance of his *Malachi Then and Now*. The author's evangelical expositions on hot-button topics like marriage and divorce, justice and oppression, the second coming of Christ, and punishment and reward will not be embraced by all Bible scholars, but I think Ross will smile at that given his commitment to biblical faith.

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The Samaritans: A Profile. By Reinhard Pummer. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016, xiv + 362 pp., \$30.00 paper.

Reinhard Pummer, professor emeritus of religious studies at the University of Ottawa, Canada, is a leading scholar in Samaritan studies and one of the seventy-member *Société d'Études Samaritaines*, an international organization of scholars working with Samaritan literature, languages, history, religion, theology, rites, calendar, music, and the like (cf. <http://www.socsam.org>). Having contributed widely to the field of Samaritan studies since the 1970s, Pummer is well suited to offer "a profile of the Samaritans in the sense of a concise biographical and character sketch of the community as it developed through the centuries" (p. x). His stated aim is "to present the main facets of the history, religion, and life of the Samaritans in the light of recent developments and historical, archaeological, philological, and anthropological studies by setting forth the present state of our knowledge and providing references that enable readers to pursue in greater detail questions of special interest to them" (p. x). The timeframe of this profile spans antiquity to the present.

Pummer presents the content of the volume in thirteen chapters, beginning with viewpoints concerning the identity of the Samaritans (chap. 1) and closing with new challenges that the Samaritans face (chap. 13). Three early chapters are

devoted to the biblical traditions (chaps. 2 and 3) and Jewish writings of antiquity (chap. 4). A wide variety of subject areas are treated in chapters 5–12, including archaeology, sects, history, geography, rituals, and customs. Appended to the book are a lengthy bibliography of over 30 pages (pp. 305–38) and three indices (pp. 339–62): sources, modern authors, and subjects.

In chapter 1, “The Identity of the Samaritans” (pp. 9–25), Pummer surveys answers given to the question, “Who/What are the Samaritans?” The Samaritan view, as expressed in the medieval chronicles, is that they are the original and true Israelites who worshiped in the place chosen by God. Their rivals who worshiped in Jerusalem went astray when they established a sanctuary in Shiloh. The split is traced to the time of the priest Eli. The traditional Jewish perspective, by contrast, contends that the Samaritans are a mixed people whose religion was contaminated when the Assyrians settled foreigners in the former kingdom of Israel in the 8th century BC, based on a particular understanding of 2 Kings 17. Modern scholarly views offer two principal theories. Some consider the Samaritans a Jewish sect, while many others identify them as a version of ancient Yahwism. Pummer himself maintains all the evidence shows that the Samaritans are a branch of Yahwistic Israel in the same sense as the Jews (p. 25).

Chapters 2–3 cover the biblical traditions. In chapter 2, “Samaritans in the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament?” (pp. 26–46), Pummer challenges the common assumption that 2 Kings 17 provides details about Samaritan origins. He contends that **הַשְּׁמֹרִיטִים** (v. 29) does not refer to “the Samaritans” (KJV, RSV) but rather “the people of Samaria” (NRSV). Pummer notes that recent biblical research considers it wrong to assume that there was a long-standing enmity between Judeans and Samaritans that did not allow for amicable contacts and exchanges. He further observes that throughout the centuries there have been many instances of Jewish influence on the Samaritans (p. 35). The next chapter (chap. 3), “The Samaritans in the New Testament” (pp. 36–46), surveys how the Samaritans are presented in the Gospels and Acts. Pummer addresses, in succession, Matt 10:5–6; Luke 9:51–53; 10:25–37; 17:11–19; Acts 8:4–5; and John 4:4–42; 8:33–47. He also examines the question of the Samaritan influence on the NT writings and observes that scholars working in both areas have concluded that the theory of such influence in either direction is not a fruitful avenue of research.

Chapter 4, “Samaritans in Jewish Writings of Antiquity” (pp. 47–73), surveys references to the Samaritans in apocryphal/deuterocanonical writings (principally Sir 50:25–26; 2 Macc 5:22–23; 6:1–2), the Dead Sea Scrolls, Flavius Josephus, and rabbinic literature (Mishnah, Tosefta, Talmuds, and Midrashim). The first two groups of sources are limited in detail. The third and fourth groups must be used with caution. Pummer suggests Josephus’s information on the Samaritans must be employed guardedly because of his different aims in *Antiquities* and *Wars*. In *Antiquities* “the inimical statements about the Samaritans are not so much expressions of Josephus’s personal hostility towards them as attempts to enhance the positive image of the Jews by contrasting them with that of another, unreliable subject people of the Romans, the Samaritans, and by painting an unflattering picture of them” (p. 55). Rabbinic literature, too, which has a good deal to say about the Samaritans,

must be used carefully because the rabbis' views of the Samaritans reflect changes over time.

Chapters 5–12 relate to archaeology, Samaritan sects, history, geography, and demography. Chapter 5, “Archaeological Excavations” (pp. 74–118), provides an overview of archaeological excavations in relationship to Mount Gerizim, synagogues (both in the diaspora and in the land of Israel), amulets and oil lamps, and ritual baths (*miqva'ot*). Chapter 6, “Samaritan Sects” (pp. 119–27), identifies the different types of sources available for studying this question (Samaritan, Muslim and Karaite, and patristic). Pummer admits that what is unknown of Samaritan sects far surpasses what is known (p. 115). Chapter 7, “The Samaritans in History” (pp. 128–69), highlights the Samaritans' history from the Hellenistic and early Roman periods (2nd century BC) to the modern period (1918–present). Chapter 8, “Geographical Distribution and Demography” (pp. 170–94), examines Samaritan presence in Palestine and the diaspora. Today Samaritans are geographically concentrated primarily in two cities (*Nablus* and *Holon*), with no diaspora presence. Demographically, while their numbers are substantially less than in antiquity, they have increased recently (more than 750 in a 2013 survey).

Chapters 9–11 are devoted to literature, ritual and customs. Chapter 9, “The Samaritan Pentateuch” (pp. 195–218), surveys the nature of and ancient translations of the Samaritan Pentateuch, its place in Western scholarship, and details regarding its script. Chapter 10, “Samaritan Literature” (pp. 219–56), sketches the vast body of Samaritan literature under the categories of exegesis, *halakhab*, liturgy, chronicles, linguistic writings, folktales, and interactions with European scholars. Chapter 11, “Samaritan Rituals and Customs” (pp. 257–88), treats seventeen subject areas: the Samaritan calendar, Passover and *maṣot*, the Feast of Weeks, the first day of the seventh month, the Day of Atonement, Tabernacles, the eighth day of Tabernacles, *Ṣimmut Pesah* and *Ṣimmut Sukkot*, pilgrimage, circumcision, redemption of the firstborn, completion of the reading of the Torah, betrothal and wedding, funeral, prayer, music, and art.

The remaining two chapters relate to contemporary Samaritans. Chapter 12, “The Samaritans Today” (pp. 289–301), discusses the basic principles that provide identification for someone as a member of the community: to live forever in the Holy Land, compulsory participation in the sacrifice on Mount Gerizim at Passover, celebration of the Sabbath as written in the Torah, and adherence to the laws of purity and impurity as prescribed in the Torah (p. 289). A brief final chapter (chap. 13), “New Challenges” (pp. 302–4), highlights the challenges that confront contemporary Samaritans. Some young members want to blend in with Israeli society; others favor strict adherence to their cultural and religious heritage; still others do not concern themselves with the challenges posed by modernity.

Pummer's reputation as a scholar of the Samaritans is on abundant display throughout this volume. He is thoroughly familiar with all facets of Samaritan research and provides an informed, accessible, and impressively broad survey of the entire field, along with details on representative areas of interpretive debate and abundant bibliographic resources. Given the nature of the book as a profile, however, the volume's content is consequently stronger on breadth than depth. His

treatment of the biblical traditions (chaps. 2–3), for example, is limited in detail. I found neither chapter particularly illuminating and would take issue with some of his interpretative positions in chapter 3. (Does the parable of the “Good” Samaritan “want to show” that the Samaritan knew the love commandment of the Torah and set it higher than the ritual laws in contrast to the religious functionaries of the Jerusalem temple [p. 39]? Is the content of Acts 7:48 a condemnation of the Jerusalem temple [p. 44]? Cf. 1 Kgs 8:27 = 2 Chr 6:18.) While Pummer’s treatment of the biblical traditions is limited in scope, scholars and students seeking broad exposure to all things Samaritan will do well to consult this volume. It provides a wealth of information about this intriguing people and their traditions. Pummer notes in the preface (p. ix) that an anonymous reviewer of James Montgomery’s 1907 book, *The Samaritans* (Philadelphia: J. C. Winston, 1907), questioned whether a book on the Samaritans was worthy of 360 pages (*ExpTim* 18 [1907]: 548). Whatever the legitimacy of that question in 1907, Pummer’s volume joins those of Magnar Kartveit (*The Origin of the Samaritans* [VTSup 128; Leiden: Brill, 2009]), and Gary Knoppers (*Jews and Samaritans: The Origins and History of Their Early Relations* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013]) as tangible examples of contemporary scholarly interest in the Samaritans.

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Theologisches Wörterbuch zu den Qumrantexten: Band III. Edited by Heinz-Josef Fabry and Ulrich Dahmen. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2016, xvii + 602, €349.00.

The third and final volume of the *Theologisches Wörterbuch zu den Qumrantexten* (*TbWQ*; Theological Dictionary of the Qumran Texts) treats words from עֲבָד to תְּרוּמָה (see the review of the first two volumes in *JETS* 57.1 [2014]: 173–75). The editors, Fabry (University of Bonn) and Dahmen (University of Freiburg), restate their indebtedness to the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG), which supported the project from 2007–2015. It is safe to assume that the three volumes could not have been written and published over a period of only nine years without the help of the DFG. The volume, which comes with an index of German key words and an index of selected Qumran passages, is again superbly edited and published by Kohlhammer, whose editor Florian Specker is specifically mentioned in the preface.

The 281 entries consistently seek to meet the goals of *TbWQ* (stated in vol. 1, p. v): gather the vocabulary of the Qumran texts with the semantic valences and shifts of the individual terms; analyze the development of the Hebrew and Aramaic language on the lexical, semantic, and syntactical levels; depict the meaning and reception of OT terms in early Judaism; illuminate the roots of early Christianity and rabbinic Judaism; facilitate the development of more precise profiles of the various theological movements of early Judaism; and establish a “theology of Qumran” in the context of the Hebrew Bible, the NT, and rabbinic Judaism. The editors emphasize that *TbWQ* does not focus on the history of the Hebrew (and Aramaic)

language as it surfaces in the Qumran texts, although such matters are indeed discussed. *TbWQ* is deliberately a *theological* dictionary (vol. 3, p. v).

The following examples illustrate the rich content of *TbWQ* (reference to the Qumran texts that are the basis for the analyses is mostly omitted). In the entry on עֶבֶד (cols. 1–22), Barbara Schlenke highlights for the noun עֶבֶד (“slave,” rendered “Knecht” in the German text) the following: the term expresses a relationship of legal dependence in the context of a power relationship; the prohibition to sell Israelite slaves to pagans is grounded in Israel’s liberation from slavery in Egypt and in the slave relationship to Israel’s God; the wise person is God’s slave and chosen one and thus shall not take himself into a relationship of economic dependence; slaves of God are, as in the OT, the prophets and important individuals such as Moses, Jacob, and David, and probably the Messiah; עֶבֶד is the term that most frequently describes in liturgical texts the one who prays to Yahweh—the relationship expressed by the term communicates the constitutional lowliness of human beings before God, a relationship that grounds the purification of human beings; God’s turning to his slave/servant is characterized by kindness, grace, care, and protection against enemies and against sin.

The entry עֶד (Christina Kumpmann) comments on God and his glory, eschatological realities such as reward and punishment, the responsibility for one’s eternal fate, statements on predestination, eternal life, and the fact that the permanent states of the eschaton are sometimes portrayed as a present reality. We learn that when עֶדָה is used for in-groups, the term has mostly a cultic and theological connotation, while its use for out-groups such as opponents of the Community seems to have mostly secular and organizational connotations; the eschatological עֶדָה in 1QSa 1:1, which describes not only the members of the in-group (as in CD and 1QS) but all of Israel, assigns all members of the eschatological Community a specific task, although physically handicapped people are excluded since the Community needs to maintain its cultural purity: it will be a hierarchical עֶדָה led by the Zadokite priests; the messianic priest will preside in the messianic Community at the eschatological meal (Sarianna Metso).

The entry on עוֹן (Christina Kumpmann) describes the characteristics of sin/guilt (disturbance of the relationship between human beings and God; objectivity, defilement, threat, guilt), its causes (the *conditio humana* for which human beings are not responsible, actions for which human beings are responsible, and between these two poles the ensnarement in the guilt of the ancestors), its consequences (punishment, and forgiveness/purification), its removal (forgiveness as a result of divine initiative; acknowledgement and confession of sin), its reality for/in the Community (confession of sin upon entry, excommunication, confession).

Concerning עַם (Heinz-Josef Fabry), all peoples/nations are God’s creation, ordered according to their clans/tribes and language, subject to God’s judgment in the eschaton; over against the peoples of the earth stands Israel as the people of God; Israel’s army is simply called עַם; in the eschaton, the pagan peoples will be delivered into the hand of the pious as God’s verdict is certain since every group of people practice injustice even though they hate it, since nobody holds on to the truth that all peoples confess; in some texts the people (of God) are distinguished

from the priests and the leaders of the “people”; while the term **עם** is not the primary term in the (self-) description of the Community, the latter uses the term in the context of the succession of Israel’s election, which in a sense continues in the present; at the same time, the Community emphasizes that the people of Israel have forfeited God’s election on account of idolatry, impurity, and disobedience to the Torah; the Community has taken on the task of living the renewed covenant and becoming the sanctuary “from all peoples,” gathering the righteous of the people in order to bring them into the covenant; the holiness of the Community is both a characteristic of its members and an ethical obligation; the NT texts show a similar use of the term **λαός**, and Matthew’s notion of substitution is similar to Qumran’s in the Community’s demarcation over against the impure, sinful, and obdurate Jewish people.

The last sentence of this volume, a quotation from 11QTarg-Ijob XIV, 5 (Job 29:11)—“when the ear heard, it commended me” (col. 1168; in the entry on **תשובות**, by Christian Stadel)—is an apt comment on the entire project of *TbWQ*, a project that deserves unreserved praise. It is welcome news that *TbWQ* will be published in English by Eerdmans in the not-too-distant future.

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Jesus and the Last Supper. By Brant Pitre. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015, xv + 590 pp., \$55.00.

The discipline of biblical scholarship is not without its ironies. A case in point emerges in the curious role of the Last Supper within the sub-discipline of historical Jesus studies. Whereas the four Gospels assign Jesus’s last meal a fundamental and focal significance in which a number of themes are brought to a climax, historical Jesus research has—with some notable exceptions, including Scot McKnight’s monograph *Jesus and His Death* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2005)—studiously avoided the occasion. This is not so much because the event itself has been deemed inauthentic (most Jesus scholars are willing to grant that Jesus did indeed have an eleventh-hour paschal, quasi-paschal, or non-paschal feast with his disciples). Rather, at least partially because there are so many imponderables bound up in a historical-critical reconstruction of the Last Supper, the vast majority of scholars have been reluctant to make much of the meal in their own reconstructions. However, if Brant Pitre’s *Jesus and the Last Supper* is even near the mark, then it only means that the systemic unwillingness to engage this veritable “elephant-in-the-living room” of Jesus studies has left our reconstruction unnecessarily impoverished. Approaching six hundred pages, Pitre’s effort is something of a *tour de force* as it forges a fresh argument for the Last Supper as a paschal meal, bearing significant implications for Jesus’s aims not just for himself but for his on-going movement.

In chapter 1, the author lays out four objectives giving impetus to the project: (1) to assess the historical plausibility of Jesus’s words and deeds in connection with the Last Supper; (2) to inquire as to how the meal might shed light on his self-

understanding; (3) to contextualize the supper within Jesus's broader eschatological outlook; and on a related point, (4) to explore its significance *vis-à-vis* the trajectory that he expected his movement to take after his death. In the history of the scholarship, these lines of inquiry have been generally prejudiced or altogether preempted by widespread yet ultimately misguided assumptions: the presumably un-Jewish nature of Jesus's words (especially those pertaining to the consumption of blood), the non-messianic character of Jesus's vocation, his expectation of the imminent end of the world (so Schweitzer), and the presumed fictiveness of Jesus's role as founder of the church. Following the methodological lead of E. P. Sanders, Pitre commits himself to reliance on three criteria for determining the authenticity of Jesus's alleged words and actions: their consistency with first-century Judaism, their coherence with reasonably well-established facts about Jesus, and the ability of the same words and deeds to explain historical phenomena in the primitive church.

Primarily focusing on Jesus's feeding of the multitudes in chapter 2, Pitre finds that this miracle yields up compelling evidence that Jesus identified himself with Moses *redivivus*. This conviction in turn is closely related to Jesus's belief that he was not only a prophet (like Moses) but the appointed catalyst for the long-awaited new exodus—all in keeping with Second Temple eschatological expectation. Jesus's identity as the new Moses then serves as an optic for a clearer understanding of the "blood of the covenant" (as the eschatological covenant and the distinguishing mark of the Isaianic Suffering Servant) and the bread (as the eschatological Bread of the Presence). Yet the bread is also, as argued in chapter 3, indicative of the eschatological manna, which was expected to accompany the final Moses. This point finds further support in the Lord's Prayer ("Give us this day our daily bread") and in the bread discourse of John 6.

Chapter 4 deals with the perennially complex issue of the dating of the Last Supper. Pitre begins with a recognition of the tension between, on the one hand, the picture seemingly provided in John, namely, that the Last Supper occurred *before* the official Passover, and, on the other hand, the impression formed by the Synoptic accounts that the meal was a bona fide *pascha* meal occurring on Passover night. With admirable thoroughness and clarity, Pitre sets out what have become the three major positions regarding this discrepancy. The alternative theories are laid out on their own best terms but also with full cognizance of their often-downplayed weaknesses. For Pitre, the solution to the timing of the Last Supper is neither to privilege the Synoptic account over John (particularly John 13:1–2; 18:28; 19:13–14), nor to give credence to John over and against the Synoptics, nor again to fall back on Jaubert's thesis that Jesus celebrated Passover three days "early" in keeping with the Essene solar calendar (the established temple operated by the lunar calendar). Against these options, our author calls for a properly nuanced and variegated understanding of the term *pascha*, where it may refer to the Passover lamb, the larger Passover meal, the Passover peace offering (which occurs later in the weeklong festival), and the Passover week as a whole. As it turns out, all four meanings are relevant to an accurate reading of John's meaning. The result is integrative:

In sum, when the chronological evidence in the Gospel of John is interpreted in its linguistic, literary, and historical contexts, there are good reasons for concluding that the date of the Last Supper in the Gospel of John and the Synoptics is basically the same: the account of Jesus' final meal begins on the afternoon of 14 Nisan, continues through the night of 15 Nisan, on which Jesus and his disciples celebrate a Passover meal together, and then concludes with the crucifixion of Jesus on 15 Nisan. (pp. 366–67)

With this piece in place, chapter 5 is positioned to argue that Jesus's words over the bread and cup amounted to the institution "of a new Passover ritual that he expects the apostles to reenact after his death" (p. 420). Precisely as a Passover, the meal inaugurates the new exodus and symbolically designates Jesus as the atoning Suffering Servant. The event not only, prospectively, seals a new covenant that would endure beyond the point of Jesus's death but also, retrospectively, serves to interpret the meaning of the temple action, which implied the (near?) obsolescence of the Jerusalem cult.

Drawing the fuller argument to a close, chapter 6 makes the case that the Last Supper is finally inseparable from the messianic banquet, even only as a partial installment. As such, it signals the restoration of the twelve tribes, which includes the ingathering, along with Diaspora Judaism, of the Gentiles. In his conception of the kingdom, Pitre resists identifying the "kingdom" with the physical land, not least because of the patriarchs' future-state presence at the messianic banquet; on the other hand, following Allison (among others), this is not to say the kingdom is reducible to God's active and non-spatial reign.

Jesus and the Last Supper is a carefully constructed, painstakingly argued, and well written book. Nevertheless, a project as ambitious as this one is inevitably liable to some measure of both criticism and commendation. To begin with the former, first, on a stylistic quibble, the author's recurring encyclopedic approach of presenting full quotations from various scholars representative of a given position has its way of slowing the pace of the argument. I, for one, would prefer to see short citations carry more of this load for a brisker read. Second, more substantively, there will undoubtedly be many in the broader guild who will feel that Pitre has at points overplayed his hand—or to return to an earlier metaphor, that he has attempted to move parts of the proverbial elephant that perhaps should have been left well enough alone. For example, some readers will likely take exception to the author's treatment of John 6. While I am, like Pitre, relatively sanguine about the possibility of the historical reality of the bread discourse, one wonders whether the sheer number of exegetical difficulties and interpretive contingencies presented by this difficult passage make it a somewhat precarious platform for a strong argument regarding the *Sitz im Leben Jesu*.

As for strengths, there are many, but I shall restrict myself to three comments. In my view, the strongest component of the book is the discussion of the dating of the Last Supper (chap. 4): one would be hard pressed to identify a more judicious (and in my view more persuasive) treatment of the issue. Future discussions of the dating question that fail to engage Pitre's arguments seriously do so at their own peril. Second, by linking the Last Supper with Jesus's restorationist agenda, the au-

thor sets forth a thesis bearing heuristic value on all kinds of levels. Finally, if the overall argument is found to be convincing (and I for one believe that it is), then the project holds promise for rescuing the Last Supper from the black hole of underdetermined Jesus-events, thereby forcing a fresh reckoning of its significance within the agenda of Jesus and—after him—the life of the early church. Whatever criticisms may be voiced, for such contributions scholarship owes Pitre a debt of gratitude.

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Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels. By Richard B. Hays. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2016, xix + 504 pp., \$49.95.

Richard Hays's earlier work on the use of Scripture in Paul's writings, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989) had a significant influence on subsequent scholarship and led to many studies on the intertextual use of the Scriptures of Israel in the NT, including my own. Another previous book by Hays, *Reading Backwards: Figural Christology and the Fourfold Gospel Witness* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014), is actually based on his most recent book, *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*. *Reading Backwards* represents lectures based on the content of *Echoes of Scripture in the Gospels*, even though the larger work was published second. In this most recent work, Hays begins with a description of what he is doing in the book by using Martin Luther's imagery of the OT as "the swaddling cloths and manger in which Christ lies" (p. 1). Luther's reading, asserts Hays, is figural. This imagery suggests that Jesus Christ is "metaphorically wrapped in the folds of the Old Testament," contained in the OT but also partly concealed (p. 2). Therefore, "all four of the canonical Evangelists, in interestingly distinct ways, embody and enact the sort of figural christological reading that Luther commends" (p. 2). Using Erich Auerbach's definition of figural interpretation, Hays maintains that there is a "significant difference between *prediction* and *prefiguration*" (p. 2, emphasis original). A figural reading does not require that the biblical authors, nor the people that they narrated, were "conscious of predicting or anticipating Christ" (p. 2). A "figural connection" may only be identified in hindsight. This figural correspondence results in deeper significance for both the first and the second event, and "a hermeneutical strategy that relies on figural interpretation of the Bible creates deep theological coherence within the biblical narrative" (p. 3). In this book, Hays proposes that the Gospel writers summon us to open our minds and imaginations to read correctly the scriptural text through the evangelists' eyes. This requires us to study carefully the "revisionary figural ways the Gospel writers actually read Israel's Scripture" (p. 4). The NT authors "*read backwards* in light of new revelatory events" (p. 5, italics mine).

Following the introduction to "Figural Interpretation of Israel's Scriptures," the book has four chapters, one each for the Gospels of Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John. Each of these chapters considers five things: (1) the evangelist as an inter-

preter of Scripture; (2) how the evangelist “invoke[s]/evoke[s] Scripture to re-narrate Israel’s story”; (3) how the evangelist “invoke[s]/evoke[s] Scripture to narrate the story of Jesus”; (4) how the evangelist “invoke[s]/evoke[s] Scripture to narrate the church’s role in relation to the world”; and (5) “findings about the distinctive scriptural hermeneutics of the Evangelist[s]” (p. 9). The final chapter compares the ways the evangelists use Scripture and offers a “Gospel-shaped hermeneutic,” in which Hays asks: Can we interpret Scripture the same way that they did?

Hays assumes that “all four canonical Gospels are deeply embedded in a symbolic world shaped by the Old Testament” (p. 10). He notes that in addition to quoting Scripture, the evangelists refer to Scripture more indirectly through allusion and echo. Quotations are explicit citations of Scripture with (nearly) identical wording. Allusions are fairly close to the intertext being referenced but not necessarily identified as a citation and the wording may only approximate the scriptural text. Echoes are at the opposite end of the spectrum from quotations. These may contain only a few words of a scriptural text and may not necessarily be clear about which text is being referenced. As it will become clear to readers, echoes are nonetheless important, regardless of how faint they may be. The Gospels form a “resonance chamber” of scriptural echoes.

Chapter 1 begins by stating that Mark’s Gospel is “a mysterious story enveloped in apocalyptic imagery.” Many of these images are drawn from Israel’s Scriptures and “a reader who fails to discern the significance of these images can hardly grasp Mark’s message” (p. 15). Hays seeks to answer the three heuristic questions described in the introduction to the book. Mark’s Gospel sees Israel in crisis, still in exile at least metaphorically. Through the composite quotation of Exod 23:20, Mal 3:1, and Isa 40:3 at the start of his Gospel, Mark urges the reader to consider the OT contexts of these passages. At the same time, coming at the start of the narrative, it explicitly drives the reader to understand the ensuing story within its narrative and scriptural context. God is coming to save and judge his people.

Mark makes numerous intertextual references to Israel’s Scriptures but does not identify those references. Instead, Mark expects the reader to recognize the reference, which is essential for a proper understanding of Mark’s text. Mark does not make an explicit claim that Jesus is the embodiment of Israel’s God. Yet, in his “mysterious” presentation of the identity of Jesus, it is clear from many passages that Jesus is somehow the embodiment of the presence of Israel’s God. Hays concludes his study of Mark’s use of Scripture by stating that Mark’s hermeneutical approach, “however uncongenial to modernist interpreters” who search for the original sense of the scriptural texts, is “precisely attuned to the way that figural language actually works” (p. 101). Readers must be attuned to the “mystery” of Mark’s figural language to understand his Christology.

In stark contrast to Mark’s “mystery,” Matthew explicitly interprets Israel’s Scriptures in a narrative that boldly and overtly presents Jesus’s identity. While Matthew’s use of formula quotations of Israel’s Scriptures to show that Jesus fulfills them is noteworthy, these are only a part of Matthew’s sixty explicit quotations, to say nothing of allusions to Israel’s Scriptures. Focusing on these formula quotations would lead to far too narrow of an understanding of Matthew’s interpretation and

use of Israel's Scriptures. Hays begins by considering the genealogy that Matthew places at the start of his narrative. It shows continuity between Israel's story and Jesus's story. The absence of Moses or the Mosaic Law means that the genealogy shows Jesus to be the royal messianic king, not a lawgiver. For Matthew, "*the story of Israel is carried forward through a particular, prophetically shaped, interpretation of Torah within a community called to embody the mercy of God*" (pp. 127–28, italics original). In Matthew's narrative, when Jesus quotes Scripture, such as Hos 6:6, he expects the scribes and Pharisees, and Matthew's readers, to know the context of each passage and not to reflect on the verse in isolation.

Numerous scholars continue, in spite of the evidence, to assert that Matthew, like other NT authors, has ripped scriptural texts out of their contexts and used them as "prooftexts." Hays shows again and again that readers must know the original contexts of the intertexts used by the evangelists in order to grasp fully what the authors are doing. Failure to recognize these contexts will lead to a "diminished" reading.

In considering "Jesus is Emmanuel" in Matthew's Gospel and Matthew's Christological interpretation of Israel's scriptures, Hays states that the search for a single image or motif for Jesus's identity will end in frustration. Matthew demonstrates through numerous intertextual connections that Jesus embodies the presence of YHWH. Matthew uses scriptural intertexts to show that being a disciple means being on a mission to the nations to bring them light. Matthew interprets Scripture as Israel's story, a "prefiguration" of Israel's Messiah, and a call for a mission to the nations.

Luke's use of scriptural intertexts positions his narrative as the continuation of the biblical story of redemption from Adam to Jesus and into the church. Luke's Gospel exemplifies a pattern of promise and fulfillment and most of the intertextual references in Luke are allusions and echoes. Luke's interpretation requires "a reader whose encyclopedia of reception is formed by Israel's scriptural story and its interpretation within Jewish tradition" (p. 198). Luke's interweaving of Scripture presents a God who is gracious, kind, good, and patient, who repeatedly has acted to deliver and restore Israel but who will hold those who reject him accountable—and they will be judged.

Since Jesus in Luke's narrative states that all the Scriptures speak of him (Luke 24:25–27), using one strand of Luke's presentation of Jesus's identity will provide only a diminished view of Jesus's identity. In working through some of the thicker strands in Luke's narrative, Hays examines Jesus's use of Isa 61:1–2a in Luke 4:18–19, which ends abruptly by leaving out the rest of Isa 61:2, where the passage speaks of judgment. However, this is a classic instance of metalepsis: the omitted words are hovering in the air and Luke expects readers to know them. Through Luke's complex intertextual narrative, he portrays Jesus as the Spirit-anointed Servant, the liberator of Israel, and the Davidic royal Messiah. Yet, none of these should be given precedence or pulled out of the carefully woven narrative. Like Matthew and Mark, Luke presents Jesus as the embodiment of Israel's God and Lord. Luke uses scriptural intertexts to show that the followers of Jesus are to

be a light to the nations and also are to challenge the ruling powers by being emissaries of a new order.

In chapter 4, "The Gospel of John: The Temple of His Body," Hays observes that John's Gospel has relatively few quotations or clear allusions to Israel's Scriptures, but John depends primarily on evoking images and individuals in Israel's Scriptures. John calls the reader to recognize how "*Israel's Scripture has always been mysteriously suffused with the presence of Jesus*" (p. 289, emphasis original). John's Gospel offers a positive interpretation of Israel's story in Scripture and affirms that God will bring his promises to the world through Israel. Hays describes the ways that important Israelite figures, such as Moses and David, and Jewish feasts are woven into Jesus's story. These are subtle but important ways in which John weaves together Israel's story and Jesus's story.

In Hays's earlier book on Scripture and Paul, he asserts that "midrash" is not a useful term because calling something a "midrash" does not tell you anything and it is a specific form of rabbinic interpretation not seen in the NT. So it is quite odd to read Hays speaking of the prologue of John's Gospel as "a midrash on Genesis 1, a midrash that links the idea of a preexistent creative divine *logos* to the motif of divine Wisdom seeking a home in the world" (p. 310). What exactly, then, is a midrash? Using primarily the scriptural imagery of the good shepherds in Ezekiel and Israel as a vine, John presents the need for the community of disciples to be one and to be one with Jesus who is one with the Father. That will be their testimony, which helps enable Jesus to bring in other sheep not of his flock. Hays concludes that John's scriptural hermeneutic "understands the Old Testament as a vast matrix of symbols prefiguring Jesus," a "huge web of christological signifiers" (p. 343). A figural reading backwards in the light of Jesus is the way to see the self-revelatory hints or traces of God the Word in the world.

In the final chapter, Hays compares the hermeneutical approaches of the evangelists and considers the possible gains and losses of learning to read backwards figurally as they did. Hays then proposes elements that need to be in a Gospel-shaped hermeneutic, including a deep knowledge of the Scriptures of Israel; the ability to read backwards through the lens of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus; and the "conversion of the imagination."

This is a book to be savored, not rushed through like fast food. At one point, Hays describes the benefit of reading John's narrative "attentively." This book demonstrates Hays's attentive reading of the evangelists interpreting and using Scripture. Even for those not specifically researching this topic, Hays's exegesis offers helpful interpretations of the evangelists. Some readers may quibble with Hays over this or that proposed echo, but these doubts do not diminish the value of this book. Hays's work will be useful for those studying one or more of the Gospels and for those researching the use of the Scriptures of Israel in the NT. Failure to engage with Hays would be a mistake.

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Luke's Christology of Divine Identity. By Nina Henrichs-Tarasenkova. Library of NT Studies 542. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2016, xvii + 235 pp., \$112.00.

Hans Conzelmann's groundbreaking and programmatic work on Lukan theology (*Die Mitte der Zeit* [Tübingen: Mohr, 1954]) has been the catalyst for much debate, research, and publication in the field of Lukan studies. Conzelmann's redaction-critical approach to Luke-Acts showed that Luke was more than a mere compiler of the early church's traditions; he was a theologian. Through his two-volume narrative, Luke not only sought to preserve the church's *kerygma* but also sought to shape it. This paradigm-shifting research opened up the opportunity for creative and fresh explorations of Lukan theology. Little over a decade later, C. F. D. Moule could note the "formidable output of literature" related just to Luke's Christology ("The Christology of Acts," in *Studies in Luke-Acts* [ed. Leander E. Keck and J. Louis Martyn; Nashville: Abingdon, 1966], 159). Yet despite the overwhelming number of dissertations, monographs, and articles available almost sixty years later, the field of Lukan studies continues to be ripe for fresh and paradigm-shifting research—as demonstrated by the publication of Nina Henrichs-Tarasenkova's revised dissertation.

Over the years, much of Conzelmann's research has been modified or even criticized by Lukan scholars, especially as narrative criticism has replaced redaction criticism as the preferred critical tool for analyzing the Lukan narrative. Nevertheless, Conzelmann's conclusions regarding Lukan Christology have continued to influence scholars. Conzelmann argued that Luke's Christology is subordinistic and not divine—a conclusion subsequently confirmed and developed by Jacob Jervell, who wrote, "Lukan christology has a tone of subordination to God: God is at its centre and Jesus is managed by his Father" (*The Theology of the Acts of the Apostles* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996], 32). Furthermore, because Luke does not apply the titles *θεός* or *δεσπότης* to Jesus, Jervell concluded that the Lukan Jesus "is not divine, not pre-existent, not incarnated, not the creator or tool of creation, not the universal reconciler, not the *imago dei* etc." (p. 30). Thus, for many years, Lukan studies operated under the Conzelmann paradigm—Luke emphasized the humanity of Jesus to such a degree that there is no divine Christology in Luke-Acts.

However, recent scholars have questioned this monolithic paradigm and have offered fresh perspectives on Luke's variegated Christology. Henrichs-Tarasenkova's monograph is situated within this current stream of Lukan scholars who have sought to demonstrate that Luke-Acts does in fact characterize Jesus as divine. Henrichs-Tarasenkova builds upon the work of Laurentin, Buckwalter, Turner, Fletcher-Louis, Rowe, and Bauckham, and, through her well-written and carefully researched thesis, she offers both insightful developments and original contributions to the argument that there is a divine Christology in Luke-Acts.

In chapter 1, Henrichs-Tarasenkova introduces the primary question her research seeks to answer: Does Luke characterize Jesus as God/*θεός* in his two-volume narrative (p. 2)?² Although an answer to this question may seem as simple as doing a word study of the title God/*θεός* and determining whether or not Luke

applies this title to Jesus, Henrichs-Tarasenkova observes the problems with this approach. First, even if Luke does explicitly call Jesus *θεός*, the significance of doing so would still be difficult to determine because in the first-century Greco-Roman world the meaning of *θεός* could vary significantly. Second, even if Luke may not directly tell his readers that Jesus is God/*θεός*, it is still possible that he could indirectly characterize Jesus as *θεός*. Therefore, the question of Jesus's divine identity in Luke-Acts cannot be determined solely by a word study of *θεός*; rather, the reader of Luke-Acts must attend to the narrative itself to determine whether or not Luke characterizes Jesus as Israel's God.

Henrichs-Tarasenkova begins her history of research by summarizing Conzelmann's description of Luke's Christology and analyzing his methodology. She argues that Conzelmann's subordinistic Christology was grounded in a false dichotomy between ontology and function. Conzelmann observed various places in Luke-Acts in which Jesus is portrayed as identical to God "functionally" but not "ontologically." Henrichs-Tarasenkova suggests that "Conzelmann's juxtaposition of 'ontological' and 'functional' categories reflects his faithfulness to the modernistic thinking of the time that promoted the idea that who a person is should be understood separately from what he/she does. This mode of thinking, however, does not correspond to what Luke-Acts tells us about being and doing" (p. 9; see, e.g., Luke 6:43-45).

Chapters 2 and 3 establish more appropriate methods for determining whether or not Luke characterizes Jesus as God/*θεός*. Chapter 2 develops guidelines for reading Luke-Acts as an ancient narrative and provides justification for the narrative-critical approach employed in chapters 4 and 5. First, Henrichs-Tarasenkova establishes the parameters for the "model reader" of Luke-Acts, which is the persona all readers should adopt. A model reader of Luke-Acts is one who attends to the text's co-text, context, and inter-text and is open-minded and receptive to the narrator's guidance (pp. 35-36). Second, she explains how characterization works in Luke-Acts and argues that, while Luke-Acts employs both direct ("telling") and indirect ("showing") characterization to identify Jesus, the latter is more significant.

In chapter 3, Henrichs-Tarasenkova develops the meaning of the term "identity" in its Greek, Roman, and Jewish contexts in order to supplement Bauckham's description of divine identity. In the first century, personal identity was defined *relationally* by one's position in the household and society, as well as *functionally* by one's acting in accordance with that position. Henrichs-Tarasenkova demonstrates that her conclusion regarding the nature of identity in the first century coheres with Bauckham's description of the divine identity in Second Temple Judaism. She writes, "We theorize that in Luke-Acts the characterization of God is oriented towards a more traditional exclusive monotheism and that Jesus, if he is presented as *θεός*, is characterized as one God with YHWH, rather than as a second god subservient to YHWH" (p. 86).

Before one is able to determine whether or not Luke characterizes Jesus as sharing YHWH's divine identity, it is necessary to know how Luke characterizes YHWH himself. Therefore, in chapter 4, Henrichs-Tarasenkova analyzes Luke's characterization of YHWH. To make such a daunting task manageable, she limits

her focus to three chapters: Luke 1–2 and Acts 14. Her analysis highlights Luke’s use of indirect characterization in these chapters demonstrated in the way he emphasizes YHWH’s actions and words “in defining consistent traits of YHWH’s divine identity and providing meaning for the titles predicated of YHWH” (p. 135). She also shows how Luke speaks of YHWH relationally (i.e. “in light of his hierarchical position within the universe and in contrast with others who claim the same position” [p. 135]) and functionally (i.e. “with regard to how he carries out responsibilities prescribed to him by his position within his created world and his covenant with Israel” [p. 135]). In these chapters Luke characterizes YHWH as (1) a gracious God who shows mercy and offers generous gifts without regard for human standing; (2) a mighty Savior; and (3) as the only God and Creator who alone deserves worship.

The preceding chapters have paved the way for Henrichs-Tarasenkova’s analysis of the characterization of Jesus in Luke-Acts. Chapter 5 is, therefore, the climax of the study. As in the previous chapter, she limits the scope of her analysis to three chapters (Luke 1–2 and Acts 2), employing her narrative-critical model (chap. 2), the relational and functional definition of identity (chap. 3), and Luke’s characterization of YHWH (chap. 4) to answer her question as to whether or not Luke characterizes Jesus as God/ $\theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$ in his two-volume narrative. First, in Luke 1–2 she observes that Luke defines Jesus’s position through his relationships, his responsibilities and functions in light of his position, and his ability to carry out those responsibilities and functions (p. 193). Regarding Jesus’s position, function, and abilities, Henrichs-Tarasenkova demonstrates that (1) Luke constructs Jesus’s identity only in relation to YHWH and portrays Elizabeth and John appropriately responding to Jesus’s superior position; (2) Luke attributes to Jesus responsibilities and functions of YHWH himself; and (3) Luke accepts that Jesus carries out YHWH’s responsibilities and functions successfully (p. 194). Based on these observations, she concludes that Luke characterizes Jesus as the one who shares YHWH’s identity fully (p. 194). Second, she focuses on the way Luke characterizes Jesus after his death, resurrection, and ascension (Acts 2). She observes that Luke “characterizes Jesus and YHWH in ways that make it impossible to distinguish Jesus from his Father YHWH and that make Jesus’ name synonymous with the name of YHWH himself” (p. 194). From these observations, she concludes that Luke indirectly characterizes Jesus (together with YHWH) as the one God of Israel, while at the same time maintaining their distinction as Father and Son.

Despite its limited focus, Henrichs-Tarasenkova’s work is a welcome contribution to the ever-growing field of Lukan Christology and her research provides a solid foundation upon which subsequent scholars can easily build.

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John. By Murray J. Harris. Exegetical Guide to the Greek NT. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2015, xxxiv + 366 pp., \$34.99 paper.

This is the fifth volume in the Exegetical Guide to the Greek NT (EGGNT) series, the first of which—on Colossians and Philemon—was published originally by Eerdmans and written by the same author back in 1991. EGGNT aims to “close the gap between the Greek text and the available tools” (p. xxii) by providing information for understanding the Greek text. Murray Harris, the author of the present volume on John’s Gospel, is Professor Emeritus of NT Exegesis and Theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, IL.

The series editors claim that EGGNT is not a “full-scale commentary” (p. xxii). However, it actually starts off with an introduction discussing the biblical book’s authorship, purposes, audience, setting, date, structure, etc. The subsequent material then follows the outlined structure and covers the entire Gospel in a section-by-section manner. Each section contains a structural analysis of the passage with a discussion of each phrase in the passage, including the relevant vocabulary, detailed grammatical analysis of significant words, and their translations. In each discussion of the selected verses, comments made by various commentators are briefly summarized. Thus, in my eyes, this “guide” is still more or less a kind of commentary.

In terms of content, EGGNT is like an expanded version of Max Zerwick and Mary Grosvenor’s *A Grammatical Analysis of the Greek New Testament* (5th ed.; Rome: Gregorian & Biblical Press, 1996). Yet in terms of both the book length and depth of the Greek discussion, EGGNT is much closer to the Baylor Handbook on the Greek NT series (BHGNT). EGGNT has some distinctive features in this regard. The very first chapter of EGGNT deals with introductory matters of the biblical book, although done in a concise manner. In the present volume on John, Harris has done a reasonable job in a brief amount of space. The authorship issue is tackled fairly with Harris holding to the traditional view that the apostle John is the Gospel’s author. Harris thinks that John’s writing purpose is multiple: pastoral, evangelistic, apologetic, and also liturgical. The Gospel’s intended audience is not limited to Johannine Christians, but could be universal. This viewpoint is likely influenced by Richard Bauckham’s *The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998). The Greek style and structure of John are also nicely reviewed. Harris lastly lists five recommended commentaries: Barrett, Beasley-Murray, Brown, Köstenberger, and Schnackenburg. They are the key commentaries with which he will interact in the subsequent discussion. I do wonder why some important ones, like the commentary by Bultmann and the International Critical Commentary (both the one by Bernard and the one by McHugh), were not included in that list, since they are also exegetically oriented. However, Harris here has rightly identified E. A. Abbott’s *Johannine Grammar* (London: A. and C. Black, 1906) as an unreliable guide for discussions on Johannine Greek (p. 14), an important point since many Johannine scholars still regard Abbott’s works as a classic.

Regarding the “commentary proper,” I would like to take a few passages as examples for discussion. For John 1:1, the difficulty in understanding the anarthrous θεός in the phrase θεός ἦν ὁ λόγος is notorious. Here Harris summarizes the key available options and manages to make a sensible evaluation with illustrations from different Bible translations (pp. 19–20). He paraphrases the phrase as “this Word inherently shared the same nature as God” (p. 20), which, in my view, best fits the theology and overall thrust of the Gospel. Admittedly, a judgment is inevitably made out of a mix of grammatical and theological considerations. An exegetical decision cannot be made purely with reference to the Greek grammar without also examining the theology of John, the theology of the NT, or even one’s own doctrinal position.

The recent debates of and contributions from verbal aspect theories have made little direct impact on the discussion in the commentary. John 2:24 can be used as an illustration. In explaining αὐτὸς δὲ Ἰησοῦς οὐκ ἐπίστευεν αὐτὸν αὐτοῖς in 2:24, Harris notes that Jesus “continually refused to entrust himself to them [the people]” (p. 69). Although Harris’s key point is to illustrate the reflexive sense of αὐτόν, his use of the term “continually” betrays a problematic understanding in stressing the ongoing temporal significance of the imperfect ἐπίστευεν. Such a reading is unlikely in view of the immediate literary context. One can hardly imagine that the narrator would think of Jesus as “continually” distrusting those who believed him at the Passover feast. Rather, the imperfect makes the most sense if we understand it as merely providing “supplemental or backgrounded information” as some linguists and grammarians who adhere to verbal aspect theory claim (see, e.g., Constantine R. Campbell, *Verbal Aspect, the Indicative Mood, and Narrative: Soundings in the Greek of the New Testament* [SBG 13; New York: Peter Lang, 2007], 91). In addition, Jesus’s refusal to “believe” in 2:24 is then explained theologically as due to the insufficiency of a “faith generated simply by signs” (p. 69). This approach to the relationship between signs and faith in John (following Bultmann and Fortna) does not seem to take into consideration sufficiently the more complex viewpoint found in John’s Gospel regarding the relationship between Jesus’s signs, his words, and faith.

Regarding the textual variants πιστεύητε (present subjunctive) and πιστεύσητε (aorist subjunctive) in the purpose statement in 20:31, Harris prefers the aorist, but he argues for a dual sense of πιστεύσητε as denoting both “coming to believe” and “continue to believe” (p. 336). Harris rightly sees that the two types of faith cannot be construed as such merely by making use of a particular tense. Both variants could point to either type of faith or to both types of faith (p. 5). This makes the most sense as the author of any great literary work would have multiple aims in writing a work. This is certainly the case for John, as Harris rightly asserts. Overall, Harris’s discussions provide valuable information for students learning Greek.

At the end of every chapter, after commenting on the Greek text, Harris provides a preaching outline (“Homiletical Suggestions”). For pastors who read the work for their sermon preparation, this is good news. It represents another advantage of EGGNT over BHGNT (though their volume on John has not yet been

released). However, it would be even more helpful if Harris would elaborate a bit on how the outlines are done or how they can be used in view of the foregoing Greek discussions. A few preaching outlines appear to be a bit artificial. For instance, I cannot see how some short passages, like 10:40–42 (p. 206) or 21:25 (p. 348), should be selected as preaching texts. Sections marked “For Further Study” appear occasionally at the end of the commentary discussion on a passage. The sections are designed for “more advanced students” (p. xxiv). Yet in fact the bibliographies address only certain topics mentioned in the foregoing passage, and they are relatively short and could be a bit more up to date.

Personally, I expected more discussion on text-critical issues, especially in view of the revised apparatus of NA²⁸ (even though for John, the critical text of NA²⁸ remains the same as that in NA²⁷). Brief interaction with the new edition of the *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014) or the second edition of Lothar Coenen and Klaus Haacker’s *Theologisches Begriffslexikon zum Neuen Testament* (Witten: SCM/R. Brockhaus, 2010) would also be most desirable. Yet that would go beyond the present scope of the series set by the editors. The book ends with (1) an “Exegetical Outline,” which basically repeats the table of contents; (2) a “Grammar Index,” which covers the Greek vocabulary and grammatical terms used; and (3) a “Scripture Index,” which is limited to references to the OT and NT.

For students of the Greek NT and preachers alike, Harris’s work has its usefulness as discussed above, especially when you need to have a quick look at some Greek issues or you need some preaching ideas and suggestions. Notwithstanding the dissents I raised, readers will still be able to find a valuable contribution here, as a special kind of commentary/handbook. I look forward to an electronic edition that can be fully integrated and linked to other Greek resources.

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John, His Gospel, and Jesus: In Pursuit of the Johannine Voice. By Stanley E. Porter. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015, xii + 297 pp., \$30.00 paper.

John, His Gospel, and Jesus: In Pursuit of the Johannine Voice is a collection of nine wide-ranging essays, each meant to serve as a starting point for discussion of notable issues in the Gospel of John. As the title suggests, Porter’s book has three foci: John’s Gospel, the presentation of Jesus in John’s Gospel, and the unique voice that John brings to his presentation of Jesus in his Gospel. It is this unique Johannine voice that Porter is most interested in teasing out throughout the individual chapters. Of the nine essays, two were previously published but updated for inclusion in this volume. The remainder are essays based on papers from conferences. While not really a monograph per se, the movement of the book is a little more cohesive than the previous description may suggest.

Before I look specifically at individual chapters, it may be helpful to trace the scheme of issues that Porter tackles. He covers the date, the original audience, the

sources (specifically in relation to the Synoptic Gospels), the prologue, the “I am” sayings, the concern over the use of the phrase “the Jews,” the concept of “truth,” the Passover symbolism, and the final chapter of John’s Gospel. We quickly recognize that most of these issues are frequent topics of scholarly discourse about John. In each case, Porter tends to tackle the issue obliquely, looking at it from an under-discussed avenue in order to make a new case for the positions that he has come to hold. The introduction offers a rationale for the book, a description of each chapter, and a justification for why each of the issues discussed fits within these foci, while the conclusion provides further discussion of the way in which each of these elements fits into the scheme.

Let me point out several highlights from a number of the essays. The first chapter opens with a discussion of the dating of the Fourth Gospel, especially in relation to the evidence provided by P.Egerton 2 and P.Rylands Greek 457. Porter suggests (and provides evidence for his assertion) that scholars are too quick to link the composition dates of these two papyri together and that this artificial linkage creates an inaccurate sense of how to date the composition of John. He suggests that when we disassociate these two texts, we can create a more accurate timeline—one that points to an earlier date for John. As Porter notes, this dating is relevant for John’s presentation of Jesus—as to whether or not John can be said to offer a first-century portrait. This chapter also includes a helpful list of where many scholars date the composition of John and a brief discussion of *nomina sacra* in ancient texts. Next, the fourth chapter looks at the prologue of John by way of four different critical methodologies: form criticism, source criticism, musical-liturgical criticism, and functional criticism. The goal is not to show one method superior or one conclusion about the prologue definitive but to demonstrate the value that each of these methods has in the continuing study of the prologue. The goal here is less to provide solutions and more to offer directions.

In chapter 5, Porter turns to the “I am” sayings in John’s Gospel. After surveying the background of these sayings and how they help structure the Gospel, Porter suggests that there may be as many as thirty-two “I am” sayings used to develop Jesus’s Christology in John’s Gospel. This number is larger than what scholars traditionally suggest. Porter notes that not every literal use of “I am” in John’s Gospel is Christological, but John’s frequent use of the phrase is more significant than others have previously noted. For example, Porter rightly points out that the Christological aims in the “I am” of John 18 are too frequently minimized, when they are quite clearly Christological in feel. The root of Porter’s line of reasoning is linguistic—his categorization of “I am” falls into the absolute, locative, and predicate uses. Porter argues that the frequent use of the “I am” sayings provides a “framework” for the Gospel, but from his evidence it seems more like a thread that is woven in and out of the Gospel’s story.

Chapter 6 examines a hot-button issue: John’s use of the term “the Jews” within his Gospel. Porter’s underlying argument—and he shows evidence for it—is that most of John’s uses of “the Jews” are not necessarily negative or pejorative. This approach runs counter to those who argue that many, if not most, of the uses of “the Jews” are negative. The problem, as he points out, is that some of the uses

turn on how the reader reads and understands the phrase in the context (as either positive, neutral, or negative). Porter's greatest contribution in this chapter is to show, linguistically and literarily, that generalizing words such as "the Jews" are more often contextualized than readers sometimes assume. In other words, because readers often confuse sense with reference, they look for the sense of "the Jews" instead of the more exact reference of the term in the text. Therefore, Porter argues that many of the references to the "the Jews" in John are not to be read in the sense of a people group (the "literal" meaning of the term) but in reference to a certain subset of a religious group (as suggested by the context). In this, Porter's arguments are significant and serve as a reminder for those who are quick to read a one-dimensional anti-Jewish sense throughout the Johannine narrative.

In the final essay, Porter turns to the concluding chapter of John. John 21 has been the subject of much attention in the last sixty or so years of biblical scholarship, specifically as to whether it was original to the Gospel, and if not, when exactly it was added. Porter considers both the internal and external evidence, noting that the external evidence for John 21 as a later addition is non-existent and that the internal evidence for a lack of cohesion between John 21 and the rest of the Gospel is either inconclusive or lacking. Thus, Porter argues that, since scholars can make no text-critical case for John 21 as a later addition, the issue turns on the internal evidence, which linguistically and thematically supports the view that John 21 is an integral part of John's Gospel. Porter notes that there are two closings to John, and I would add that really there are more likely three related successive closing statements (John 19:35–37; 20:30–31; 21:24–25), each of which build to the climax of the faith-in-the-resurrection and then point the reader to the future as a true conclusion in John 21. This chapter is a useful reminder of where the evidence lies when taking up concerns with John 21.

Throughout *John, His Gospel, and Jesus*, Porter's approach is often indirect; an approach that he calls a "preliminary exploration of topics of importance." It seems that several of the essays are very much that (such as the chapters on the themes of truth and the Passover) and will not answer every question or always be highly persuasive on their own. Still, the primary usefulness of Porter's book is that he approaches a wide range of topics, all of which deserve more careful thought and scrutiny. Certainly, all of the essays warrant future engagement by those reading or writing on John's Gospel. As a writer, Porter takes a mild tack that encourages the reader to see his perspective without ever forcing a decision or opinion. Porter's book is recommended as a solid starting point for exploring issues about Jesus as portrayed in the Johannine voice.

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The Role of Jewish Feasts in John's Gospel. By Gerry Wheaton. Society for NT Studies Monograph Series 162. London: Cambridge University Press, 2015, ix + 223 pp., \$95.00.

The title, *The Role of Jewish Feasts in John's Gospel*, clearly describes the intention of the volume. In this work, Wheaton evaluates how the author of John incorporated the Jewish Scriptures and contemporary traditions into the book's presentation of Jesus. Interacting with a wide range of present-day scholarship and primary sources, Wheaton proposes that the author has shown "real innovation" in his appropriation of "distinctive features of each festival to illumine both the content of the salvation Jesus achieves as well as the manner in which he brings it about" (p. 183). The path toward this conclusion consists of basically four parts. After an introductory chapter, Wheaton first spends a significant amount of space couching his work in the contemporary discussion of the Gospel's teaching regarding "the Jews" and Judaism. In this, Wheaton challenges the tendency of some to contribute a wholesale anti-Jewish label to the author of the book and concludes that the Fourth Gospel has a high view of Judaism: "In the divine economy, the purpose of Jewish religion was essentially *prophetic* and *revelatory*" (p. 80, emphasis added). The conclusions of the rest of the book almost demand such a positive posture, particularly if references to the feasts are driving the author's theology of the Messiah. The role of the feasts as part of the Jewish religion will be "*preparatory* for the revelation of eschatological salvation" (p. 82, italics his).

With this foundation, the next three chapters describe the Gospel's appropriation of the feasts of Passover, Tabernacles, and Dedication. In each of these, Wheaton introduces the features of the feasts within their OT context, but more importantly for his work he elaborates upon their setting within the context of first-century Judaism. As such, he interacts with Second Temple sources as well as the secondary literature of today. In order to spend more time evaluating the work, here are the conclusions to which Wheaton comes, in summary fashion. Regarding Passover, John (especially John 6) presents Jesus not only as the atoning paschal victim, but as "the paschal lamb who must be eaten by all who would participate in the restoration of the community of the people of God effected by his death" (p. 83). This reflects "the hope for national restoration" inherent to the Passover festival of the day (p. 84). Regarding Tabernacles, Wheaton concludes on the basis of "a fresh study of the main sources for the rituals surrounding the altar during the feast of Tabernacles" (p. 139) that John 7 intends to identify Jesus specifically with the altar that is ritually struck over against the background of the Meribah tradition. He includes a helpful discussion of the role of Isaiah 55 in the Gospel's teachings concerning the New Exodus theme. Regarding Dedication, Wheaton concludes that John 10:22–39 draws from the symbolism of Hanukkah to demonstrate the exclusivity of worship directed toward Jesus in light of his deity. This will most readily be apparent in his eschatological, national restoration of the people. Given the nature of the Feast of Dedication as a later development, this discussion entails the most extra-biblical source material. As this is an important part of the methodology undergirding the book, I will turn next to an evaluation of this hermeneutic.

The hermeneutical issue that drives Wheaton's work revolves around the reader's ability to apply knowledge of sources and traditions contemporary to the author of John's Gospel for a proper appreciation of how the author has shaped the narratives along the lines of the Jewish feasts. In fact, failure to probe these traditions at strategic points in John "inevitably impoverishes the reader's ability to discern with precision the fullness of the author's message in these several contexts" (p. 4). Based on Wheaton's conclusions, two stark realities must have been true. First, the author was steeped in the traditional practices of Judaism to such an extent that he could develop well-fashioned theological conclusions on the basis of careful attention to the smallest details of these traditions. Second, the author expected much from his readers in making these subtle connections.

The buttresses of this hermeneutic are history, tradition, and Scripture, as some comments on a section entitled "Judaism in John" demonstrate. He opens this unit first with a discussion of "the Law," wherein he argues that for John "the Law is coextensive with what scholars today refer to as Judaism" (p. 15). The traditions used by the author of John are not necessarily those of the writers of the Hebrew Bible but rather those that had developed within the religion of the Judaism around the time of Christ. As such, even "Jewish innovations" were important for John in so far as the Law combines the symbols and practices of Judaism with the Scriptures, in other words Scripture and tradition. Thus, boundaries between Scripture and Judaism, between the text and redemptive history, remain fuzzy at best, nonexistent at worst. As a result, there are occasions in which this might cause the reader to take pause, in that the "grace and truth" revealed through the Word made flesh supersedes (but not by displacement) not just the Mosaic Torah but also the contemporary practices of Judaism.

To miss these connections to the Jewish religion, which Wheaton describes as "essentially prophetic and revelatory" (p. 80), means ultimately missing revelation upon which John builds his case for the Gospel (see Wheaton's discussion of Hanukkah). For example, in discussing John 1:17, Wheaton states that Jesus's incarnation, death, and resurrection are (1) "the culmination of the history of God's redeeming program"; and (2) "the *telos* or goal to which the Law ... pointed and prepared" (p. 24). In the next sentence, however, Wheaton makes the claim that the "redemptive-historical turning point" signaled by 1:17 must be understood within John's representation of "Judaism simultaneously as good and legitimate (even exalted)" (p. 24). Wheaton juxtaposes history, Law (Scripture and tradition), and Judaism in such a way as to create potential confusion on behalf of the reader of Scripture. John's audience would then need to be so highly skilled in all three—Scripture, tradition, and history—as to discern subtle allusions to Judaic practices as the basis for profound theological claims. My apprehension regarding Wheaton's hermeneutical posture comes primarily in response to statements such as this: "For John, the institutions of contemporary Judaism represented *living prophecies that Jesus entered into and brought to consummation*" (p. 80, italics his; see also p. 184). The very concept of revelation seems to be misconstrued by this statement, resulting in an approach that makes the hermeneutical task elusive. An example of this revelatory freedom occurs in Wheaton's discussion of the Feast of Dedication where he concludes that

Jesus “reveals that his work represents the enactment of the eschatological deliverance petitioned by those who celebrated the festival” (p. 182). The eschatological significance of each of the feasts discussed is a major conclusion Wheaton attaches to these traditions. The wholesale espousal of such a hermeneutic that attaches revelatory character to religious traditions may complicate the simplicity of the gospel of Christ “according to the Scriptures.” It should at least give the reader pause. Although there is nothing inherently erroneous with the theology of what Wheaton has proposed in his conclusions about the feasts, the methodology seems to cloud the canonical emphasis on the role of Scripture in the understanding and proclamation of the faith. At the same time, the question of how the book’s thesis supports John’s articulated purpose for the book, a purpose in which the Gospel is given in words drawn from the Hebrew Bible, remains unstated.

Wheaton’s work proves important for continued work in the Fourth Gospel, particularly in its relationship to Judaism and the religion of John’s day. Student and professor alike will find it helpful for larger discussions of this theme as well as specific issues surrounding the feasts. It will also prompt the reader to think carefully about Jesus’s presentation of himself.

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The Acts of the Apostles: Interpretation, History and Theology. By Osvaldo Padilla. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2016, 264 pp., \$26.00 paper.

In his second major effort following his thesis on the speeches in Acts, the author sets a lofty goal of writing for a new generation a work similar to that of I. Howard Marshall’s *Luke: Historian and Theologian* (3rd ed.; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1998). Padilla positions his work as an advanced introduction to Acts. However, the real value of the work lies not necessarily in going deeper on all the issues of special introduction pertaining to Acts (it does not deal with, say, provenance, date, structure, or themes) but rather in going deeper on the *implications* of some of them: authorship, genre, and the nature of the author of Acts as historian. Padilla presents a thorough treatment of these topics and makes insightful contributions to the defense of a conservative position found elsewhere in conservative-leaning commentaries and NT introductions. However, he goes one step further—and this may be the book’s enduring contribution—to ask crucial but oft-overlooked “So what?” questions: Why does it matter that Luke is the author? What bearing does a decision on genre have on preaching, teaching, and understanding Acts? How does Luke’s accuracy impact our understanding of Scripture and the truth-claims made in Acts?

The introduction articulates the author’s intention to engage with more recent hermeneutical/philosophical issues (hence, bringing Marshall into the twenty-first century). He summarizes chapters 1–6 and presents two “convictions”—rather than a single “thesis”—that will undergird the work: Luke as a wholly responsible historian giving a dependable account, and Acts as an inextricable blend of history

and theology. (As a side note, I would commend the introduction to other writers as exemplary for how to do such things without being tediously long or unhelpfully brief.)

Chapter 1 defends the traditional view of Luke's authorship of Acts, engaging primarily with patristic evidence (Irenaeus, Anti-Marcionite prologue, etc.). He then turns to ask why—for conservatives who already accept Acts as canonical or for postmoderns who see the author as irrelevant—Lukan authorship matters. Because the author was a witness of some of the events ("we" sections) and interacted with eyewitnesses of others, this authorship gives Acts a certain kind of interpretive pressure as a *reliable eyewitness testimony to the redemptive significance of the events*. In other words, the authorship question impacts not just factual accuracy but also the role of the author as an authoritative transmitter of *why those facts/events matter*.

Chapter 2 turns to the much-plowed question of genre. It begins by summarizing the historical discussion of genre itself and then surveys three primary theories on the genre of Acts (out of many): epic, ancient novel, and historical monograph. Padilla lands in the final category by bringing to bear both Greco-Roman histories (Polybius, Cicero, etc.) and Jewish histories (especially 2 Maccabees) to the task of clarifying what exactly Luke is doing. In asking the "Why does it matter?" question, Padilla argues that Luke's attempt to position the work as a historical monograph asks the reader to assume a correspondence between the events narrated and the events of reality—though such genre distinction does not itself guarantee Luke's accuracy in this (to which he turns in the next chapters). This chapter is on the whole convincing but at times suffers from imbalance (e.g. spending too much time on, say, epic, and not enough on the hermeneutical importance of genre). It also relies heavily on applying the prologue of Luke 1:1–4 to Acts (this applies also to chaps. 1 and 3). This move is arguably the right one, but Padilla spends little time engaging with the recently reinvigorated case against treating Luke–Acts in this way (Rowe, Gregory, Pervo, Parsons)—though he does make reference to *other* works of these scholars.

Chapter 3 presents Padilla's case in favor of viewing Luke as a responsible historian as judged by the standards of his day. He briefly but helpfully treats Luke's method of historical narration (e.g. compression, telescoping, selectivity) to set up a discussion about whether Luke's *literary* "art" invalidates his *historical* integrity. This common suspicion, as Padilla argues, is largely the result of the modern professionalization of historiography that prizes so-called objective reporting over literary presentation. Padilla rightly challenges this and argues that Acts is best understood as accurate history but with theological motivation that drives the literary form—neither of which, in turn, invalidates historical accuracy. Some readers may be disappointed that Padilla almost entirely avoids engaging in the task of confirming the details of Acts (people, places, names, dates) with extrabiblical sources, but Padilla intentionally focuses on the speeches as his primary test case, to which he turns next.

Chapters 4–5 feature a lengthy discussion of the speeches in Acts broken into two parts. First, Padilla examines ancient standards for reporting speeches. He sharply challenges the consensus that ancient historians fabricated speeches and

never intended to report them accurately. Instead, Padilla proposes a spectrum: some historians were concerned with conveying the *ipsisima verba* of speeches or rendering them as closely as possible to what was said (Thucydides/Polybius/Tacitus), while others were more concerned with exercising their rhetorical abilities in crafting a speech that, nevertheless, “fit” with the person and circumstances being reported (Dionysius/Lucian). All of them, barring a few exceptions, presupposed that a speaker gave a speech at a given time/place and did not feel free to invent speeches outright. Padilla then places Luke on this spectrum and concludes that Luke is a conservative reporter of speeches for his day. For Padilla, the “truth” of the speeches in Acts is best understood as “refer[ring] to an essential fit between the speech in the historical situation and the reporting of the speech in the historical work” (p. 147). While this conclusion may not be robust enough to satisfy some, it is worth noting that Padilla pulls no punches in affirming a high view of Scripture throughout and does solid work in assessing the historical context against which we should understand Luke’s speech-reporting along the *organic* axis of inspiration.

In the second part on speeches (chap. 5), Padilla provides helpful commentary on the speeches of Peter at Pentecost, Stephen, Peter-to-Cornelius, Paul-to-Athenians, and Paul-to-Agrrippa. This chapter provides numerous helpful exegetical observations, but it seems to further his overall aims less than his other chapters. However, his conclusion regarding the core truth claim of each speech—the intervention of God, messiahship of Jesus, and power of the Spirit in revealing the message of salvation found in Christ—sets up chapter 6, which is positioned as the book’s climax.

Chapter 6 attempts to answer the question, “On what basis, if any, does Acts justify its truth-claims about Jesus Christ?” (p. 200), by providing a lengthy (44 pp.) analysis of the epistemology and narrative theology of postliberalism (represented primarily by Frei and Lindbeck). The analysis is no doubt sophisticated and helpful. It is, however, a lot to bite off at the end of an already rigorous book. Perhaps due to space constraints, the author leaves much undefined or under-defined (foundationalism[s], earlier/later Wittgenstein, epistemic justification, warrant, prevenience, coherentism, postconservatism) and, thus, requires the reader to bring much to the table. (I will leave the critique of Padilla’s take on postliberalism *in itself* to theologians more versed in it.) Bringing postliberalism into conversation with Acts is a helpful contribution in its own right, but one wonders if it would be better as a stand-alone project. As it stands, the chapter reads less like a climax and more like a longish addendum (though too short to engage in all the complexities adequately) to a very solid book on Acts.

Padilla does, ultimately, direct the discussion toward making a helpful argument that, in my opinion, could have been more forcefully made—and merits being more forcefully made—without the encumbrance of the postliberalism analysis. The speeches of Acts proclaim the resurrection of Christ as the epistemic justification for all other claims about Jesus (messiahship; salvation; onset of the eschatological age). What is the warrant for belief in the resurrection? Consistently Acts refers to apostolic eyewitness testimony as the thing that confirms the resurrection

as a historical event in space-time. However, it is no mere evidential fact that is simply proven/disproven; rather, Acts always attests the *significance of the resurrection* by appealing both to Israel's Scriptures and to the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the church. It is only in God's own interpretation of the *redemptive* significance of the historical fact of the resurrection of his Son—that is, an interpretation *revealed* by God himself via the OT and the Holy Spirit—that this truth-claim is brought to bear to produce the necessary response of faith. This is a helpful and robust assessment of Acts that deserves more reflection. It also crystallizes Padilla's goal of asking the next-level questions. Why do authorship, genre, and historicity matter for interpretation? The historical fact of the resurrection (historicity) as confirmed by eyewitnesses (authorship) is narrated in such a way (genre) that serves God's purposes of revealing its significance (interpretation) to the hearts of many to produce faith and repentance. And that is precisely the message of Acts.

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Paul's Political Strategy in 1 Corinthians 1–4: Constitution and Covenant. By Bradley J. Bitner. Society for NT Studies Monograph Series 163. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015, xvi + 351 pp., \$99.00.

First Corinthians 1–4 has been subjected to a variety of different means of analysis. Some like Walter Schmithals consider the section illustrative of Paul's apparent Gnostic opponents. Others like Bruce Winter, Duane Litfin, and Andrew Clarke believe that the section describes the characteristics of Paul's Greco-Roman opponents. James Davis and Hans Inkelaar find the section as evidence for Jewish wisdom being to blame for the problems at Corinth. In this volume, Bradley Bitner declares that the Greco-Roman constitution and Jewish covenant together provide the critical key necessary to unlock the meaning of this passage. His vantage point is a unique one that enters into the current discussion taking place among Pauline scholars regarding the balance between Paul's Greco-Roman, Jewish, and Christian background for interpreting his letters. The book is composed of two main parts. In the first part, Bitner examines constitution and covenant in the city of Corinth and in the church. The second part of the book provides exegetical arguments on two sections: 1 Cor 1:4–9 and 1 Cor 3:5–4:5.

In chapter 1, Bitner compares constitutional studies in the light of other studies of Paul and politics. He demonstrates that political concern is not a new trend but something that has ancient precedent from the writings of *1 Clement*, Jerome, and Chrysostom. Within this chapter, Bitner evaluates the four conflicting approaches to political analysis in Paul, which he calls philosophical, empire-critical, feminist, and social-historical. Bitner sees similarities between all four in their attempt to read Paul within the first-century political sphere. He also finds differences in their aims with regard to applying, resisting, or understanding the type of Paul's politics that he constructs. It is a helpful summary for those who are not familiar with the evaluation of Paul and politics.

Following the summary, Bitner then suggests a way forward for considering the use of the Corinthian constitution in the analysis of 1 Corinthians. He surveys the work of E. A. Judge, B. Blumenfeld, and Y. M. Gilliam regarding *politeia*. While each provides differing vantage points for considering *politeia*, Bitner identifies several conceptual categories that will aid his examination. These categories are as follows: a broad first-century understanding of *politeia*, an understanding of 1 Corinthians as political discourse, and the idea of an alternative civic ideology. This chapter provides more than enough evidence for considering the Corinthian constitution as a background for understanding sections of 1 Corinthians. It would be helpful, however, if Bitner would distinguish his approach from the various ones within the field.

Chapter 2 is a seven-page chapter in which Bitner sets forward his approach for considering law and everyday living experience. The work of J. A. Crook, who has argued strongly for the connection between law and life in his volume *Law and Life of Rome* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1967), is vital for Bitner's method. In Crook's words, Roman citizens were "enmeshed in a vast network of legal rules" (*Law and Life of Rome*, 7–8). In a later essay in 1996, Crook encouraged younger scholars to consider the parallels between Roman law and how they influence life in Greco-Roman cities. While several scholars are in disagreement with Crook, Bitner joins a group of younger generation scholars who find his approach beneficial. Bitner concludes his chapter noting cautionary conditions for using Crook's approach that concern the application of parallels from Roman law.

Within the third chapter, Bitner reconstructs the place of the constitution within the city of Corinth. While the Corinthian constitution has not been discovered, Bitner reconstructs its place and contents by considering the Roman Spanish civic charter *lex colonia Genitivae Iuliae* from Urso, Spain and the *lex Flavia municipalis* from Salpensa, Malaca, and Irni, Spain. Since the colonial city of Urso was founded approximately at the same time as Rome established colonies at the spots of Corinth and Carthage, Bitner believes that the *lex colonia Genitivae Iuliae* provides a model for other Julio-Claudian colonies like Corinth. According to Bitner, the *lex Flavia municipalis* also can contribute to our understanding of Corinth as it displays legal life in first-century colonies and overlaps with the *lex colonia Genitivae Iuliae*. Apart from their being legal documents, the prominence of these constitutions is heightened in that they were written in bronze and were displayed prominently within the forum of the city. From the evidence of the colony in Urso, Spain, the constitution affected multiple activities of daily living.

Bitner provides several helpful tables within this chapter. The first table contains the chapter headings of the *lex colonia Genitivae Iuliae*. He provides a title for many of the 134 chapters of the document and the corresponding place upon the tablet. The second table contains the chapter headings of the *lex Flavia municipalis*. Once again, Bitner gives headings for many of the 97 chapters and their place upon the tablet. The chapter headings indeed illustrate how multi-faceted the documents are. They address matters such as: the structuring of physical space within the colony, the regulation of the economic life of the colony, the organization of ritual and cultic activities, and the forms and procedures for jurisdiction and regulation of

disputes. Bitner's presentation provides a good amount of data for those considering the influence of *politeia*.

Chapter 4 contains an analysis of Jewish influence within Corinth. While many have focused exclusively on the Greco-Roman backdrop of the letter, Bitner rightly sees that Jewish influence is also important for understanding the Corinthian correspondence. He makes this point well from evidence within the writings of Philo Judaeus and Acts 18:1–19:1 but also the use of Deuteronomic covenant language that runs throughout 1 and 2 Corinthians. He considers various interpretations of the synagogue inscription in Corinth. Then, evidence for the new covenant community is presented, particularly in the number of “Do you not know?” statements within the letter that evidence knowledge of the covenant over against the Corinthian constitution. As his argument progresses, Bitner believes that the Corinthian constitution helps to make sense of Paul's writing, but it largely functions as a contrast for Paul to construct his argument. The new covenant, which is Jewish in orientation, provides the framework for the transformation of the Corinthian church politically and ethically.

In chapter 5, Bitner moves towards exegesis by providing limits on drawing parallels to the Corinthian constitution and the covenant. He defines the method of comparison used within his study and the character of communication used within it. He also sketches out the view of key figures—Roman Corinth, Paul, and the church. Bitner's approach is a reasonable one for reading passages from 1 Corinthians in the light of constitution and covenant. This then leads to the second part of the book with the examination of two specific passages, 1 Cor 1:4–9 and 3:5–4:5, which both contain language of *politeia* but also of Jewish covenant.

Bitner examines 1 Cor 1:4–9 in chapter 6. Many scholars believe that this passage is to be read in the light of Jewish thanksgiving tradition. Bitner, however, approaches the passage in terms of constitution and covenant. Such an approach fits within an earlier history of interpretation that examined this thanksgiving section in the light of its Greco-Roman political background. Bitner finds evidence from Chrysostom and then specifically a scholar named Schubert (1939), who by using form-critical comparisons found correspondence between the thanksgiving section and Hellenistic political inscriptions. In his exegesis, Bitner also brings forward the role of covenant. Through God's gracious agency, those within the church were called into the fellowship of the church. Bitner's appeal to these backgrounds is intriguing, and his approach provides answers to the crucial exegetical issues found within the passage. By emphasizing the patron-benefactor relationship, Bitner provides another example of this motif, one that others have seen displayed within the Corinthian correspondence. His exegesis of this passage, drawing attention to the political situation, accentuates the gratitude of Paul's writing.

In his exegesis of 1 Cor 3:5–4:5, Bitner views this passage as the politics of construction, based on the large amount of detailed evidence for public contracting for public works in Corinth. By using this information, Bitner arrives at a fresh interpretation of 1 Cor 3:5–4:5. Bitner finds considerable terminological overlap between Greek building contracts and 1 Cor 3:5–4:5. These include parallels such as: contracts and competition, design specifications and penalties, authority and

accountability at the work site, payment and approval, as well as monument and acclamation. These can also be seen with Greek temple building. He balances the Greco-Roman background with the Jewish covenant background. Here he appeals to the language of Jeremiah due to the place of Jeremiah within the Corinthian correspondence.

While Bitner is correct that Jeremiah influences Paul's writing within the Corinthian correspondence, he is not convincing with his viewpoint that Jeremiah influenced 1 Cor 3:5–4:5. While Jeremiah provides important ideas for the understanding of the Corinthian correspondence, there are more convincing Scriptural references within 1 Cor 3:5–9 that have been ignored. Recent studies of Scripture within 1 Cor 3:5–9 appeal to other texts besides Jeremiah, particularly the use of Isaiah 5 with its building and planting imagery. There is also no discussion on the Scripture citations of Job 5:13 and Ps 94:10, which are present within 1 Cor 3:19–20. Bitner has chosen a minority position and not interacted with other studies on Scripture in this passage.

Bitner may still be able to make his argument that covenantal language is present within the section without appealing to Jeremiah. The Isaianic references within 1 Corinthians 1–3 would lead to evaluating the passage covenantally. Isaiah 3:3 has been noticed as a scriptural reference within 1 Cor 3:10, but it is underdeveloped by studies that consider this passage. The reference of Mal 3:2–3 in 1 Cor 3:13–15 could be used further to establish covenantal warning and judgment. Multiple Scripture references from the Law, Prophets, and Writings have been noted to inform 1 Cor 3:5–4:5 regarding judgment and community conflict from a study by D. Kuck. Further interaction with these texts would enhance Bitner's approach.

Bitner has surfaced new information about the political context that influenced life in Corinth. This information will be especially valuable to those who are pursuing political investigations of NT texts. Those who are interested in Roman Corinth and the interplay between Greco-Roman and Jewish ideas within 1 Corinthians will also find this work valuable. While he has pursued the Greco-Roman background, further consideration could be given to the Jewish Scripture that is present within 1 Cor 3:5–4:5.

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2 Corinthians. By George H. Guthrie. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the NT. Grand Rapids, Baker Academic, 2015, xxvi + 710 pp., \$49.99.

George H. Guthrie, who is Benjamin W. Perry Professor of Bible at Union University in Jackson, TN, has written an eminently well-researched and readable commentary on 2 Corinthians for the BECNT commentary series. Guthrie is well known for his scholarship on the Epistle to the Hebrews, and this volume, extending into fresh academic territory, presents itself in a way that is both scholarly and pastorally helpful. Guthrie organizes this commentary faithfully around the funda-

mental principles of the series, that it should succeed first of all if it reflects “the original text accurately, clearly, and meaningfully to the contemporary reader” (p. x), while integrating “scholarly depth with readability, exegetical detail with sensitivity to the whole, and attention to critical problems with theological awareness” (p. ix). As such, this volume succeeds on those counts.

Compared to other NT books, it has oft been observed that 2 Corinthians has received less scholarly attention, although arguably more so in the last few decades. One reason is that 2 Corinthians has complex points of interpretation, exegetically and theologically, that have historically been difficult to resolve. A persistent allure is that it also contains some of the richest theological material in the NT and provides additional background material about the author, giving unique glimpses into the heart and life of the apostle Paul. Guthrie sees this as a compelling entry point and argues that a fresh look allows us to address issues that are worth making the effort to mine further. Guthrie works confidently in the discussion streams of Paul Barnett, C. K. Barrett, F. W. Danker, David E. Garland, Murray J. Harris, Ralph P. Martin, M. E. Thrall, and V. P. Furnish.

The introduction to this volume is 61 pages, where Guthrie covers important background issues for better understanding Paul’s writing, such as his self-identity (a Roman citizen of the Greco-Roman world, as well as a messianic Jew); what we know about the city of Corinth, the location of the recipients of the letter (including discussions about its political and cultural backdrop, the economic climate of the city, and the moral values of the surrounding culture); and also the details of Paul’s ongoing and developing relationship with the Corinthians. Guthrie spends time establishing the timeline within which the letters were written, while discerning the relationship of the letter to Paul’s broader ministry efforts (pp. 9–22).

Here, Guthrie engages the common academic discussions around the question of the letter’s form and purpose, including whether what we have as 2 Corinthians is more than one letter (especially by looking at the exegetical arguments for proposed divisions, the so-called interpolation at 6:14–7:1, the possibility of 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 as separate letters, and the potential break between chaps. 9 and 10). In the end, Guthrie argues strongly for the unity of the book, while admitting that it makes some parts exegetically tricky. However, it allows us to trace topics and themes (such as “commendation” and “boasting”) throughout the whole in ways that are uniquely helpful, if we start with its unity in mind (pp. 23–32).

Especially helpful is the discussion of Paul’s use of his voice in the letter, as he fluctuates between the first-person singular (“I”) and plural (“we”). Does Paul represent others in the writing of the book by the way that he uses pronouns or only himself? In addressing this question, Guthrie provides a statistical analysis by looking at the “hits per 1000 words” in each chapter for occurrences of the first person singular pronoun, the first person plural pronoun, and all verbs in the indicative and subjunctive moods for singular and plural forms. The related graphs are especially helpful in visualizing the patterns of usage. Guthrie uses this data to conclude that Paul expertly uses both of these voices to intermingle both his “unique role and responsibility as apostle and spiritual father to the Corinthians” and his place within a larger team and in partnership with others for the gospel (pp. 32–38).

While finding a common relational thread throughout 2 Corinthians between Paul and God, Paul and the Corinthians, and Paul and his opponents, Guthrie summarizes the message of 2 Corinthians as follows:

Paul commends his ministry to the Corinthians as one of integrity. Appointed by God, under the lordship of Christ, and suffering in his proclamation of the gospel, Paul calls the Corinthians to repent from unhealthy relationships and embrace his authentic apostolic leadership. Their appropriate response will be seen, on the one hand, by again taking up the collection for Jerusalem, and on the other hand, by resolutely rejecting the ministry of the false teachers. (p. 50)

With regard to the text itself, each of the four major sections (1:1–11; 1:12–7:16; 8:1–9:15; 10:1–13:13) is developed in harmony with the purposes of the series and the stated thesis of the letter. As is customary of the series, the research is clearly written, with attention to accuracy in its exegetical discussions, including close analysis of original textual variants when warranted. Many interpretational questions are addressed in the commentary itself (especially insightful is Guthrie’s discussion of the thematic relationship between Paul’s vision and the thorn in his flesh) or in the additional notes at the end of each section (e.g. the more discussed textual variants, such as in 2:12; 4:14; 8:19; 10:12–13; and 11:17). Especially beneficial to the reader are the introductory thoughts and reflection sections that are highlighted in gray, which allow for creating bridges to contemporary application from the text. As someone who enjoys seeing information represented visually, I also find helpful Guthrie’s charts depicting theological concepts, outline structures of the Greek text, and graphical representations of data.

Additionally, Guthrie does a fine job connecting practical implications in the letter to important contemporary issues, without being superficial. For example, there is a discussion at the beginning of chapter 11 regarding the issue of healthy religious tolerance, which is a timely issue for the church. There are application proposals elsewhere regarding evaluating the effectiveness of ministry (p. 499); how to think as responsible kingdom citizens of a partially realized eschatology, between the “now” and “not yet” (p. 290); what it means to be “qualified for ministry” (p. 176); church discipline (p. 130); and how to respond to suffering in a pastorally and theologically informed way (p. 74). These examples only scratch the surface of a skilled blend of exegesis and application.

Speaking of which, my only desire for “more” while reading this volume was in relation to the application discussions, since Guthrie is good at making the text accessible to the contemporary reader, even as he navigates the exegetical difficulties that press hard on the interpreter. However, (1) the presentation of extensive application points is not one of the main stated purposes of the commentary series, although it is an attractive inclusion; and (2) Guthrie’s examples are sufficiently modeled for readers to continue to do this kind of exploration on their own. Also, I look forward to further discussions that should develop from Guthrie’s analysis regarding the nature of Paul’s opponents (Guthrie suggests two, both inside and outside of the church) and a couple of the historically trickier passages (e.g. 1:8–11;

12:6–9). Although we are often limited in our ability to know with certainty, Guthrie’s observations provide good fodder for additional contemplation.

One of the strengths of this volume is its broad accessibility. I could recommend this volume for individuals who want to know this book better while being challenged academically (perhaps while learning Greek), seminary students who are learning to exegete Scripture, pastors who are teaching from the book, and professors of NT who would like to refresh their reading of 2 Corinthians while being challenged in new and helpful ways. Despite the question with which the author opens up this volume, “Why another commentary on 2 Corinthians?” (p. xi), the answer becomes readily apparent in the reading, and I am happy to include it as an invaluable resource on my bookshelf.

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Christian Oxyrhynchus: Texts, Documents, and Sources. Edited by Lincoln H. Blumell and Thomas A. Wayment. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2015, xxii + 756 pp., \$89.95.

With respect to our knowledge of the early text of the Greek Bible and the Christians who read it, one can hardly overstate the importance of the Egyptian city of Oxyrhynchus and its rich archaeological yields. Yet, to access these texts, one must consult an overwhelming mass of publications: over eighty volumes of the *Oxyrhynchus Papyri* series, multiple volumes of an Italian series, as well as miscellaneous journals, book chapters, and conference proceedings. In this remarkable volume, Blumell and Wayment, established scholars of early Christianity at Brigham Young University, bring together into a single volume (nearly) all of the texts from Oxyrhynchus related to ancient Christianity. This includes not only NT manuscripts and fragments of extra-canonical books, but also a variety of other texts—hymns, homilies, letters, prayers, and amulets. In short, this single-volume reference tool for students and scholars conveniently gathers no fewer than 175 primary texts and translations related to Christianity from a known provenance.

The book contains four major sections. An introductory portion (section 1) provides a brief history of the discovery and publication of the Oxyrhynchus texts, both of which began in the 1890s, as well as some “remarks and caveats.” Here the editors describe several limitations of the project: they restrict the focus to texts with a sure connection to Oxyrhynchus and those dated up through the fourth century; further, they exclude manuscripts of the Septuagint/Greek OT (see below). One point that could have been made more clear in this section is that the editors have in fact re-transcribed each text in the volume rather than simply reproducing *editiones principes* or other editions.

Sections 2–4 form the bulk of the book, and they follow the same format. For each manuscript the editors provide the following: the publication identifier (e.g. P.Oxy. LXIV 4404), contents, physical dimensions, LDAB catalogue number, date, material used, a list of previously published editions, and a bibliography of other

relevant resources. Then, following an editorial introduction is a new transcription complete with added breathings, accents, and spaces, often with an English translation. Manuscripts are organized chronologically. Paleographical notes are kept to a minimum, while extensive textual apparatuses accompany the transcriptions. No manuscript photographs are included.

Section 2, titled “Christian Literary Papyri from Oxyrhynchus,” is subdivided into three subsections: NT texts, extra-canonical texts, and other literary texts. In the first, there are no fewer than fifty-two NT manuscripts, both papyrus and parchment, including many important witnesses such as P¹, P³⁹, P⁶⁹, P¹⁰⁴, P¹¹⁵, and 0162. This array provides a remarkable cross-section of the canonical NT, with portions of most books attested at least once. The second subsection contains twenty-six extracanonical texts; eleven of these are fragments of *Shepherd of Hermas* and one is *Didache*. The rest are fragments of apocryphal books such as the Gospels of *Thomas*, *Peter*, and *Mary*, as well as the *Acts of John* and the *Acts of Peter*. The third subsection, “Other Christian Literary Texts,” contains twenty-seven texts from a wide variety of early Christian literature: homilies, hymns, prayers, amulets, liturgical fragments, patristic works of Irenaeus and Aristides, and more.

Section 3 contains fifty-seven documentary texts. Two types are included: those written by Christians, and those that make some mention of Christians (or “monks,” “bishops,” etc.). The former group consists chiefly of private letters that paint a colorful picture of the daily struggles of believers in early Egypt. Many are letters of recommendation; others relate to specific prayer requests, business matters, or the exchange of copies of Scripture. Of special note is the dossier of Papa Sotas, a third-century bishop of Oxyrhynchus, whom we find busy writing letters of recommendation and raising funds for the church. The second group of texts, those mentioning Christians, is diverse: tax lists, business documents, petitions, sales receipts, and leases. Some contain merely passing mention of Christians, such as a tax receipt in which one of the many names listed is “Aphous, deacon of the church” (no. 116). Yet others give illuminating glimpses of Christians involved in every-day affairs—sometimes reflecting the chagrin of neighboring pagans—such as no. 126, an official complaint registered against a “presbyter of the Church” for allegedly stealing land. Finally, many texts relate to the persecution of Christians, such as the Decian *libelli*, documents used as proof that one had sacrificed to the pagan gods in accordance with imperial edict.

The final section (section 4) differs from the previous two in that it contains texts not from Oxyrhynchus but from elsewhere that “elucidate in some way Christianity at Oxyrhynchus or notable Christians from the city” (p. 16). Some of the thirteen included are: an extract from *Acta Sanctorum* describing accounts of Christian martyrs; the Coptic *Life of Apa Aphou*, containing the life and words of a fourth/fifth century ascetic bishop; and hagiographical extracts from *Apophthegmata Patrum*, as well as others—all in their original languages accompanied by English translations.

Foremost among this project’s shining virtues is that it brings together in one place what would otherwise require several dozens of volumes. Further, the editors’ careful and consistent treatment brings some of the older editions up to date and

provides English translations where some were lacking. Also laudable is the extent to which the editorial introductions to each text provide crucial background information and evaluation; the result is much more than a simple database of texts, but rather a coherent and understandable anthology. Another strength is the inclusion of texts written in languages other than Greek. The reader will find some texts in Syriac, Coptic, and Latin. Finally, while the subject of Christian documentary papyri has received increased attention in recent years (e.g. the work of AnneMarie Luijendijk and of Blumell elsewhere), sadly it remains unfamiliar to many scholars of NT and early Christianity. The present volume is thus an ideal entry point into the fascinating world of Christian documentary texts.

It is regrettable that the editors did not include any manuscripts of the Greek OT. Although no fewer than twenty such fragments have been unearthed at Oxyrhynchus, the editors omit these manuscripts on the grounds that they cannot always be identified as Christian—rather than Jewish—in origin (p. 13). Indeed, as the editors accurately observe, the codex book format and the use of *nomina sacra* are not always indisputable earmarks of Christian provenance. Nevertheless, most scholars today would agree that these are the *usual* indicators of Christian production. Furthermore, it is curious—especially in light of their supposed restraint—that elsewhere the editors consider that the presence of a *nomen sacrum* “strongly suggests” the Christian provenance of a Hebrew onomasticon (p. 331) and that another text is “certainly of Christian origin as is made obvious through the usage of *nomina sacra*” (p. 312, and similarly on pp. 369 and 371). These apparent inconsistencies aside (and conceding that space may have been a factor), some readers might be of the opinion that such OT manuscripts, whether Christian or Jewish, ought to have pride of place over others included in the volume, such as those in section 4 (texts not *from* Oxyrhynchus but *about* the Christians in that city).

This one complaint notwithstanding, Blumell and Wayment are to be congratulated for an impressive achievement: a much-needed resource, highly detailed and accurately executed. Anyone who has endured the constant searching and sifting of volume after volume of the Oxyrhynchus library will recognize immediately the value and convenience of this collection. In all, *Christian Oxyrhynchus* fills a glaring gap with an excellent and eminently useful tool for scholars as well as students who are interested in early Christianity, its people, and its texts.

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