

BOOK REVIEWS

The Lost World of the Israelite Conquest. By John H. Walton and J. Harvey Walton. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2017, 269 pp., \$20.00.

What began as a conversation between two theologians (who happen to be father and son) over the conquest of Canaan by Israel and the issue of genocide developed into this book-length study that has been incorporated into John Walton's Lost World series. Following the structure of that series, it builds on "a close reading of the Hebrew text" combined with "perspectives and information from the ancient cultural context of the Old Testament" (p. 23). The book consists of a series of 21 propositions divided into six units. The result is a thoughtful, provocative presentation, challenging both those who defend the conquest and those who disdain it as genocide. Three appendices on the IVP website give more technical explanations of aspects of the conquest accounts; these should be read along with the book.

Much could be addressed, but space restrictions limit discussion to noting three key premises and suggesting four areas for further consideration. In terms of premises, first, propositions 4–11 argue after careful analysis of the Hebrew text that the Canaanites were not guilty of sin or violating God's covenant. Second, propositions 12–14 suggest that the portrayal of the Canaanites is a literary device, not an actual indictment. Third, propositions 15–19 argue that *herem* is mistranslated, which gives a wrong impression of exactly what Israel was to do. The remaining propositions cover introductory matters and application. Each premise is carefully developed and initially seems broadly valid, but important nuances merit further evaluation.

That the Canaanites were not guilty of violating God's covenant argues that since they were not in a covenant relationship with God, they could not violate it. That they might not be guilty of sin is more complicated. The authors note several factors pointing in this direction, most specifically the lack of both a formal indictment and textual indicators of divine retribution such as technical terms like *dyn* (pronouncing a verdict) or *ysr* (discipline) (42–43). Given prophetic declarations to Israel such as the oracles in Isaiah 13–20, further evaluation of whether specific warnings are needed for God to judge pagan nations is warranted. Likewise, Paul seems to argue in Romans 2–3 that all humans should be aware of their guilt before God.

Addressing the same premise, the issue of holiness (*qds*), presented both as a proposition and an extensive appendix online, could use further evaluation. The argument is complex, befitting the difficulty of the term, and the following briefly summarizes some aspects. The authors argue that the Hebrew root *qds* "cannot possibly mean 'having a certain moral character'" (105). Noting that the Sumerian and Akkadian cognate forms DINGIR and *ilu* overlap the semantic range of *qds*, they argue that in the ancient world the common concept "refers to the essence of di-

vinity.” Without explaining what that essence is, they define *qds* as referring to “that which belongs to the sphere of God’s being or activity” (p. 108). They conclude that holiness is a status granted by God and not earned by moral performance. On this basis, they reject translating the imperfect of *qds* in Lev 19:2 as an imperative, viewing it as a statement of status that God gives the nation. How the context, which contains several other imperfects that demand imperatival force, affects this perspective merits further evaluation. While it is true that many of the items defined as “holy” in the OT do not have moral agency (p. 105), I argue in a forthcoming article that this is a derived use that does seem to denote sphere (and here their observations are helpful). However, there does seem to be a communal moral dimension to the basic concept of holiness, and it seems likely that the essence of the term reflects the relationship of the members of the Trinity.

The idea that the descriptions of the Canaanites are literary devices is thoughtful but raises questions. Does that in and of itself preclude an indictment? Also, if the text of Leviticus and Deuteronomy were written by Moses, would he (and the Israelites) have been as familiar with Mesopotamian literary techniques as the authors assume if they had just left Egypt following four hundred years of bondage? Their first proposition is that a cultural river separates ancient Israel and our own culture. Was there then a cultural river between Israel and Mesopotamia? Or between Mesopotamia and Egypt? These issues merit more evaluation.

The final area of further evaluation is the use of the word *herem*. The authors maintain that it is generally mistranslated, which is perhaps the strongest argument of their presentation. Their suggestion that the basic meaning is to “remove from human use” is helpful. Given the description of the conquest in the OT, genocide does not seem to match how many Canaanites apparently continued to live in the land after Israel settled. Their suggestion that in the case of Canaanite cities the force of the word was “to remove identity” presents a strong alternative that may give further insights for studies of the conquest. For example, would it be possible that in terms of the law, *ger* might refer to descendants of the Canaanites who remained in the land?

From the beginning, this book intends to address the common perception that “God looks not only harsh and demanding but also as if he is actually driving the Israelites to genocide of the native population of the land” (p. 1). A number of specifics are helpful in this regard; however, the end result is not clear. Overall, the book seems to exonerate the Canaanites, making them appear as victims (pp. 75–166). The Israelites are portrayed as Yahweh’s vassals who are “procuring territory, not for themselves but for their (divine) emperor who will likewise place his name there” (p. 223). This then places the onus on Yahweh who directs the conquest in order to “place his name” there “comparable to ancient Near Eastern practice” of human emperors (pp. 220–23). It seems that this serves to underplay the issue of God’s ownership of the land and right to promise it and raises questions regarding the purpose of the conquest.

There are a number of thoughtful aspects to this book. However, at times it appears that the authors read the Hebrew text too much through a Mesopotamian

lens. Still, because of the depth of the textual evaluation, the work is a must-read for anyone studying the Israelite conquest of Canaan.

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He Will Reign Forever: A Biblical Theology of the Kingdom of God. By Michael J. Vlach. Silverton, OR: Lampion, 2017, 638 pp., \$39.95.

George Ladd's *Jesus and the Kingdom: The Eschatology of Biblical Realism* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964) was undoubtedly the most influential work on the kingdom in the twentieth century. Ladd's "already/not yet" paradigm continues to hold sway over biblical-theological studies in the twenty-first century. In a 2013 NT theology lecture, Thomas Schreiner expressed his opinion that Ladd single-handedly refuted classic/revised dispensationalism; Ladd's "already/not yet" paradigm undercut classic/revised dispensationalism's belief in an exclusively future Davidic kingdom. Ladd's work eventually led to the rise of progressive dispensationalism, which rejects an exclusively future kingdom in favor of an inaugurated kingdom that will be consummated in the future (see, e.g., the writings of Craig Blaising, Darrell Bock, and Robert Saucy).

Michael Vlach enters the scene in defense of revised dispensationalism's view of an exclusively future earthly kingdom, choosing to focus on the nature and timing of the kingdom (p. 11). A summary of Vlach's key arguments will be more helpful than a chapter-by-chapter overview.

First, regarding the nature of the kingdom, Vlach advocates a "new creationist perspective" on the kingdom, which "is a holistic understanding of the kingdom that gives justice to the multi-faceted dimensions of God's kingdom ... [and] emphasizes the future relevance of matters such as nations, kings, economics, agriculture, the animal kingdom, and social-political issues" (pp. 12–13). Vlach is particularly adamant about avoiding false dichotomies regarding the kingdom—spiritual vs. physical, nations vs. individual, Israel vs. Jesus, national vs. international. Vlach advocates a holistic "both/and" approach that views the kingdom as including all such elements (p. 16). Particularly notable is Vlach's focus on the role of nations (not just individuals) in the kingdom (pp. 48–50, 74–75, 78–79, 146–50, 520–22, 538–39). The concept of a nation includes government/leaders, land/territory, language, ethnicity, religion, and shared history (p. 75). While nations and governments currently oppose and persecute God's people, they will bow the knee to King Jesus in a future earthly kingdom (Isa 2:2–4; 19:24–25; Mic 4:3; Zechariah 14) and still exist on the new earth (Rev 21:24–26; 22:2). This view of nations has implications for the future of Israel *as a nation*. Vlach argues that God will not merely save *individual ethnic* Israelites (as in historic premillennialism); the future kingdom will include a *restored nation of Israel* to be the conduit of blessings to all the nations of the world, a kingdom that has Jerusalem/Zion as its capital city (Deut 30:1–10; Psalm 110; Isa 2:2–4; Mic 4:1–2; Zechariah 14; Matt 19:28; Luke 21:24; Acts 1:6; Rom 11:11–15; pp. 138–39, 146–54, 229–30, 243, 388–89). Most importantly,

Vlach argues that this holistic, earthly kingdom is found in the OT (esp. the prophets) and that the NT concept of the kingdom agrees with and does not modify the OT concept of the kingdom. This view, therefore, positions itself against Ladd and those who limit or focus their definition of the kingdom on a reign, downplaying or excluding the need for a realm (i.e. land) in their conception of the kingdom (pp. 28–30). One wishes that Vlach defended the importance of “realm” more since the notion of kingdom as “reign” is so prevalent (but see pp. 305–310; Joel Willitts, “Jesus, the Kingdom and the Promised Land: Engaging N.T. Wright and the Question of Kingdom and Land,” *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus* 13 [2015]: 347–72).

Second, again regarding the nature of the kingdom, Vlach argues for an “intermediate kingdom” that occurs between this present age and the eternal state (Isa 2:2–4; 65:17–25; Zechariah 8 and 14; 1 Cor 15:20–28; Rev 20:1–6; pp. 149, 173–76, 238–45, 436–44, 489–504). Notice that in employing the term “intermediate kingdom” rather than “millennial kingdom,” the duration of this kingdom is not as important as the question of whether Scripture portrays the existence of an intermediate period of kingdom rule on earth distinct from the current era (Darrell Bock, “Summary Essay,” in *Three Views on the Millennium* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999], 304–5). Thus debate over whether the thousand years of Revelation 20 are literal or figurative is secondary, perhaps even irrelevant. Furthermore, Vlach argues for an intermediate kingdom not merely from Revelation 20, but from a variety of NT and OT texts.

Third, regarding the timing of the kingdom, Vlach argues that the establishment of the Davidic, earthly kingdom as described in the OT prophets is exclusively future. He argues this based on four factors: (1) There are contingencies or conditions surrounding the arrival of the kingdom (pp. 17, 50–51, 182–83, 375–79, 415–21); the kingdom will not arrive unless Israel repents and favorably responds to the Messiah (Lev 26:40–45; Jer 3:12–18; Luke 19:41–44; Matt 23:39/Luke 13:35; Acts 3:19–21). Many views of the kingdom do not reckon with this contingency factor and wrongly assume that the kingdom can be present while Israel is still in unbelief. (2) Vlach argues that while the Gospels initially described the kingdom as “near” or “at hand” (Matt 3:2; 4:17; 10:7), Israel’s rejection of Jesus as their Messiah caused Jesus to withdraw the offer of the kingdom and postpone its establishment until his second coming (Matt 19:28; 21:43; 25:31; Luke 21:24, 31; Acts 1:6; 3:19–21; pp. 344–47, 367–69, 381–90, 401–8). (3) Vlach draws a distinction between Jesus’s present heavenly session at God’s right hand and Jesus’s future earthly reign on the Davidic throne (Psalm 110; Matt 19:28; 25:31; Heb 10:12–13; pp. 135–40, 463–67). Vlach rejects arguments that David’s throne has been transferred to heaven (pp. 410–13). Matthew 19:28 and 25:31 are especially important to his view. (4) Our current experience would suggest that Jesus is not currently reigning over the nations and that the saints are not currently co-reigning with him over the nations (pp. 477, 560–61); the nations currently live in defiance against Jesus and persecute the saints. Thus, the kingdom seems to be future.

Fourth, Vlach finishes his work with theological reflections on why there *must* be a future, earthly kingdom where Jesus visibly reigns over the realm where he was

rejected and where the saints are vindicated and rewarded with authority over the nations that persecuted them (pp. 543–67). These reflections will comfort battered saints and remind us that the king who was and is rejected and scorned by this world will reign over this world and receive the honor due to him.

Fifth, dispensationalists have often been accused of exalting Israel and belittling Gentiles and of seeing no connections between the future kingdom and the church. Vlach counters these charges by repeatedly stressing the inclusion of Gentiles in the kingdom (see esp. Isa 19:24–25; Matt 8:11–12; Acts 15:13–18; pp. 48–50, 161–64, 315–17, 422–27, 538–39) and by offering careful explanations of the relation between this present church age and the future kingdom (pp. 448–50, 540–42, 569–79).

Regarding weaknesses, one could wish at numerous points that Vlach's statements were backed up with more citations/footnotes so readers can know who he has in mind. For example, when Vlach describes three views on the kingdom (pp. 269–71), it would be helpful to cite the best works that support each view, but he offers no citations at all. In other places he does the same, describing different views on an issue with little or no accompanying footnotes (pp. 67, 89–90, 135–36, 148, 203, 300–302, 325, 508), or he will say, "Some claim that ..." but not cite any scholars who make such a claim (pp. 295, 311, 394, 501). When Vlach critiques ancient authors such as Plato, Augustine, and Origen, one could wish Vlach cited directly from their writings rather than from critiques found in secondary sources (pp. 64, 563–67).

Vlach concedes that his work "addresses opposing views of the kingdom at times, [yet] is focused on a positive presentation of the kingdom. It does not address every objection made against [his] view" (p. 17 n. 11). This choice means that his work will likely be met with resistance from multiple sides. First, non-dispensationalists will likely be unconvinced because while Vlach defends his hermeneutical assumptions at numerous points (pp. 33–51, 150–51, 176–77, 422–27, 490–94), his treatment of wider issues is too brief to satisfy non-dispensationalists since issues such as typology, the hermeneutics of prophecy/apocalyptic, the NT's use of the OT, and the nature of "literal" interpretation are at the heart of their disagreement (although Vlach's *Has the Church Replaced Israel?* [Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2010] and his various articles and book reviews deal with these matters in more depth). But in reading *this* book, non-dispensationalists may unfortunately tune out because of their foundational differences in hermeneutics. Furthermore, many may be disappointed with Vlach's brief treatment of Ezekiel's millennial temple and sacrifices (pp. 202–6), an issue that is a major stumbling block and objection against dispensational premillennialism. One could wish that Vlach at least cited other scholars who defend his view so that the reader can explore further. Despite these weaknesses, non-dispensationalists should interact with Vlach's treatment of key biblical texts in both the OT and NT rather than dismiss him on hermeneutical grounds.

Second, although Vlach has much in common with progressive dispensationalists regarding the future kingdom, they disagree regarding the *present* fulfillment of the Davidic covenant and the nature of Jesus's preaching on the kingdom. Vlach is

particularly indebted to the work of Alva J. McClain, *The Greatness of the Kingdom* (Winona Lake, IN: BMH, 1959) and argues that Jesus offered the kingdom to Israel, but Israel's rejection of Jesus led to the postponement of the kingdom until Jesus's second coming. Strangely and unfairly, progressive dispensationalists have not really critiqued this view so much as they have simply ignored it and argued for an already/not yet kingdom (but see the critique of McClain in Robert Duncan Culver, *Systematic Theology* [Ross-shire: Christian Focus, 2005], 857–68; for a helpful explanation of the disagreements, see Stephen Nichols, "The Dispensational View of the Kingdom: A Response to Progressive Dispensationalism," *Master's Seminary Journal* 7.2 [1996]: 213–39). Vlach's chapter on the fulfillment of the Davidic covenant (pp. 569–79; cf. 410–13) was likely written with progressive dispensationalists in mind. While Vlach broadly agrees with an already/not yet framework, such a framework is "often general or vague. It is one thing to say the kingdom is already and not yet and quite another to explain specifically what is already and what is not yet" (p. 570). Vlach states specifically what he thinks was fulfilled in Jesus's first coming (the already) and what awaits Jesus's second coming (the not yet). Hopefully, Vlach's work will encourage others to also explain specifically what is already and what is not yet.

Despite these weaknesses, Vlach's work remains helpful. For scholars, it is the only recent defense of the revised dispensational view of the kingdom and hopefully will spark renewed discussion. The length of Vlach's work (582 pages) will make it liable to cursory reading, misunderstanding, and misrepresentation. The reader may use my summary of his key arguments as a guide. For pastors who find it hard to read lengthy books, Vlach's arrangement of his book according to Scripture (as opposed to themes) makes it easy to read portions of it alongside one's devotions or current preaching. I would especially recommend the pastor preaching through Matthew or Revelation to read Vlach's treatment of those books (pp. 255–399; 471–527; also see his unpublished article, "The Kingdom Program in Matthew's Gospel," <http://www.pre-trib.org/data/pdf/Vlach-TheKingdomPrograminM.pdf>). Chapter 37 on the "Necessity of a Coming Earthly Kingdom" could be read on its own in order to motivate further reading since it gives readers a sense of why pre-millennialism is so important to the Bible's storyline and how Vlach's view magnifies King Jesus and consoles battered saints. Many will benefit from Vlach's work; I hope my summary of his arguments will prevent misunderstanding and misrepresentation. I also hope my suggested reading strategy might motivate those intimidated by the length of the book to learn more about King Jesus and his kingdom.

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An Introduction to Biblical Law. By William S. Morrow. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017, xvi + 270 pp., \$24.00 paper.

In his *Introduction to Biblical Law*, William Morrow makes plain from the outset that his intention has not been to create an exhaustive study of biblical law, but rather an illustrative introduction to its various aspects. The work is divided into five sections: an introductory section that tackles issues of origin (e.g. date, authorship, etc.) followed by four subsequent sections that divide the various laws and law “codes” according to their content and setting within Israel’s cultic practice.

The introductory section begins by laying out the format of the book—what it is, what it is not—as well as providing insight into the author’s own suppositional perspective, namely canonical criticism. These first four chapters provide a summary of many of the introductory issues surrounding the Pentateuch and biblical law, including discussions of the date of the exodus, Mosaic authorship, and comparisons with another ANE legal and ritual practices. Though not intended to be comprehensive, these chapters provide the basis for the study of biblical law and are an invaluable resource for the beginning student or layperson. Morrow demonstrates how biblical law shares many characteristics with ANE law collections while also revealing points of departure in terms of the scope and authorship of biblical law.

Part 2, entitled “Israel at the Holy Mountain,” focuses on the Ten Commandments and the distinctions between their presentation in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5. Although Morrow argues for the primacy of the Exodus Decalogue, he concedes that Exodus 20 contains Deuteronomistic language. Thus, the Ten Commandments in their current form could not have come from the time of Israel’s origins, but rather are more at home in the late monarchical period. Following his discussion of the Ten Commandments as a whole, Morrow devotes an entire chapter to the second commandment in order to clarify the prohibition against making any concrete images of YHWH. After brief discussions of intergenerational punishment and imageless worship, Morrow concludes that the purpose of the prohibition was threefold: to ensure the preeminence of the “word of God,” to distinguish between earthly kings and the divine kingship of YHWH, and to ensure that no one could “possess” YHWH.

Part 3, “Israel in the Village Assembly,” deals primarily with relationships among the covenant people themselves. The opening chapter of this section provides an insightful discussion of the Covenant Code. Morrow includes a brief section on the types of laws contained in the Covenant Code as well as the structure of the collection. Morrow notes that the structure of the Covenant Code, with rules for proper interpersonal relationships framed by Israel’s obligations to YHWH, reveal that a proper relationship with YHWH is vital to building good community relationships. The remaining two chapters in this section focus on the case of the goring ox, as an example of *lex talionis* laws, and laws governing slavery. *Lex talionis* laws, and indeed the Covenant Code as a whole, reveal the intended egalitarianism of the covenant community. With regard to the biblical instructions on slavery,

modern readers may question why the Bible does not outright condemn such a practice. Morrow suggests that the biblical authors, rather than calling for the abolition of slavery in a world firmly entrenched in a slave-owning culture, set about to prompt their readers to question the ethics of slave-owning. He argues that the writers' literary tactics regarding treatment of slaves reveal a concern for vulnerable members of society, a major theme of the Pentateuch.

Part 4, "Israel in the Courts of the Lord," begins with a chapter detailing the differences between the Priestly laws (P) and the Holiness school (H) followed by a chapter on the Tabernacle laws and the design of the tabernacle itself with its "graded holiness." These chapters are helpful resources for understanding the nature of the tabernacle and the P and H laws; however, the real benefit of this fourth section is found in chapters 12–17, which deal with the sacrificial system, laws governing holiness and cleanliness, and the Year of Jubilee. Morrow details the various types of sacrifices/offerings required of the people as well as the gradations of sin (high-handed, inadvertent, and deliberate). In addition, he handles various other aspects of daily life that made members of the community unclean (e.g. bodily discharge, touching a corpse, etc.). Morrow's treatment of the Jubilee Year concludes that the concept was likely never put into practice but was a utopian ideal meant to convey the belief that YHWH was the true owner of the land as well as to establish the importance of the Sabbath.

Part 5, "Israel in the City," comprises the book's fifth and final section and focuses on the book of Deuteronomy. Morrow first introduces the structure, rhetoric, and dating of the book. He dedicates the remaining chapters to highlighting particular themes within the book of Deuteronomy. One of the most troublesome of these is the commanded annihilation of the Canaanites, though Morrow demonstrates that the "religious intolerance" of YHWH was quite in keeping with the exclusive loyalty commanded by ANE kings. Centralization of the cult and judicial reform are each discussed in the chapters that follow, and Morrow concludes with a discussion of women in the book of Deuteronomy. He laments that Deuteronomy fails to advocate strongly for women's rights, which he sees as particularly frustrating in light of the humanitarian tendency of a number of laws within the book.

William Morrow has produced a valuable resource for the study of biblical law. He has crafted a work that is simplistic enough to be accessible to the beginning student or interested layperson, yet insightful enough to be beneficial to the learned scholar. Perhaps the most valuable contribution of this work is the "Developments" portion that concludes most chapters; here, Morrow details the function and validity of the particular laws in later Judaism, rabbinic teaching, and early Christianity. In so doing, he allows his readers to visualize the application of biblical law in both Jewish and Christian communities.

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Old Testament Law for Christians: Original Context and Enduring Application. By Roy E. Gane. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017, 448 pp., \$32.99.

Dr. Roy Gane (Ph.D., University of California, Berkeley) provides a good resource to help answer a perpetual and essential question: “What law(s) in the Old Testament are still binding or in force for believers today?” This question is all the more significant in a time and culture that challenges the NT (and virtually every other source of order) with similar questions. While commentaries, monographs, and articles have been written regularly on topics related to the validity of OT law in modern times, a work or two devoted to the larger question of ethical applicability have been published only infrequently. Gane’s bibliography indicates something like a cycle of publications on the subject of OT law beginning in 1980. *Old Testament Law for Christians* has come a little early, given the cycle observed, but is timely given the current intensity of disagreement about ethics and biblical relevance in our culture, whether readers agree with Gane’s arguments or not.

The content and organization of Gane’s book suggests that he has significant experience with resistance against and challenges for recognizing and advancing a particular place for OT law in the life of a Christian. A reader would want to become familiar with the theological commitments of Seventh Day Adventists in order to appreciate the particular motivation and hermeneutical presuppositions in this text.

Gane’s book is organized in four main parts: Part 1, “Getting into the Old Testament Law”; Part 2, “Literature and Background of Old Testament Law”; Part 3, “Applying Old Testament Laws”; and Part 4, “Values in Old Testament Law.” Gane provides a concise and helpful description of the content of the chapters within these four parts in his introduction (p. xv). Part 1 discusses the relevance, nature, and purpose of OT law, reflecting on the approaches of Jesus and Paul to OT law. Part 2 provides the reader with a basic understanding of the law as a literary genre and various means by which law was expressed or formulated. Part 3 appears to be the heart and purpose of Gane’s work. How does the Christian rightly apply OT laws and what approaches are possible? The approach advocated is called “Progressive Moral Wisdom,” which has to do with recognizing the value of OT laws, then letting wisdom guide the appropriate application in our time. Part 4 is a helpful survey of OT law, beginning with the Ten Commandments, in which Gane helps readers understand one particular approach for recognizing the value of law, especially as such recognition provides them a different perspective by which they might evaluate contemporary as well as historical/traditional dispositions toward OT law. Besides the bibliography, the ever-essential indices of Scripture and subjects are provided.

Gane clarifies his interest at the beginning of the introduction by claiming the OT is a neglected source of wisdom regarding values and then giving three reasons for this neglect. According to Gane, (1) Christian tradition has tended to isolate the Ten Commandments as the only law that remains applicable; (2) many OT laws cannot be kept because they depended on the existence of the temple in Jerusalem; and (3) too many OT laws are obscure or disturbing.

One example of the helpful conversation for which this book provides has to do with “filling the gaps between laws” (p. 142). Gane directs us to the teaching of Jesus and Paul that illustrates their recognition of the value/purpose of OT law, which yields the benefit of knowing the spirit rather than merely the letter of the law: “Jesus demonstrates a way to fill gaps between laws by penetrating to the inner motivations that lead to moral violations. . . . You have heard that it was said . . .” (p. 143). Was this Jesus’s only or primary intent, or is any filling of gaps a secondary benefit from Jesus restoring the law to its intended requirement of perfection in act and intent? Are Jesus and Paul more interested in supporting more ideal human conduct or in exposing the need for redemption and regeneration?

Interestingly, Gane begins his chapter on progressive moral wisdom with a quote from Paul (2 Tim 3:15–17) rather than a quote from Jesus. Is preference given to a reformed Jewish rabbi rather than the incarnate Lord, or does it make sense that Paul would provide the richest resource for understanding the proper place of OT law for NT believers? Progressive moral wisdom “serves the purpose of moral character development toward the goal ‘that a man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.’” (p. 199). While Gane is quick to caution that such good works are not the basis of salvation, he credits acceptance of and cooperation with God’s free gift of salvation (Eph 2:4–10). Yet Eph 2:4–10 does not speak in terms of acceptance and cooperation but of having been raised from the dead. Similarly, Paul explained in 2 Tim 3:15–17 that it is the very Word of God itself that completely equips the man of God for every good work, not the man’s acceptance of or cooperation with it.

Who would argue against the proposition that we are failing to benefit from the law as much as we might? Is it possible to thoroughly appreciate OT law without the human ego co-opting that law as a basis for arguing its own righteousness before God and against neighbor? Is it essential to not just grasp the value of divine law but also the necessity of hearing that law in the full context of God’s gracious redemptive work, the constant drowning of the flesh and regeneration of the soul from the Father above (John 3)?

Biblical warnings against adding or subtracting from the Word of God urge the prudent person to continually subject his/her assumptions about the law to cross examination. Dr. Gane has provided a unique resource, especially for those who are not aware of nor sympathetic toward a high view of the value of OT law.

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The Fear of the Lord is Wisdom: A Theological Introduction to Wisdom in Israel. By Tremper Longman III. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2017, xviii + 311 pp., \$32.99.

Tremper Longman III, a well-known scholar of the OT, provides a fresh and engaging look at the subject of wisdom in ancient Israel. The overarching argument of the book is that wisdom in Israel is practical, ethical, and above all, theological (i.e. rooted in the fear of Yahweh). In this work, Longman does more than examine

the traditional OT wisdom literature. He also studies the concept of wisdom in other sources of the OT, intertestamental period, and NT. Indeed, Longman argues that the traditional concept of a “wisdom genre” as a category is outdated (Appendix 2). Understanding genres to have “fuzzy boundaries” (p. 281), Longman believes in a wisdom genre but does not restrict it to the typical OT books. Longman also discusses the theology of wisdom (Parts 3 and 4), and the post-OT development of wisdom (Part 5). While the author states that the study “is a work of Christian biblical theology” (p. xiv), in reality only one section of the book deals in depth with NT teaching, though the work falls in line with Christian teaching.

The book begins by exploring the nature of wisdom by examining the “core” books of Proverbs, Job, and Ecclesiastes. Longman convincingly demonstrates that underlying each of these books is the theological conviction that the fear of the Lord is wisdom. First, he shows how Proverbs uses the theological foundation (the fear of Yahweh) to develop practical and ethical advice. Longman makes a strong argument that Woman Wisdom is actually Yahweh himself, not merely a personification of wisdom (p. 24). To seek Woman Wisdom is actually to seek Yahweh himself. As to why the woman is to be equated to Yahweh, Longman’s main argument is that she dwells in the highest place of the city (Prov 9:2), where ancient deities resided. Since Woman Folly also dwells in a high house, she represents false gods who compete with Yahweh for Israel’s worship (p. 24).

Longman then explores Ecclesiastes and Job, reading them in light of Proverbs. He presents the view he argued in his NICOT commentary, which he says is “widely held” (p. 27), that a narrator frames Qohelet’s negative voice. Qohelet interprets the world by observation, but the narrator by revelation. Proverbs and Ecclesiastes align by showing that we should fear Yahweh (Eccl 12:13). As to Job, Longman claims that the book is really about wisdom, not suffering. Job’s suffering is the backdrop for him to learn that wisdom comes from fear of Yahweh, as opposed to the “wisdom” of his friends that is based on human observation.

Part 2 branches out to other areas of the OT. The author demonstrates that the concept of wisdom is dealt with throughout the OT. By referencing Deuteronomy, Longman shows a clear connection between Law and Wisdom. This part of the book also discusses Joseph, Daniel, Adam, and Solomon. Interestingly, Longman sees Adam, “full of wisdom” in the garden (Ezek 28:12), as the analogy for the King of Tyre rather than for Satan.

After examining the OT itself, parts 3 and 4 address issues particular to the theology of wisdom. Part 3 further examines how wisdom in Israel is similar or distinct from other cultures, with chapters on the sources of wisdom; wisdom and creation; Israelite wisdom compared to the ANE; and the relationship of wisdom, covenant, and law. Several of Longman’s observations go against the common conception of wisdom. For example, while the classic concept of the Zimmerli school is that wisdom is rooted in creation, Longman claims the connection “is not as simple as some would make it out to be” (p. 144), for themes of the Fall (disorder) also lurk around the wisdom texts (p. 142). Part 4 deals with further issues that relate to issues debated in the modern academy and church, such as retribution, the presence of schools and sages in ancient Israel, and wisdom and gender. The chap-

ter on gender may be the most controversial and raise questions for some in this readership. Longman claims that the OT wisdom books are “clearly patriarchal” (p. 202). He also writes approvingly of William Webb’s “redemptive-movement hermeneutic” in *Slaves, Women, and Homosexuals* (p. 204). He encourages female readers to change their reading of the texts, even translating texts differently (pp. 208–9). Longman appears here to blur the line between textual meaning and application of the text to one’s context. At the very least, the chapter is certainly thought-provoking.

In part 5, the writer details the view of wisdom after the OT, in the intertestamental period and in the NT. Longman shows how in the intertestamental period wisdom was appropriated from the canon and further developed, as well as how the writers bring out themes implicit in the OT. For example, Sirach more clearly connects wisdom with redemptive history (covenant) than does Proverbs (p. 228). The Qumran texts develop wisdom as revelation, particularly in an apocalyptic sense (pp. 240–42). As for the NT, it portrays Jesus as the hallmark of wisdom. The NT also associates (but does not identify) Jesus with Woman Wisdom, and also urges readers to fear God. Thus, there is a good deal of continuity between wisdom in the Old and New Testaments.

Finally, the book concludes with two appendices. The first one, on twenty-first century wisdom, is one of the most interesting and helpful chapters in the book and should not be skipped. The second appendix further explores the question of a wisdom genre, a question brought up at the beginning of the book.

This work has much to commend it. In so many places, Longman does not settle for scholarly consensus but questions issues by looking at the text in a canonical context. Longman also does a great service by moving beyond the traditional “wisdom literature” into other parts of the OT, and especially the intertestamental and NT texts. In addition, the work has strong application to the church, not simply scholars (e.g. the “prosperity gospel” discussion [p. 178]). The author’s description of the twenty-first century sage is a veritable manual on discipleship for the modern believer and one of the best parts of the book.

As with every book, readers may have interpretative questions, such as the aforementioned discussion of gender, or the reading of Qohelet. One weakness of the writing is that in a few places the author spends a large amount of time on a concept that his intended audience likely knows. For example, he spends four pages each telling the Joseph narrative (pp. 79–82) or what a covenant is (pp. 164–67).

In conclusion, this is an excellent new work on the wisdom of Israel, useful for the college or seminary level and helpful for the academy and the church. For the evangelical scholar, this is a beneficial treatment of wisdom that properly balances historical and scholarly questions with looking at the text itself. Pastors are also well served to study this treatment of wisdom. As Longman says, “The Christian counselor is about as close as we get today to the ancient sage” (p. 270).

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The Christ of Wisdom: A Redemptive-Historical Exploration of the Wisdom Books of the Old Testament. By O. Palmer Robertson. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2017, xxi + 407 pp., \$19.99.

With the publication of *The Christ of the Covenants* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1980) nearly four decades ago, O. Palmer Robertson embarked on a career-long writing project devoted to exploring “Christ in all the Scriptures” (p. xv) and established himself as an accessible guide to redemptive-historical biblical interpretation. *The Christ of Wisdom* is Robertson’s most recent contribution, a simultaneously pastoral and scholarly attempt to consider from a biblical theological perspective those OT books that have been most often neglected in redemptive-historical scholarship. Recognizing that the wisdom literature does little to advance the plot of the scriptural narrative—and seldom even makes reference to the defining moments of Israel’s covenantal history—Robertson nonetheless contends that the wisdom books are most fully appreciated when situated within the contours of a redemptive history that culminates in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Robertson approaches the wisdom literature with a resolutely evangelical doctrine of Scripture and regularly cautions against entertaining interpretive strategies that might compromise the church’s reception of the text as the authoritative and trustworthy address of the covenant Lord. An opening chapter introduces the terminology, literary form, and ANE context of biblical wisdom, and Robertson defends his intriguing decision to treat Lamentations along with those books more typically identified with Israel’s wisdom tradition, arguing that Lamentations serves as a functional pedagogy of tears that trains God’s people in corporate and individual responses to tragedy (pp. 20–21).

The body of *The Christ of Wisdom* comprises five chapters, each focusing on a distinct wisdom book as a “how-to” guide for properly navigating God’s world. Robertson defines wisdom as “the ability to understand the basic principles inherent in God’s created order, and to live by those principles . . . living out the whole of life with a constant awareness of accountability before a loving, gracious, and just Creator and Redeemer” (pp. 12–13), and the individual pieces of wisdom literature together provide a multi-dimensional composite of the faithfully wise life. Each of the chapters is structured similarly, covering various introductory issues (date of composition, authorship, literary form) before summarizing the book in question and analyzing its theology and themes with an eye toward redemptive-historical considerations.

Chapter 1 describes Proverbs as “how to walk in wisdom’s way.” After devoting almost sixty pages to summarizing in detail the structure and content of Proverbs, Robertson maintains that the book, with all its aphoristic diversity, presents a covenantal perspective of reality, observing how creation characteristically operates under Yahweh’s reign and commending fear of and trust in the Lord as the fundamental posture for wisely inhabiting a complex world. Robertson rightly connects the wisdom of Prov 8:1–36 with the person of Christ (pp. 52–59), and an excursus on Athanasius’s interpretation of Prov 8:22 details the defender-of-orthodoxy’s Christological reading of Proverbs’s personified wisdom (pp. 59–67), but his con-

centration on lexical and historical issues prevents Robertson from mining the theological and existential significance of the Christic shape of wisdom. How does knowing Jesus as the Wisdom of God provide an integrative perspective on Proverbs's wisdom, orient the Christian's dynamic pursuit of wisdom, and empower wise participation in God's creation? A redemptive-historical approach is uniquely suited to answering these questions.

With chapter 2, Robertson explores "how to puzzle" in the book of Job. Robertson describes each speech in the cycles of dialogue, fixating curiously on the book's figures of speech and frequently supplying long lists of those employed, and argues that while Job does not provide a comprehensive theodicy, the book does counsel God's people regarding how (and how not) to wrestle with the deep questions of human existence. Rather surprisingly, Robertson does not examine any potential Job-Jesus typology or address in detail what difference the death and resurrection of Christ as the turning point in redemptive history makes for the church's reception of Job's wisdom.

Chapter 3 takes up Ecclesiastes—"how to cope with life's frustrations." Robertson defends Solomonic authorship (pp. 205–17) and translates the key term of the book (כָּלָה) as "frustration" (pp. 246–52) on his way to proposing that Ecclesiastes presents a wise, unified, and utterly realistic view of life, against readings that detect a multi-perspectival, creative apologetic designed to prod readers to acknowledge the futility of life apart from the covenant God (e.g. Derek Kidner, *The Wisdom of Proverbs, Job and Ecclesiastes*; Tremper Longman III, *The Book of Ecclesiastes*). Robertson's framing dramatically influences what one detects as the book's primary pedagogical point and results in some rather strained interpretations of Qohelet's most pessimistic counsels.

Lamentations—"how to weep"—is the subject of chapter 4. With pastoral sensitivity, Robertson exposes the theological misconceptions underneath religious aversions to lament and the spiritual dangers that ensue, expanding upon four thematic pillars Lamentations offers to direct the covenant community's weeping: "calamity has come; sin has caused it; God has ordered it; hope nonetheless" (p. 294).

In chapter 5, Robertson turns to "how to love" according to the Song of Songs. Eschewing both allegory and typology as interpretive frameworks, Robertson favors what he terms a "redemptive-historical perspective" (p. 336) that reads the Song as a literal celebration of human love in marriage as it is recreated and renewed in the restoring work of God in Christ, and he suggests that the Song is best interpreted as a dramatic reading that includes Solomon, the Shulamite bride, and a female chorus. In Robertson's view, the Song is about Jesus insofar as Jesus is the one who makes possible a return to God's ideal of covenantal love between a redeemed husband and wife (p. 339). The chapter concludes with a dramatic rendering of the Song for ecclesial performance.

Given the complexity of the wisdom literature and the varied approaches adopted even among evangelical scholars, readers are certain to find plenty with which to quibble in Robertson's treatment. Those anticipated disagreements notwithstanding, *The Christ of Wisdom* is an able introduction to OT wisdom and will

serve well those desiring a single resource to acquaint them with the wisdom literature. Robertson's work is particularly helpful for developing a sense of the interpretive landscape around each book as he interacts with the major commentaries and includes bibliographies for further reading at the end of each chapter.

The Christ of Wisdom, however, left me with a sense of titular misdirection. The work's title, along with its subtitle *A Redemptive-Historical Exploration*, evokes expectations of thickly Christocentric biblical theological engagement with the constitutive themes of OT wisdom in the vein of Graeme Goldsworthy's *Gospel and Wisdom*. Instead, the bulk of each chapter is descriptive summary, and Robertson's approach to redemptive-historical analysis too frequently remains lexical (noting NT occurrences of key terms), literary (observing similarities between forms of discourse), and exemplary (citing illustrative NT texts). What is missing is the kind of redemptive-historical synthesis that identifies the foundational theological structures that shape the OT's presentation of covenantal wisdom, follows them to their culmination in Jesus, and consequently brings them to bear on the church in her pursuit of wisdom in union with Christ at this moment of redemptive history. If the whole Bible—wisdom literature included—indeed testifies to Jesus, we may hope that Robertson's work will stimulate a renaissance of robustly redemptive-historical reflection on OT wisdom for the wise flourishing of the church.

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Proverbs. By Ryan P. O'Dowd. The Story of God Bible Commentary. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017, 480 pp., \$31.99.

Proverbs is the tenth and most recent volume published in The Story of God Bible Commentary Series (SGBC) based on the NIV 2011. This volume is a welcome addition to the series, which firmly roots Proverbs in the worldview of Israel that springs from the Pentateuch, and highlights the place of Proverbs within the biblical canon. O'Dowd is pastor of Bread of Life Anglican Church in Ithaca, New York, and Senior Fellow at Chesterton House, Cornell University.

In *Proverbs*, O'Dowd's central claim is that "the most natural source of material for a Hebrew writer in thinking practically about teaching wisdom to an audience would be the Old Testament" (p. 85). For O'Dowd, the primary source material for Proverbs is Deuteronomy; O'Dowd mentions verbal and theological parallels to Deuteronomy in almost every section of the commentary. Secondarily, the author finds abundant parallels in the wider Pentateuch, and the rest of the biblical canon. He critiques the approach of many more academic commentaries for attempting to find the meaning of the Bible "through the most objective method in vogue at any one time" (p. 145). Instead, O'Dowd encourages Christians to examine Scripture critically and with significant scholarly effort, yet believing that Scripture is inspired and has come to us in a canon where God can speak beyond what the human authors of any one section intended or understood (p.145). O'Dowd himself uses literary and canonical methodologies for his exemplary reading of Proverbs. Ulti-

mately, he wants to show that Proverbs is not a secular work of wisdom but rather a sacred book that applies the worldview of Israel and its Scriptures to everyday life rooted in the fear of Yahweh.

The introduction to O'Dowd's commentary is short (only 32 pages compared to Bruce K. Waltke's 132 pages in *The Book of Proverbs* [NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004]), but is adequate and helpful for the target audience. In addition to the main introduction, the author includes a short introduction to chapters 10–29 (p. 175–79), and brief introductory comments for other collections of sayings. As far as authorship, he believes the name of Solomon to most likely serve an honorific purpose with the final form of the book being shaped by editors (p. 18–19).

The commentary on chapters 1–9 is particularly engaging and the highlight of the work. In these chapters O'Dowd makes significant connections between the pedagogy of Deuteronomy, the worldview of Genesis, and type scenes in the wider OT that demonstrate wisdom concepts in Proverbs. Curiously, the commentary and application in chapters 10–29 is noticeably shorter than O'Dowd's work in chapters 1–9 and leaves something to be desired. In his discussion of chapters 10–29, O'Dowd focuses on the proverb groupings and their relationship to the wider themes of Proverbs and the rest of the canon and not necessarily on the individual meaning of any one saying.

Proverbs has the usual layout of the SGBC series, which examines each passage from three angles; I will discuss each in turn. (1) Listen to the Story: The NIV 2011 text is printed for reading, and background biblical information and ANE parallels (a trademark of the SGBC series) are considered. O'Dowd engages the expected ANE comparables in the commentary carefully, including Amenemope, Kagemni (Kagemni), Ptahhotep, Ani, Ludlul Bel Nemeqi, the Keret Epic, Enuma Elish, the Akkadian Myth of Nergal and Ereshkigal, and the Hittite Myth of Illuyankas. As O'Dowd comments, "Common content does not mean common origin," and he holds comparables loosely, without claiming dependency one way or another (p. 307). The author repeatedly shows how the common wisdom of life found in the ANE is for Israel always subsumed into a worldview that starts with Yahweh and is understood in light of Israel's scriptures.

(2) Explain the Story: The passage is considered in light of the Bible's grand story and only significant exegetical issues are mentioned. This section of each chapter is similar to exposition in an exegetical commentary. However, no explanation of the translation is given unless it is theologically important or O'Dowd's own reading of the text has significant differences from the NIV. The commentary is mainly concerned with showing how each section and grouping of proverbs relates to other sections, the book as a whole, and the canon. This is done through the consideration of catchwords, allusions, and echoes, as well as thematic and types scene comparisons and poetic devices. O'Dowd makes an overwhelming amount of comparisons in chapters 1–9, but makes fewer in chapters 10–31. In fact, sometimes the reader may think of comparisons in later chapters he could have included, e.g. comparing Prov 20:25 with the story of Jephthah in Jdg 11:29–40.

(3) Live the Story: Modern-day application is made, and the Christological trajectory of the passage is considered. In *Proverbs*, this section differs from other vol-

umes in this series by reprinting the passage under consideration. This is helpful when quickly referencing a particular passage, but is not needed when reading larger sections of the commentary, essentially reading the verses twice within a short span. O'Dowd provides solid, timely, and contemporary application throughout, though his application has some repetitive themes, such as his comments on the modern education system. Furthermore, application is usually made only at a thematic level. An index of the application themes is given (pp. 47–48), but the titles sometimes obscure the content of each section of application and its relationship to Proverbs. The Christological considerations come and go throughout the work but are always intriguing, such as O'Dowd's consideration of the continuity and discontinuity between Jesus and Woman Wisdom in Proverbs 8 (pp. 156–61).

A significant contribution of O'Dowd's work is the educational purpose he assigns to the macro-structure of Proverbs. Similar to many scholars, O'Dowd lays out the structure of the Proverbs in the introduction (pp. 29–31), having an outer frame (chaps. 1–9 and 30–31) of highly structured poems that provide a lens for the looser collections of chapters 10–29. The inner chapters are made up of mostly antithetical proverbs in chapter 10–15 and a mosaic of “better-than, contemplative, synonymous, semi-synonymous, and uneven” sayings in chapters 16–29 (p. 246). For O'Dowd, the structure of Proverbs is centered on pedagogy. Chapters 1–9 draw in the reader with “provocative and cosmic” poems that inspire and motivate the reader to pursue wisdom. Chapters 11–15 repeat familiar sayings establishing basic rules and principles of wisdom. Chapters 16–30 provide more difficult sayings with variegated application of wisdom principals that “instill skill through increasingly complex drills” (p. 256–57). Finally, chapters 30–31 bookend the teaching, recalling chapters 1–9 (p. 396) and climactically embodying all the best of wisdom for men and women in the *eshet-hayil*, who is like Jesus (pp. 424–27).

Overall, *Proverbs* is a great addition to the growing body of literature on Proverbs and to the SGBC series. The volume's focus on the Bible's big story and Proverbs's place in that story is a refreshing look that illuminates a complex book. O'Dowd's work is thought-provoking and persuasive as he shows the sacred nature of Proverbs, rooted in the Pentateuch, the history of Israel, and the wider canon through the consideration of catchwords, allusions, echoes, and thematic similarities. *Proverbs* would make a great companion volume to a more exegetically focused commentary and could even be read devotionally.

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Isaiah Old and New: Exegesis, Intertextuality, and Hermeneutics. By Ben Witherington III. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2017, xv + 508 pp., \$34.00 paper.

Ben Witherington, professor of NT at Asbury Theological Seminary, has undertaken a prodigious task in what is apparently the first of a series of books exploring the use of the OT in the NT. While there are other works dealing in a more cursory manner with all NT citations of the OT or with the use of Isaiah in select

portions of the NT, Witherington's work stands alone in his detailed examination of every major citation of Isaiah in the NT.

The book consists of an introduction, six chapters, and seven appendices. The book is a gold mine both for general principles in dealing with NT citations as well as for specific insights on the NT use of particular Isaianic texts.

In the introductory chapter, Witherington provides key principles that he reiterates throughout the book. First, he states that distant future prophecy tends to be less specific and "more metaphorically poetic in character," and thus "more readily serviceable" for use by later generations (p. 3). Since poetry is "inherently metaphorical, multivalent, more universal in character and content," it is more easily adaptable to a different situation by the NT writers (p. 4). Second, often the Christian interpreter simply "reads backwards" from the NT use of the OT, but never really looks at the OT passage in its original context. Other interpreters simply read the OT in its own terms, not "in light of the Christ event" (p. 9). Instead, Witherington argues, "the Christian must learn to read the Bible both forward and backwards for fuller understanding" (p. 9). Third, Witherington sees the rich poetic text of Isaiah as having both its contextual meaning and the more extended NT meaning all along: "God intended it that way from the outset when he inspired the writing of these oracles in Isaiah" (p. 10). Here he breaks rank with many OT critics, but I think he is right on target.

In chapter 1, appropriately titled "Isaianic Fingerprints Everywhere," Witherington discusses the vast use of Isaiah in the NT: 131 different NT passages that together contain over 400 quotations or allusions from forty-five of the sixty-six chapters of Isaiah. Witherington includes a chart with all direct quotations, partial quotations, and allusions to Isaiah in each NT book.

With chapter 2 ("Early Isaiah—Isaiah 1–12") Witherington begins the heart of his analysis. He helpfully begins each section by providing a translation of both the MT and LXX, as well as the relevant NT citation(s). Here he briefly treats the matter of authorship, holding that Isaiah is responsible for chapters 1–39, but chapters 40–55 are exilic and 56–66 are post-exilic, written by later prophets "following in the footsteps of the historical Isaiah" (p. 44). He then discusses Isaiah 5:1–7; 6:1–10; 7:1–17; 8:11–18; 8:23–9:11; and 11:1–10 together with the relevant NT citations. He concludes that Hezekiah is the immediate fulfillment of both Isaiah 7:14 and Isaiah 9:6–7, yet he states that "Jesus was the more perfect fulfillment of Isaiah's word about Immanuel. . . . A prophet, in a poetic oracle, can certainly say more than he realizes and it be a part of the original meaning of the text, though the prophet may not have realized the full significance of what he said" (p. 79). The child of Isaiah 9 is also Hezekiah, "though even he could not live up to all the campaign promises made about this son (e.g. his dominion did not last forever)" (p. 95). On the contrary, other commentators such as I, view both 7:14 and 9:6–7 as direct prophecies of the Messiah. Hezekiah had already been born at the time of the Isaiah 7 prophecy. Far from being an unfulfilled "campaign promise," Isa 9:6–7 points to the future Messiah whose reign indeed will last forever.

Witherington concludes that Isaiah probably knew that what he was saying wouldn't happen fully in Hezekiah's day, since "only the eschatological king would fully bring peace" (p. 114).

Chapter 3 ("Later Isaiah—Isaiah 13–39") begins with Witherington discussing Isaiah 25:6–8; 26:19; 29:18–19; and 35:1–10 along with some references to the NT citations. But then he confusingly has three more sections, where he discusses the use of Isaiah 13–39 in the Gospels, the Epistles, and Revelation. Admittedly, one possible reason for this confusing arrangement is that so often the NT writers are drawing from a variety of passages, not only one—passages, in fact, from all three sections of Isaiah! (see, e.g., his discussion of Isa 35:1–10, with its close relationship to Isa 51:11 and Isaiah 65 [p. 136]).

With chapter 4 ("Eschatological Isaiah, Part One: Isaiah 40–55"), Witherington thankfully returns to his discussion of the relevant passages in canonical order, dealing with 40:1–11; 42:1–25; 44:24–45:13; 49:1–13; 50:4–9; 51:1–6; 52:13–53:12; 54:1–8; and 55:1–13. This is the longest chapter in the book, deservedly so since it contains the four "Servant" passages (Witherington correctly insists that they not be labeled "songs," since they are lyric poems integrated within the context of Isaiah 40–55 [pp. 198–99]). He views the Cyrus oracles as evidence that the prophecies are exilic, since OT prophets either spoke to their own setting or "the final eschatological horizons, *but not about specific historical events 150 or more years in the future*" (emphasis original, p. 174). However, putting a statement in italics does not make it true; Witherington offers no proof for his bold assertion, and he ignores the context of Isaiah 40–48, which stresses the uniqueness of the Lord, who alone predicts and directs the future (including the rise of Cyrus and, later, the Servant).

As for the Servant passages, Witherington helpfully sees each one progressively building to the climax of Isaiah 52–53 (p. 230). For both Isaiah 50 and 53, Witherington appears to say they are autobiographical of Second Isaiah, but ultimately he says (correctly, in my view) that Isaiah 53 only points to Christ: "Who then is this suffering servant? None fully fit the description in Second Isaiah's day, and indeed none in any day fits the description so well as Jesus himself. . . . This is why the NT writers used this material confidently in various ways" (p. 248).

In chapter 6 ("Eschatological Isaiah, Part Two: Isaiah 56–66"), Witherington treats 56:1–8; 59:15b–21; 61:1–6; 63:1–6; 65:17–25; and 66:1–2, 22–24. Sadly, in discussing Isaiah 59, Witherington concludes that the editors unsuccessfully tried to handle "material that they are not entirely the master of" (p. 296). This conclusion is disappointing, to say the least, if one holds to biblical inerrancy.

In the concluding chapter, Witherington revisits the hermeneutics of biblical prophecy, emphasizing that "a later set of circumstances may lead to the drawing out of a latent meaning not discovered in the original context" (p. 344). The NT writers believed that the prophecies of Isaiah "had only *partially* been fulfilled in the past and were only brought to their full *telos* in Christ and in his people in the eschatological age. . . . A prophet could say more than he fully understood at the time, and he frequently did so" (pp. 345–46). The NT writers often had the entire context of the passage in Isaiah in mind, not simply the passage that they cited. They saw the OT prophets as foretelling the truth, which the NT writers could then

properly expand in the light of later events, as Jesus himself did: “Jesus by his own discourse and use of Isaiah set this train of thought in motion to apply Isaiah to himself and his ministry, and his followers have done so ever since then” (p. 358).

There are seven appendices in the book, the inclusion of some of which is curious. Appendix A deals with Paul’s use of Scripture in 1 Corinthians 10–11, which has nothing whatsoever to do with Isaiah. Appendices B and E speak favorably of several works by Richard Hays dealing with the Gospel writers’ use of the OT. Appendix C provides a condensed version of Brevard Childs’s work, *The Struggle to Understand Isaiah as Christian Scripture*. Appendix F deals with the definition of intertextuality, while Appendix G notes with some skepticism various studies that suggest that various NT authors used Isaiah as a “narrative template” to structure their books.

Appendix D, a discussion of Isaianic authorship, is surely germane to this volume. Though early on Witherington says that his task “is not to become too embroiled too deeply” in discussions of authorship (p. 42), he does so throughout the book—necessary since he is trying to determine the context of each passage. Witherington proposes that “Second Isaiah” was Isaiah’s actual great-grandson, and also named “Isaiah” after his great-grandfather. Isaiah 56–66 was then written by a disciple of Second Isaiah (pp. 449–53). So when the NT writers speak of “Isaiah,” they are not erring, since *both* prophets are named “Isaiah.” Suffice it to say that there is no evidence whatsoever for this conjecture, and it seems simplest to view the entire book as the work of one man, just as the NT writers attest.

The book contains a bibliography, but no index of authors cited or Scripture index. This omission is disappointing for a book such as this one. The bibliography reflects another issue throughout the book: a heavy reliance on only a handful of OT commentaries. Only ten OT commentaries are listed (and only Oswalt’s commentary is theologically conservative).

All in all, Witherington has done an amazing job with incredibly complex texts, seeking to be faithful both to the original OT context as well as the NT usage. My main difficulty (which some won’t find problematic at all) is with his insistence on a multiple-authorship view of Isaiah, which limits the prophetic vision (rejecting mid-range specific prophecies such as Cyrus) and needlessly complicates his overall historical and contextual analysis. Despite this reservation, for anyone interested in the book of Isaiah and/or the NT use of the OT, *Isaiah Old and New* is highly recommended.

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Theories of Poverty in the World of the New Testament. By David J. Armitage. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2/423. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016, xvi + 301 pp., €89.00 paper.

David Armitage’s *Theories of Poverty in the World of the New Testament* is a lightly edited doctoral dissertation, first submitted to the University of Nottingham and

now published in the WUNT 2 series. In this study, Armitage examines how poverty was understood in the world of the NT, “identifying points of continuity and contrast with other traditions” (p. 1) and with the NT writings. The most noticeable distinctive about this thesis is the author’s attempt to focus “primarily on *interpretations* of poverty that are discernible in textual sources” rather than on the “socio-economic realia of the NT world” (p. 1; italics original). As such, while some time is spent discussing likely economic theories about defining poverty, the focus is on how people understood and explained their social situation rather than whether they really were “poor.”

The study follows what might be called a concentric-circle approach, beginning with general Greco-Roman literature, both in the “formative tradition and in texts from the first century C.E. itself” (p. 1), before moving to the Jewish formative tradition, and lastly examining the NT texts, which can then be compared with the world around them. After the general introduction, however, the first main chapter (chap. 2) explains the methodology to be used and defines terms. Of biggest concern at this point is to explain “how ‘poverty,’ which is remarkably awkward to define, is conceptualized here” (p. 24). Armitage explores current theories of how to explain poverty in the ancient world and the strengths and weaknesses of those theories, but he concludes that basically the thesis of his study can “be re-framed as a question about the status and significance of *material deprivation* in that world” (p. 34; italics original). He also, however, seeks to take into account “that poverty discourse is bound up conceptually with questions of *protology* and *eschatology*” (p. 36; italics original), so that these ideas—whether in the foreground or not—will also be explored in the literature. In addition, he explores self-designations of poverty in a religious sense, mapping out in a figure the overlapping of “spiritual” vs. “religious” poverty and how those intersect with material poverty. Crucially, while he acknowledges the complexity of overlapping semantic fields and contextual studies, “the language is simply too flexible” to rely solely on the appearance of various lexemes (p. 47), and so his various categories of poverty mapped out in this chapter are crucial to the rest of the work.

Then begins Armitage’s textual work. Chapter 3 focuses on the general Greco-Roman formative tradition, particularly poets like Homer and Hesiod, or playwrights like Euripides and Menander (p. 51). He walks through the literature via theme, rather than genre or author, asking questions about how the various texts viewed the gods, or fate, and their relationship to poverty, as well as questions regarding human culpability or chance and honorable poverty. Particularly of interest here is how the philosophers at the time of the NT worked with their own formative tradition and deviated from it in their explanations of the world. In chapter 4, he dives deeply into the writings of Plutarch, examining in particular Plutarch’s view of the role of *τύχη* in people’s economic status. In chapter 5, lastly, Armitage explores Stoic and Cynic views of poverty and how their worldview tends toward poverty as an irrelevance. He examines the various narratives of the *telos* toward which humans are moving, as well as the vision of what creation is, whether sufficient and good or deficient and problematic.

In chapter 6 we arrive at the Hebrew Bible. Armitage rightly notes that “the importance of the Hebrew Bible as a formative influence on the New Testament poverty discourse can scarcely be overestimated” (p. 129). In a survey mode and without overly forced unity, he approaches the Hebrew Bible with a variety of questions, such as what the creation narratives portray regarding God’s intention for the created order, as well as the Fall’s corruption of it that leads to material deprivation (p. 137). He also examines the covenantal tradition, wherein obedience leads to promised blessing but disobedience leads to deprivation and hardship for the people of Israel. Ruling out capricious deities or *τύχη* as key, a right relationship with God and—particularly in the wisdom literature—a willingness for hard work are crucial. However, unlike the passing notice in the Greco-Roman literature, in the Hebrew literature there is a much greater emphasis on righteousness as well as the social structures of oppression that mean God’s people ought to act to help the helpless poor. Finally, of course, in the Hebrew texts, in contrast to Platonic thinking, there is an expectation of a physical, material future, whether that of “a long and prosperous earthly life for oneself and for one’s descendants” (p. 154) or “an individual eschatological future [that] would seem to require restoration to bodily life” (p. 155). Also in contrast to the literature of the world around, “material deprivation in the Jewish Scriptures is presented as a genuine hindrance to fully realized human existence, which is understood as fundamentally material and corporate. That material blessing is a good thing follows directly from the goodness of creation” (p. 156). Armitage then follows this line of argument through chapter 7, through the ways in which a variety of Second Temple Jewish writings, such as Sirach, the Qumran writings, and the *Testament of Job*, develop their tradition. The bulk of the chapter, however, focuses on Philo. Concluding this chapter, he notes that “piety” is now “prioritized over material prosperity” (p. 190).

At this point we finally turn to the NT writings. He first charts out the various worldviews that have been explored thus far (pp. 193–97), before discussing “diversity and unity in New Testament” studies (p. 198). Rather than going genre by genre or book by book, Armitage chooses to pursue key themes such as “the roots of poverty” (p. 205) or the “uncertainty of wealth” (p. 207), and so forth, finding key passages that speak to these issues. After looking to the eschatological hope of the NT writers, he then turns to the question of aiding the poor, both in identifying the poor and in the motivations for providing aid. He also usefully compares the Cynic ideal of poverty as freedom (p. 239) but highlights how this is a different call from NT ideals of poverty for the sake of the kingdom, which “follows not from any inherent virtue in poverty; rather it is embraced for the sake of the kingdom, and in expectation of eschatological reward” (p. 239).

This last note helps highlight one of the strengths of the book, namely, the ability to compare two texts that may sound similar, but to show how they are different due to motivation or worldview. Just because two groups may place some value on poverty, it does not follow that they have the same view on what that value is. Another strength is the surprising willingness to survey such a breadth of literature. While the presentation is clearly at a survey level, the reader is given a sense of the diversity of views regarding poverty that there were at the time, as well

as some of the motivations and perspectives regarding one's state. This allows the NT to add a coherent contribution, without claiming everything in the NT to be revolutionary. Instead, the reader is allowed to see how the writers fit comprehensibly within their world, both to concur and to critique.

However, the breadth is also understandably a weakness. It raises questions of "Why this, but not that?" For instance, why did Plutarch receive an entire chapter, but not Philo? Why did Josephus barely appear on two pages, when he would provide an interesting crossover of Jewish thought in the Roman world, parallel in that sense to Paul? The choices of literature also seemed somewhat haphazard, such as the chapter on Stoic and Cynic perspectives beginning with the observation that Stoicism was losing "its earlier pre-eminence" while Platonic thought was reemerging as dominant (p. 97). Why, then, was an Academy philosopher not also discussed? Examples could be multiplied. Even in the NT survey, by asking questions and choosing texts to answer, Armitage fails to give a coherent picture of any particular text, for instance using Romans 8 to speak to creation's broken state but not to eschatological hopes, a task given instead to Revelation. There is, one might suggest, a certain stereotyping thus given to the NT literature wherein each text answers one main question, regardless of the purpose or the audience of the text. The strength of such a broad survey, thus, becomes its greatest weakness as well. More subjectively, I found there to be too many summary statements at the introduction and conclusion of not only each chapter, but also each subsection, taking the "say what you are going to say, say it, and tell me what you said" approach to the extreme.

The weaknesses notwithstanding, this is a useful survey of the views of poverty in the ancient world. It is by necessity incomplete (it is not an encyclopedia, after all), but it does give the reader a practical sense of the ancient perspectives on poverty around them. Even better, with the variety of questions Armitage asks, he opens the door for his readers to ask better questions of our cultures today, rather than simply assume we can map biblical, or Stoic, or other worldviews onto our own without also comparing questions of protology, purpose, and eschatology. Armitage provides his readers with a helpful roadmap to begin exploring how the NT fit into its cultural milieu. As a result, this is a beneficial book, and not only for those asking questions regarding wealth and poverty.

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A History of the Jewish War: A.D. 66–74. By Steve Mason. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016, xii + 689 pp., \$150.00.

As a student of the NT, the context in which its events took place is of considerable importance to me. So a fresh examination of the Jewish War by Steve Mason—a scholar rightly recognized as a singular authority on the writings of Flavius Josephus—is a welcome contribution. Mason's mastery of primary sources, both literary and non-literary, provides readers with critical assessment of historical

difficulties from the gamut of available perspectives. The studious reader who takes up this 689-page volume will gain a valuable perspective on the Jewish War, while gleaning countless insights into a wide swath of resources, all of which Mason examines with considerable dexterity. Yet this book is not what one might expect—a mere rehearsal of the narrative of the Jewish War, perhaps with meticulous attention to the writings of Josephus, proposals for new readings, suggestions of alternative chronologies, and even the revision of some old standard dates. Mason’s ambitions are far greater: he aims to examine fundamental matters of historiography with respect to Josephus’s account (chaps. 1–3: “Contexts”) and bring these to bear in a critical reexamination of the key events he records (chaps. 4–9: “Investigations”).

From the outset Mason advances the provocative notion that much of what historians think they know about the war derives from Flavian “propagandists” (p. 58) and even Christian anti-Semitism (p. 51); thus chapter 1 is called, paradoxically, “A Famous and Unknown War” (pp. 3–59). In their effort to divert attention from internal conflicts for the throne, the Flavian spin doctors presented the Jews as a foreign enemy—which they were not—armed with a mighty army—which they were not—or as a nation in revolt, at “war” with Rome. In fact, the Judeans resided within the empire, in the Roman province of Syria, so the very notion of a “war” is fraudulent (p. 8). The Roman procession of Vespasian and Titus (summer of AD 71) was in fact a smokescreen, a sham replete with fake props and actors in the guise of captives (pp. 20, 35). This grand deception, allegedly drawn from the description of Josephus (*J.W.* 7.116–157), leaves the reader of Josephus’s *War* none the wiser about the nature of the conflict, nor its causes, nor the events alleged to have occurred. Why? According to Mason, “The only safe way to disperse the adrenalin and war-weariness, to unite the Roman community after years of deep partisan hatred and fear, was to funnel that destructive energy onto a foreign scapegoat” (p. 14). That scapegoat, though not foreign, was the Judeans.

This alarmingly deconstructionist reading finds some theoretical orientation in the next chapter, “Understanding Historical Evidence: Josephus’ *Judean War* in Context” (chap. 2, pp. 60–137). Here Mason contends that *War* could never be reliable for modern readers looking for “unskewed data” (p. 136). Instead, Josephus’s context indicates that one should read him not as a true historian but more as a rhetorician seeking to assert his own astuteness to his ancient readers. Josephus leaves us with an “implicit” message: Josephus, “the creator of such a literary monument, was a man to be reckoned with, a paragon of moral insight and authority” (p. 95). With Josephus thereby stripped of much of his historical contribution, the door is wide open for alternative reconstructions. Yet readers are left wondering what alternative remains for *War*, when for Mason even the notion that the Flavians conquered a foreign enemy is something that “Josephus renders absurd” (p. 99).

In chapter 3, “Parthian Saviours, Sieges, and Morale: Ancient Warfare in Human Perspective” (pp. 138–96), Mason surveys various matters pertaining to the conduct of the war, notably factors of human experience such as matters affecting morale (loss of life, desertion, Parthian involvement, internal conflicts, starvation

and disease, etc.). What remains unclear, however, is how one is to utilize the data that the author amasses in the ensuing chapters when, according to Mason, Josephus's account exhibits more rhetorical acumen than historical accuracy. The tension between historical details and Mason's assertions about Josephus's purpose seems to be a fundamental difficulty with the book.

In his "Investigations" (part 2), Mason addresses key events topically, beginning with "Why Did They Do It? Antecedents, Circumstances, and 'Causes' of the Revolt" (chap. 4, pp. 199–280). For Mason the primary impetus for fisticuffs was local conflict rather than a swelling intolerance of Roman rule in general. Roman involvement was the result of Judean actions against the empire's local "apparatus of administration" at Caesarea (p. 278). While anti-Roman sentiment was certainly in the air, evidence that this sentiment burgeoned into a militarism that caused the Judean War is sparse. Instead, he argues, Judeans were largely prosperous and content.

In "Nero's War I: The Blunder of Cestius Gallus?" (chap. 5, pp. 281–334), Mason rebuffs the consensus view that Cestius arrived in Judea in the throes of rebellion and came to Jerusalem in the fall of the year 66 to put it down. Instead, Mason contends that Cestius likely never "imagined Jerusalem or Judaeans to be in revolt against him or Rome" (p. 327). Furthermore, he suggests his assault of Jerusalem created enemies in *Rome*, among Judeans who previously had no animosity toward the Syrian legate (p. 333).

Whereas most scholars have seen Vespasian's campaigns in Galilee in the year 67 as the initial phase of the Roman strategy to crush the revolt, Mason disagrees. Instead, he argues in "Nero's War II: Flavians in Galilee" (chap. 6, pp. 335–401) that Vespasian anticipated no fighting at all after the submission of Sepphoris, and that the carnage described by Josephus (*J.W.* 3) is exaggerated in order to magnify artificially the importance of the early episodes of the war.

Materials in Josephus, *J.W.* 4–6 are treated next, in "Jerusalem I: Josephus and the Education of Titus" (chap. 7, pp. 402–65). The events described pertain to particular people—John of Gischala, "Zealots" under Eleazar son of Simon, the entry of Adiabeniens and Idumeans into Jerusalem, the death of Nero, Vespasian's campaigns, Simon bar Giora, and the siege of Titus. Despite escalating fighting among Jews within Jerusalem in the year 68, according to Mason, tragedy may still have been averted had the city not received an influx of outsiders (p. 465).

In chapter 8, "Jerusalem II: Coins, Councils, Constructions" (pp. 466–513), Mason examines evidence for the destruction outside Josephus, including coins excavated in Jerusalem and the Roman account of Titus preserved in Sulpicius Severus. He contends that the coins evidence internal and political turmoil rather than a religiously-motivated conflict with Rome. Additionally, Mason concludes that Titus had no plans to destroy the temple but exploited the opportunity when it arose because, somehow, it bolstered "the myth of Flavian origins" (p. 513).

The last chapter is "A Tale of Two Eleazars: Machaerus and Masada" (chap. 9, pp. 514–75). Here, dealing with material from *J.W.* 7, Mason examines accounts of the desert strongholds of Herodium, Machaerus, and Masada. Both Herodium and Machaerus were taken in the year 72, whereas Masada held out until the year 74.

Rather than seeing Masada as the last stand of the rebellion, Mason suggests that it was a refugee camp surviving on banditry. In his reading those atop the famous plateau were seeking refuge from factional conflict in Jerusalem, and it was not a haven for Zealots/*sicarii* (pp. 534, 550). For this alternative proposal to work, the two well-known speeches of Eleazar become fabrications by Josephus, presumably inserted into the account for the rhetorical expectations of his Roman readership. As a result, then, the *sicarii*'s heroic last stand is actually no more than a myth. The defenders did kill themselves, but in Mason's reading this occurs only when the Romans did not honor the terms of the refugees' surrender. As before, this reformulation requires some creative reading between the lines of Josephus's account as well as a dismissal of other texts as mere rhetorical flourish.

Among his "Conclusions" (pp. 576–90), Mason underscores that the origins of the conflict are found neither in anti-Roman sentiment nor ideological aspirations among Judeans. Instead, they resulted from an assortment of human factors: "injury, threats of more injury, perceived helplessness, the closure of avenues of redress, and ultimately the concern for survival" (p. 584). The revisionist scenarios posited here profoundly affect one's assessment of the Jewish War.

There is little room for questioning the mastery with which Mason handles a mass of literary and material evidence as he brings it all to bear on the questions at hand. Also instructive is Mason's relentless attempt to read Josephus's account within his respective contexts. The work serves scholars well by its careful reexamination of the internal conflicts among Judeans and their friction with local representations of Roman rule, helpfully eschewing a naïve assumption that Roman rule itself was the cause of the war. However, the fundamental challenge that escapes me is discerning by what means Mason distinguishes historical narratives that can be taken at face value from those that should be dismissed as rhetorical flurry.

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Questions and Rhetoric in the Greek New Testament: An Essential Resource for Exegesis. By Douglas Estes. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017, 395 pp., \$42.99.

Before reading Estes's book, I have to admit that I had given little thought to the question of questions in the Greek NT. Having realized this about myself, I am forced to wonder how widespread this negligence may be. I am pleased to say that Estes has piqued my curiosity on the subject and compelled me to be more attentive to the matter in my study of the Greek NT. As the subtitle to his book indicates, the purpose of this volume is to serve as an exegetical resource for those who wish to study questions in detail.

After his introduction, Estes begins his presentation with a lengthy chapter on the basics of question formation. He opens with a brief explanation of the levels of linguistic analysis of language, from the lowest level of phonetics to the highest level of discourse. The body of the chapter provides a short introduction to how questions function at three of the highest levels: syntax, semantics, and pragmatics.

Regarding syntax, Estes addresses many of the same matters found in intermediate and advanced Greek grammars. As a book that strives to present a full treatment of questions, it is only natural that the author would begin by addressing the ways in which questions are structured in the Greek language as foundational. Moving to questions and semantics, Estes states his goal, which is to understand more fully what questions mean. It is at this point that the book begins to offer a more detailed analysis than that found in classic grammars, particularly those from a traditional grammatical approach. Estes's treatment is characterized by his commitment to incorporate considerations based on the concerns of linguistics, not merely grammar. Thus, with regard to semantics, Estes first addresses the varying degrees of illocutionary force present in questions. Next, he explains the grammaticalization of bias, that is, the way in which a writer might prejudice the reader in a certain direction by framing a question a certain way. He moves on to help the reader recognize that the verbal distinction between "say" and "ask" that characterizes English is not as clearly defined in Greek. These are just a few examples of the specific areas of semantics Estes examines. The third section of chapter 2 addresses the pragmatics of questions, the concern of which is how questions are used in communication. Because the Greek NT was produced in an oral culture and was mostly read aloud, Estes argues that considerations such as intonation and prosody still matter, even if they are only partially recoverable by means of elements such as accents. Attending to these considerations will "alert the hearer that a question is coming." He follows this with a treatment of additional considerations such as presuppositions and implicature, turn-taking, and dialogue, to name a few. The chapter concludes with a brief treatment of answers.

The next three chapters unpack the three linguistic levels of questions previously introduced, but in greater detail. All three chapters follow a uniform format. Questions driven by syntax, semantics, and pragmatics are broken into subcategories. First, each category is defined by the manner in which the question is formed. Second, the rhetorical effects of the question are addressed. In chapter 4, "Questions Driven by Semantics," the degree to which the effects are informational or rhetorical are illustrated by a linear graph, providing a visual aid to help the reader understand the level at which these considerations are in play. Third, each subcategory is illustrated and analyzed in a case study that employs an example from the text of the Greek NT. The subsections conclude with a list of further examples, when applicable, and a key bibliography. On page 31 of the introduction, Estes includes a chart that provides a brief description of each of these elements that make up the subcategories. The attentive reader will no doubt find this a useful tool for understanding the structure of the chapters.

The final chapter provides a brief description of the narrative, dramatic, rhetorical, and dialectical functions of questions in the Greek NT. It concludes with Estes's assessment of the importance of the study of questions in the Greek language and his hope that the reader will see his work, not as the final word on the matter, but as the first word. The book concludes with an appendix that gives brief descriptions of semantic types of questions, a glossary of key terms, an extensive bibliography, and indices of Scripture, subjects, and authors.

At nearly four hundred pages, Estes's treatment is nothing short of detailed. As noted above, it aims to examine questions in Greek with a greater sensitivity to linguistic considerations than what has historically been found in the literature on biblical Greek grammar (though the tide has certainly been turning in recent decades). As one who shares this commitment, I applaud Estes's efforts. Additionally, the author strives to balance theory and application. As the subtitle states, his intention is that this book will serve as a resource for exegesis. Estes has done a fine job of articulating both his theory and its application for exegesis. This, I would argue, is where the book demonstrates its true value. As the author himself states, this work will not be the final word on the question of Greek questions. Scholarship will critically engage Estes's presentation with varying degrees of affirmation and dissent. What the study of biblical Greek desperately needs are tools that address questions of language above the word level, that are linguistically informed, and that are accessible to non-specialists who are nevertheless committed to the exegetical study of the Greek text. It is my hope that books such as this will move students of biblical Greek to value in a greater way the contribution of linguistically informed study for exegesis and teaching.

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Why Are There Differences in the Gospels? What We Can Learn from Ancient Biography. By Michael R. Licona. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017, xxi + 308 pp., \$35.00.

Michael Licona, Assistant Professor of Theology at Houston Baptist University, is known to many by his *The Resurrection of Jesus: A New Historiographical Approach* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2010)—a must-read for anyone seriously studying the Gospel accounts of the resurrection. In the present work, Licona focuses on the differences found in the parallel accounts of the Gospels. Such differences were noted from the beginning by early Church Fathers (e.g. Julius Africanus, Origen, Chrysostom, and, above all, Augustine). Accepting the view that the Gospels belong to the genre of Greco-Roman biography, Licona seeks to determine by an analysis of the works of Plutarch (born AD 45; died c. AD 120) the rhetorical rules governing this genre of literature and how Roman biographies should be interpreted. He then applies these rules to the interpretation of the Gospels.

The book begins with an "Introduction" in which Licona seeks to demonstrate that the Gospels are a form of Greco-Roman biography. This is followed by five chapters and a conclusion. In chapter 1 ("Compositional Textbooks"), he refers to early writers of such works: Aelius Theon, Hermogenes of Tarsus, Aphthonius of Antioch, Liabanius, Nicolaus of Myra, and the Roman writers Quintilian and the unknown author of *Rhetorica ad Herennium*. It should be noted that all these works date after the Gospels, most of them from the third to fifth century. Licona concludes, approvingly quoting Gerald Downing, "It would be absurd to suppose ... that the NT evangelists could have learned to write Greek and cope with

written source material at all while remaining outside the pervasive influence of these common steps toward literacy" (p. 14).

In chapter 2 ("Who Was Plutarch?"), Licona discusses the writings of Plutarch, who wrote over sixty biographies, and the compositional devices of Plutarch, which were "practically universal in ancient historiography" (p. 19). He lists these devices as transferal (attributing words spoken by one person to another), displacement (placing something spoken in one context to another), conflation (combining elements of two different events or people as one), compression (describing events as taking place in a shorter period of time than actual), spotlighting (focusing attention upon a particular person), simplification (omitting details in order to focus attention), expansion of narrative details (the creative reconstruction and free composition of plausible circumstances), paraphrasing (creative retelling of an event to emphasize a point), the law of biographical relevance (the addition or omission of biographical information according to the purpose of the author), and so forth. Because there are few examples in ancient literature where an author's sources can be discerned, Licona investigates the biographies of Plutarch in which he refers to previous works discussing the same incident.

In chapter 3 ("Parallel Pericopes in Plutarch's *Lives*"), Licona investigates 36 pericopes appearing two or more times in Plutarch's *Lives*. He discusses 30 of them, omitting pericopes 1, 2, 4, 5, 14, and 21, because they contain no essential differences. The format followed in the discussion of each example is (1) the location of *references* to the parallel passages; (2) a summarizing *narrative* of the incident; (3) an *analysis* of the findings; and (4) a *summary*. Throughout his analysis, Licona refers to such rhetorical devices as using a synonym in another account; paraphrasing a logion in one account, compressing a dialogue, shining a literary spotlight on the main character, inverting the order of events, adding details to one account not found in its parallel, omitting details to one account not found in its parallel, placing a free-floating logion in a plausible context, placing events synthetically to provide a smoother flowing narrative, and so forth.

In chapter 4 ("Parallel Pericopes in the Canonical Gospels"), after a succinct discussion of the Synoptic Problem in which he assumes the priority of Mark and the existence of Q, Licona analyzes sixteen parallel accounts occurring two or more times in the Gospels. He proceeds using the same format as in his discussion of Plutarch (references, narrative, analysis, summary) and finds the same literary devices: the use of synonyms, paraphrasing, compressing a dialogue, spotlighting the main character, changing the order of events, placing Jesus's teaching in a different context, and so forth.

Chapter 5 ("Synthetic Chronological Placement in the Gospels") begins with a summary of Lucian's instructions in writing history. (It should be noted that Lucian was born in AD 120 and died c. 180.) After discussing examples from Plutarch, Sallust, and Tacitus, Licona discusses five examples from the Synoptic Gospels. Three of them are discussed in detail using the organizational format found in chapters 3 and 4.

In his conclusion, Licona emphasizes that the canonical Gospels should not be considered as a unique literary genre (*sui generis*) but rather as works belonging to

the genre of Greco-Roman biography. He then summarizes his analysis of Plutarch and the Synoptic Gospels in support of this view. After noting that the editing of the Gospel accounts by the evangelists is minimal by ancient standards, he states that “a large majority of [these] differences can quite easily and rightly be appreciated and/or resolved in light of the literary conventions of ancient biography and history writing” (p. 201). The book ends with four appendices: (1) “Thirty-Six Pericopes Appearing Two or More Times in the Nine *Lives* of Plutarch Examined”; (2) “Nineteen Pericopes Appearing Two or More Times in the Canonical Gospels Examined”; (3) “Which Women Were Present at the Cross, Burial, and Empty Tomb?”; and (4) “Biosketches of the Main Characters in Plutarch’s *Lives*.”

Licona has written a well-researched and challenging work, and his knowledge of Roman rhetoric is impressive. Until recently, the Gospels were thought to have been written by a little-educated Christian underclass, and the leaders of the early church were seen as uneducated (*agrammatoi*) common men (Acts 4:13). Licona joins those who see the Gospels as displaying a strong affinity to Greco-Roman biography, because the evangelists used some of the same literary conventions of this genre. Thus he concludes that they must have possessed a rhetorical education. His thesis deserves careful consideration. However, I have a number of caveats with respect to it.

The first involves his use of Plutarch as his example for comparison with the NT Gospels. Plutarch was born in AD 45 and died c. 120. Thus, Licona’s use of Plutarch as his basic witness to Greco-Roman rhetoric before the writing of the Gospels is less convincing than if Plutarch had lived before the writing of the Gospels. Also, his use of Aelius Theon (Licona dates him to the 1st century AD, whereas some date him to the 5th century), Hermogenes of Tarsus (3rd to 4th century), Libanus (mid-to-late 4th century), and Nicolaus of Myra (second half of 5th century) raises questions as to their validity as examples of Greco-Roman rhetoric at the time the Synoptic Gospels were written. So does his use of Lucian of Samosata’s (born AD 120; died 180) instructions as a guide for the evangelists’ placement of events. As for Mark, his place of education was not Athens or Rome but Jerusalem, and his source of information was the oral testimony of the apostles and eyewitnesses whom he heard bearing witness to the Jesus traditions in his home in Jerusalem (Acts 12:12).

Another issue involves Plutarch’s use of his earlier biographies. How exactly did he use them? It is generally assumed that, when Matthew and Luke used Mark, they had a written copy of Mark before them and followed it visually. Did Plutarch have written copies of his earlier biographies before him when he wrote or was he depending on his memory of what he had written in his earlier works? If the latter is true, we are then comparing two different kinds of dependency—one oral (Plutarch) and one literary (Matthew and Luke). Would the former involve more freedom in repeating a former incident than the latter? Also, did repeating sacred traditions (about Jesus, the Son of God) that Matthew and Luke found in their Markan source place greater restrictions on them than Plutarch’s repeating traditions from his earlier, non-sacred *Lives*?

Licona seeks to demonstrate that the canonical biographies share several characteristics with Greco-Roman biographies. One is length. Greco-Roman biographies, he argues, tended to be about the same general length: shorter ones under 10,000 words, medium-length ones between 10,000 and 25,000 words, and longer ones over 25,000. But is a work under 10,000 and another over 25,000 words “about the same general length”? Licona points out that a normal scroll held about 25,000 words. This suggests that it may not have been so much the genre of biography that was the determiner of length but rather the size of the scroll! The Gospel of Luke (a biography) and the Book of Acts (a history) are 19,400 and 18,400 words long and suggest that the size of their scrolls was a determining factor in their length. Licona lists numerous other characteristics of Greco-Roman biographies found in the canonical Gospels, which he acknowledges are practically universal in ancient historiography. One is “spotlighting,” in which an author draws attention to a particular person. Did the evangelists need to know Greco-Roman rhetoric to focus on Jesus in writing their Gospels? Did they need to know the law of biographical relevance? Did the Gospel writers need to know Greco-Roman rhetoric to remember that they should focus on Jesus in telling the story of Jesus Christ (Mark 1:1)? Can one write a biography of Jesus and not follow this rule? Do we not find such spotlighting in the OT stories of Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, Solomon, and others?

The presence of *chreia* (pronouncement stories) in Greco-Roman biography and the Gospels is frequently referred to as evidence of rhetorical education on the part of the evangelists. However, the evangelists were not composers of this literary form found in their Gospels but recorders of Jesus’s use of this form in his teachings. They were found in the tradition they received that ultimately came to them via the “eyewitnesses and ministers of the word” (Luke 1:2). These, furthermore, had been translated into Greek in the earthly months of the church’s existence for the Hellenistic community in Jerusalem (Acts 6:1–6). The numerous pronouncement stories found in the Gospels were not the result of Greco-Roman rhetorical influence on Jesus or the evangelists but rather the product of the fertile mind of Jesus, who taught concerning the coming of the kingdom of God through parables, poetry, metaphor, similes, hyperbole, parabolic actions, pronouncement stories, and others.

In my view, the most helpful contribution of Licona’s work is his analysis of the differences found in nineteen parallel Gospel accounts. This alone is worth the purchase of the book. His honesty in admitting that he knows no convincing harmonization with respect to some of these differences is refreshing and causes the reader to take his harmonizations more seriously than those of scholars who think that all such differences can easily be harmonized. He is correct in pointing out that the evangelists, like Plutarch and other ancient authors, did not seek to narrate

events with 20th- or 21st-century photographic precision. Thus we find various differences in the parallel accounts. Yet such differences, he points out, are not necessarily discrepancies!

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John. By Edward W. Klink III. Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the NT. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016, 971 pp., \$49.00.

A quick glance at the bookshelves in either a pastor's study or a Bible professor's office normally reveals NT commentaries from a variety of series. As we know, each commentary series has its own unique audience, theological bent, and even format.

For example, the NIV Application Commentary series is a broadly evangelical commentary series, whose audience is pastors, teachers, and students with a limited grasp of the original languages, formatted in such a way as to lead the reader from the NIV text to application. Each commentary follows the same general format. A discussion titled "Original Meaning" makes literary and historical observations on a passage. This is followed by a section titled "Bridging Contexts," where major themes are identified with a view toward bridging the two horizons: the ancient world and the modern world. Finally, there is a closing section titled "Contemporary Significance," in which the commentator relates the truth of the text to current issues faced in our 21st-century context—with suggestions on how to communicate these truths. Gary Burge's fine commentary on John's Gospel is in this series.

Most seminary-trained pastors and biblical scholars are quite familiar with the New International Commentary on the NT series, which has been around since the middle part of the twentieth century. Like the NIV Application series, the NICNT series is also broadly evangelical in its theological perspective, but its audience is a bit different. The NICNT series engages, with depth, the nuances of the Greek text, which often makes it a challenge for those with only rudimentary original language skills. In addition, the NICNT is light on contemporary application. If one wants good, solid scholarly engagement of the literary and historical issues relative to the Greek text, commentaries in this series certainly are helpful. In Johannine studies, J. Ramsey Michaels's commentary on John has recently replaced Leon Morris's very popular contribution to this series.

Of course, there are other significant commentary series from much broader perspectives. The Anchor Yale Bible Commentary series, for example, is broad in its theological perspective, with commentators from the Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish faith traditions. Like the NICNT series, the focus of this series tends to be engagement with the text in its original language and interaction with current scholarship, but with little in the way of contemporary application. John's Gospel is treated in this series by Raymond E. Brown's two-volume commentary.

Edward W. Klink III, senior pastor of Hope Evangelical Free Church in Roscoe, IL—previously serving as Associate Professor of New Testament at Talbot

School of Theology—has authored a new commentary on John's Gospel in the Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the NT (ZECNT) series that will be a welcome contribution to study materials already on the typical pastor's shelf. This commentary series by Zondervan in many ways bridges the gap between what we see in the NICNT series, which emphasizes scholarly engagement of the biblical text in its original languages, and the NIV Application series, which emphasizes ministry application, while at the same time also maintaining evangelical commitments not necessarily held in the Anchor Yale Bible Commentary series.

As Clinton E. Arnold, general editor of the ZECNT series, indicates in the "Series Introduction" of Klink's commentary, the editorial board "listened to pastors and teachers express what they wanted to see in a commentary series based on the Greek text" (p. 7). Klink's commentary on John (and the other commentaries in the series) engages the Greek text but also includes what is titled "Theology in Application" at the end of the treatment on each major passage. While there is some interaction with pertinent scholarship as part of the engagement with the Greek text, the scholarly interaction is quite limited when contrasted with what is done in the NICNT and Anchor Yale Commentary series. The purpose of this commentary series in general and, thus, Klink's commentary specifically, is to help the pastor who has a decent working knowledge of the Greek text move from text to application.

What is unique about Klink's commentary and the ZECNT series as a whole might be its sevenfold organization, which is certainly an organizational scheme suitable for the study of Johannine literature given the apostle John's interest in sevens! After the typical introductory matter at the front of the commentary (authorship issues, date, theological overview, etc.), Klink works through the Gospel of John passage by passage as he addresses seven issues. First, Klink explores the "Literary Context," which includes a short discussion of how the passage "functions in the broader literary context of the book" (p. 8). Second, the author suggests a "Main Idea," which is a succinct one- or two-sentence statement that captures the "big idea or central thrust of the passage" (p. 9). This is followed by a section titled "Translation and Graphical Layout." Here the author offers an English translation of the Greek text, laid out as individual propositions, with indentations between propositions indicating how the flow of the text fits together. This ends up being a sort of discourse analysis, complete with technical terms used to describe the relationship between propositions. Fourth, in a section titled "Structure," Klink describes, in only a paragraph or two, the rhetorical flow of thought in the passage, often making reference to specific literary devices that dominate the passage. Fifth, Klink and other commentators in the ZECNT series offer a detailed outline in the section titled "Exegetical Outline." Sixth, in a section titled "Explanation of the Text," Klink dives into the meat of the commentary: a detailed phrase-by-phrase examination of the Greek text. This section includes breakout boxes for more in-depth word studies and even grammatical analysis. Footnotes connected to section six document interactions with major scholarly interpreters, but the scholarly interactions with these sources are not meant to be exhaustive. Seventh, Klink and other commentators in this series wrap up the study of each passage with a

section titled “Theology in Application.” Here the commentator reflects on the major theological insights that can be drawn from the passage—insights that will prove fruitful for the pastor or teacher looking to make points of application.

Now we turn our attention to specific content nuances within Klink’s commentary. At 970 pages, this commentary is a tome. Its length is surprising, considering that it is the stated purpose of the ZECNT series to limit the scholarly engagement of interpretive issues. General Editor Clinton E. Arnold, in differentiating the ZECNT series from other series, indicates that “some [commentaries] ... provide extensive information about word usage and catalogue nearly every opinion expressed on the various interpretive issues” (p. 7).

In terms of his approach, Klink adapts the well-known and often used “story arc” approach of Gustav Freytag (*Die Technik des Dramas* [Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1863]) to analyzing narrative episodes. This approach manifests itself in part three—“Translation and Graphical Layout”—where in the margins Klink traces the development of the narrative. One helpful narrative analysis can be found in Klink’s lengthy and rather detailed four-page “Translation and Graphic Layout” of the healing of the blind man in John 9, where he classifies the relationships between propositions as the narration of this story develops.

An interesting interpretive decision made by Klink involves the text-critical challenge of John 7:53–8:11. In a multi-page excursus, Klink rejects the view that this passage should be treated in the same category as NT apocryphal literature and as such it should be omitted from preaching in local churches. Instead, Klink draws the distinction between a materialist approach and a functionalist approach to biblical inspiration—concluding that while material evidence might cause the pastor to see John 7:53–8:11 as an addendum to the story of Jesus in John’s Gospel because of the late date of its inclusion in the manuscript tradition, functional concerns might give warrant to the pastor to preach and teach from this text from the pulpit on the Lord’s Day.

The ZECNT series and Klink’s contribution to it are a welcome addition to the repertoire of resources available to those in ministry. Klink’s work in particular will be a helpful tool in preparation for preaching and teaching.

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Many Convincing Proofs: Persuasive Phenomena Associated with Gospel Proclamation in Acts. By Stephen S. Liggins. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft 221. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2016, xv + 317 pp., €121.45.

Many Convincing Proofs is a thorough examination of the means of persuasion used by Luke in his depiction of the proclamation of the gospel in Acts. Liggins is interested, however, in more than Luke’s literary depiction of the means of persuasion, and works to determine how the persuasive phenomena would have exerted an impact upon the first readers/hearers of Acts. Liggins defines persuasive phenomena as “those phenomena associated with the communication of the gospel

message in Acts that exerted persuasive force on the evangelistic audiences described within the text of Acts and encouraged them to make the desired response to the message” (p. 1). Liggins identifies four means of persuasion that structure both his chapter on the Jewish and Greco-Roman context as well as his reading of Acts: the Jewish Scriptures, the experience of supernatural events, the Christian community itself, and Greco-Roman cultural interaction. Examining Jewish and Greco-Roman cultural contexts is necessary in order to determine “the early audiences’ repertoire and the evangelistic audiences’ thought world” (p. 21).

In chapter 2 (“Early Audiences and their Perception of Acts”), Liggins suggests that Luke’s intention was for Acts to circulate widely among Greek-speaking *Christians*, who would have understood the book to be a historical monograph that sought to give a reliable account of the historical events it narrates. In chapter 3 (“Jewish and Greco-Roman Persuasive Religious Communication”), Liggins presents a lengthy survey of means of persuasion in the broader ancient Mediterranean context. He first examines means of Jewish persuasion in proselytizing and examines Josephus’s story of the conversion of Adiabene. This text works well for Liggins as it contains a variety of persuasive phenomena. For example, the missionary Eleazar seeks to persuade King Izates to be circumcised out of obedience to the Jewish Scriptures. Izates’s mother, who appreciates Judaism, exerts a strong role in Izates’s initial desire to convert to Judaism. Liggins turns to Josephus’s *Against Apion* and notes that Josephus points to the Jewish laws as authoritative and appealing as a means of proselytizing. Liggins looks at Philo, the *Letter of Aristeas*, and the *Third Sibylline Oracle* and notes that they primarily appeal to the Jewish Scriptures to persuade others to convert. However, in addition to appeals to the Jewish Scriptures, he notes that human coercion, concepts of authority taken from the Greco-Roman world, and the appealing nature of the Jewish community also play a role as persuasive phenomena. In Greco-Roman sources, Liggins notes that oracles and other supernatural events exerted a strong persuasive function for people to accept, for example, the cult of Alexander (described by Lucian) and devotion to Apollonius of Tyana.

The heart of Liggins’s argument is found in chapters 4 and 5, where he considers persuasive phenomena that occur with respect to the evangelistic ministry in the entirety of Acts. He uses the same headings to categorize the phenomena: appeal to Scriptures, supernatural events, Christian community, and the broad “Greco-Roman cultural interaction.” The most important witnessed supernatural event in Acts, of course, is God’s resurrection of Jesus from the dead: Jesus “showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive” (Acts 1:3). Liggins spends more time, however, on a few texts that he considers paradigmatic passages. These are often determined as paradigmatic due to their length, repetition, and narrative placement and parallels. For example, in Peter’s Pentecost speech, Peter seeks to persuade his audience that God has raised Jesus from the dead and that this is the event that has elicited the outpouring of God’s Holy Spirit (Acts 2:14–36). In order to convince his audience of this, Peter appeals to a variety of Jewish Scriptures (Joel 2:28–32; Ps 16:8–11; 110:1; 132:11). Yet the event that has initiated Peter’s interpretation is, of course, the theophany and ensu-

ing speaking in new languages as described in Acts 2:1–13, and Luke emphasizes that this event was seen and heard (e.g. Acts 2:6, 8, 11, 33). It is the impact of this event that causes the people to be surprised, perplexed, and agitated (2:6, 7, 12). Liggins also sees Peter drawing upon “Greco-Roman cultural interaction,” namely, the use of rhetoric in his speech (e.g. Aristotle’s three persuasive proofs). Another paradigmatic passage is found in Luke’s first summary description of the early Christian community in Acts 2:42–47. The text depicts the Christian community as its own means of persuasion as the believers devote themselves to the apostolic teaching of the Scriptures; experience signs and wonders in their midst; and above all live as a unified community that engages in fellowship, the sharing of resources, and the eating of meals together. As a result, the community was “enjoying the favor of the people” and “the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved” (2:46–47). This, according to Liggins, “very strongly implies a persuasive role played by the appealing nature of the Christian community in these conversions” (p. 135). Liggins also devotes an extended amount of time to discussing the paradigmatic passage of Paul’s Areopagus speech in Acts 17:22–31. Paul appeals to the Jewish Scriptures in his proclamation in the synagogue and in the marketplace (17:17) as well as in his proclamation that God is the singular Creator who needs no temples or sacrifices (17:24–25). In addition, the speech is rife with Greco-Roman cultural interaction as Paul employs rhetoric, engages the thought of the philosophers, and appeals to Greco-Roman poets.

Having examined all of Acts for data on the use of persuasive phenomena, Liggins devotes the final chapters to an examination of their “Impact upon Early Audiences of Acts.” He makes a strong argument that the earliest audiences would have been able to observe and appreciate the persuasive phenomena employed by Luke. Furthermore, the audiences “would have believed that evangelistic proclamation and mission needed to continue and that they had a role to play. They would also have looked to Acts for guidance on the extent to which, and manner in which, persuasive phenomena ought to be associated with their evangelistic proclamation and mission” (p. 250).

Many Convincing Proofs gets at the heart at what is undoubtedly one of the primary purposes of Acts, namely, to convince others of the truth of the gospel and to establish further confidence in those who already believe. To this end, Liggins shows how Acts marshals a variety of persuasive phenomena to accomplish these goals. The comprehensive reading of the book of Acts makes for a helpful handbook on these phenomena. Nevertheless, the attempt to be comprehensive results in some thin explanations at both the historical and exegetical level. In this regard, Liggins’s chapter on Greco-Roman and Jewish persuasive phenomena is never really brought to bear in a meaningful way upon his later reading of Acts. Readers could discern the persuasive phenomena without the context. Further, it is doubtful whether the majority of the material covered in that chapter actually concerns making proselytes (e.g. the imperial cults?), and thus doubts are raised in my mind as to the relevance of the material. In my view, a host of questions related to the nature of conversion in the ancient Mediterranean world need to be answered for this material to be brought to bear on Acts.

Liggins's argument would have been greatly improved had he narrowed the scope to something along the lines of *one* of his four means of persuasion. For example, how does Acts employ *supernatural events* in a way that is similar to and different from Greco-Roman cult transfer narratives? Or how does the life of Hellenistic philosophical *communities* compare and contrast with Acts's depiction of the Christian community? Further, some of Liggins's methodological moves from his posited audience to their beliefs are questionable. To give one somewhat random example, he suggests that, since the audiences of Acts were "influenced by both Jewish and Greco-Roman historical contexts," they "would predominantly have possessed a discriminating belief in the supernatural" (p. 43). These kinds of moves from context to the positing of beliefs about a vast group of people are flawed at a number of levels of historical analysis.

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Cracking the Foundation of the New Perspective on Paul: Covenantal Nomism Versus Reformed Covenantal Theology. By Robert J. Cara. Reformed, Exegetical and Doctrinal Studies. Fearn, Ross-shire, Great Britain: Mentor, 2017, 312 pp., \$19.99 paper.

A backlash against the new perspective on Paul has gained momentum in the present millennium, led largely by North American biblical scholars of conservative reformed persuasion. Robert J. Cara is Provost, Academic Dean of all campuses, and Professor of New Testament at the Charlotte campus of Reformed Theological Seminary, the institution that he has served since 1993.

No flesh, said Paul, will be justified before God by "works of law." Especially since the Reformation, many have supposed this meant seeking merit by Torah-obedience, an endeavor Paul had pursued in Judaism; instead God turned Paul toward salvation in Christ alone, by grace alone, through faith alone. However, an alternative reading garnered support in the 1980s, namely, that what Paul negated was ethnocentrism among his Jewish compatriots (symbolized by observance of circumcision, Sabbaths, and ritual purity laws that marked Jews out from Gentiles). Paul disallowed not soteriological works righteousness, because no Jew advocated that, but Jewish(-Christian) insistence that Gentiles must proselytize to belong in the covenant community. This shift spawned reevaluations of Paul's language of salvation (notably of justification) in its nexus with ecclesiology, nuanced differently by N. T. Wright, J. D. G. Dunn, R. B. Hays, and others. The "sola-slogans" of the Reformation lost punch.

The stimulus behind these novel twists was E. P. Sanders's *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977). This *tour de force* ostensibly demonstrated from a mass of rabbinic, Qumranic, apocryphal, and pseudepigraphal Jewish texts that formative Judaism was a religion of grace much like Paulinism. Jews in general viewed Torah obedience as a response to God's prior election of Israel (for "staying in"), not as a grim way to earn God's favor (for "getting in"). The controversial new perspective on Paul stemmed, then, from a new perspective on Judaism. I read

Sanders's monograph shortly after it appeared and keenly followed the ensuing debate about the new perspective on Paul from the start—all the more so once my university appointed Sanders (1984) in place of my late first doctoral mentor and made "Tom" Wright (in 1987, chaplain of Worcester College, Oxford) internal reader at my oral defense.

Conservative critics of the new perspective on Paul might theoretically show how it misreads either Paul or Judaism. Most critiques have focused on Paul, for Protestants defend their historic confessions from the canon of Scripture, from Paul in particular. However, another reason is that few NT scholars have the expertise in rabbinics to examine Sanders's formidable case technically. Yet Cara opts to go after this "foundation": "Of course, this is a polemical book" (p. 17). His thesis, in his own words, is that "there are many examples of works righteousness (Pelagian and semi-Pelagian versions) in Second Temple Judaism [*sic*] literature and, therefore, Sanders' uniform covenantal nomism is mistaken" (p. 29).

The first of Cara's five chapters defines the new perspective on Paul and outlines his strategy for attack. To prove that Sanders homogenized the picture, one need only point out some contrary instances, places where Jews pointed to Torah for salvation. Chapter 2 contrasts the dim view of human works in Reformed dogmatics to the more optimistic tone of covenantal nomism, raising some "broad-brush" objections to the latter. Sanders may have distanced Judaism from hard Pelagianism, but the Jewish pattern of religion he discerns is in fact semi-Pelagian. The core of Cara's monograph consists of his third and fourth chapters. The third quotes select passages from certain Jewish texts (4 Ezra, Sirach, 2 *Apocalypse of Baruch*, *Testament of Abraham*, *Psalms of Solomon*, 1QH, 1QS, 1QpHab, 4QMMT, *m. Abot*, *m. Sotah*, *t. Qiddushin*, *t. Sanhedrin*, *b. Rosh Hashanah*) that appear to teach salvation by works, with minimal exploration. Chapter 4 reviews "Deutero-Pauline" texts in the NT (Eph 2:8–10; Titus 3:4–7; and 2 Tim 1:8–10—texts usually minimized by proponents of the new perspective) that inveigh against works righteousness in the religious atmosphere of the Pauline churches. All these passages indicate that striving for salvation by works was a live issue, both among Jews and in the environment of some churches, even though it did not characterize Judaism as a whole. Therefore, the Reformers took Paul's pronouncements against "works of law" in their natural sense, and their *solas* are vindicated. A fifth chapter rehearses the argument. An appendix of 66 pages introduces novices to Jewish literature of the Second Temple period: its parties and its main categories (OT apocrypha, OT pseudepigrapha, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the rabbinic corpus—mentioning but not treating the Septuagint, Philo, Josephus, and the targums).

With Cara, I concur that proponents of the new perspective have accepted Sanders's Judaistic pattern too uncritically. *Cracking the Foundation* contains (just) enough evidence to outline its contention that some Jews at least were oriented toward works righteousness. Yet Cara's prosecution is less cogent than it could be.

Cara insists on pressing Jewish material into foreign rubrics of Christian theology. Even though he knows the terms "Pelagian" and "semi-Pelagian" to be anachronistic for Judaism of the relevant period (pp. 40–41) and knows furthermore that the new perspective on Paul charges traditional Protestantism with im-

posing categories of its own onto the first century (p. 42), he still goes ahead and does it throughout the book. After all, Protestantism “is true!” (p. 41). Given that the new perspective aims to view Paul in his setting, is it not incumbent on its opponents for the sake of fruitful dialogue to seek more historically appropriate descriptors?

More problematic is the ambiguity of many Jewish passages that Cara offers in his third chapter as evidence of merit-based thinking. For example, how does 4 Ezra 7:105, “[On judgment day] everyone shall bear his own righteousness or unrighteousness” differ in substance from Gal 6:5, “Each man will have to bear his own load”? What distinguishes Sir 3:30, “Almsgiving atones for sin,” from Prov 16:6, “By loyalty and faithfulness iniquity is atoned for”? Again, compare Sir 29:12, “Store up almsgiving in your treasury,” with Acts 10:4: [Heavenly angel to Cornelius:] “Your alms have ascended as a memorial before God.” On *m. Abot* 4:11, “Penitence and good deeds are like a shield,” Cara comments ominously: “Allowance is made [in Tannaitic Judaism] for repentance, but it is still true that good deeds in conjunction with repentance are required” (p. 105). Did not John the Baptist enjoin, “Bear fruit that befits repentance” (Matt 3:8)? Does every mention of works, obligation, or final reward equate to semi-Pelagianism?

To get at the very real chasm between early Jewish nomism and Pauline soteriology, then, it is not enough to pluck Jewish works passages and arrange them in an anthology. One must probe their meaning within their native religious outlook and worldview. Sanders’s sophisticated attempt to do just that passes right over Cara. Cara might reasonably assume Christian readers have a working framework for interpreting verses of the NT, but he does little to help us see his chosen Jewish passages on their own terms, despite his care in dating the documents. Out of a highly textured discussion by Philip Alexander, a career specialist in rabbinics, going into the interface between Tannaitic literature, intricate in itself, and extraneous questions put to it by Christian theology, Cara distils a single line stating that Tannaitic Judaism was “fundamentally a religion of works righteousness” (p. 105, n. 68). The much more comprehensive and industrious prior study of Friedrich Avemarie, *Tora und Leben: Untersuchungen zur Heilsbedeutung der Tora in der frühen rabbinischen Literatur* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1996) finds no place in Cara’s bibliography.

In his fourth chapter on key late Pauline passages, curiously the longest chapter although it plays but a supporting role, Cara seems on firmer ground. He marshals commentators committed to the new perspective on Paul who share his conviction that Eph 2:8–10, Titus 3:4–7, and 2 Tim 1:8–10 oppose salvation by works. Whether Paul wrote these books (as Cara holds) or not (as some from the New Perspective suppose), they portray how some first-century readers understood Paul not later than a generation after he wrote his generally recognized epistles. This enhances the probability that Paul had works righteousness in his eye when he spoke of “works of law.”

Cara has cracked the foundation of the new perspective on Paul for lay people, seminary students, and pastors. However, scholars looking for complete demolition in English must await a work having the scale, sensitivity, and penetration of the work by Avemarie.

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Paul's Large Letters: Paul's Autographic Subscriptions in the Light of Ancient Epistolary Conventions. By Steve Reece. Library of NT Studies 561. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2017, x + 317 pp., \$108.00.

Paul's curious reference in Gal 6:11 to the large size of his handwriting has been accounted for in several creative ways. While scholars generally agree that the passage serves as evidence that Paul personally penned the conclusion of his epistle after dictating his thoughts to a scribe, there is less agreement as to why his handwriting was large and why he wanted his readers to make this observation. Among other suggestions, it has been argued that the "large letters" of Paul were the result of poor eyesight or some type of deformity or injury sustained to his hand, the former possibly resulting from his conversion experience while the latter possibly resulting from either persecution or his labor as a tentmaker or leatherworker (cf. Acts 18:3). Alternatively, it has been suggested that Paul wished to emphasize a certain theme or statement in his epistle, a practice believed to be similar to the modern practice of typing in all capital letters or in bold font. Aware of the difficulties with many of the common theories, some have simply concluded that the meaning of Paul's words cannot be determined with confidence. The conclusion of Douglas Moo is perhaps reflective of many interpreters when he writes: "At the end of speculation, we cannot know why the letters here are large" (*Galatians* [BECNT; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013], 392).

Rather than accounting for Paul's large handwriting by appealing to his physical condition or to his attempt to emphasize a certain point, Steve Reece argues that an examination of the extant primary documents from the period close to Paul's lifetime leads to a less sensational but more plausible explanation, namely, that Paul was simply following a common literary practice of his time. As he observes, "A substantial percentage [of ancient letters] have been dictated to a professional scribe and then subscribed in the handwriting of the author. ... Often a smaller, tidier, more regular and uniform, even elegant, professional hand gives way to a larger, thicker, more awkward and clumsy, unpracticed, amateurish hand" (p. x). The large handwriting in the subscription of several ancient letters, Reece observes, "is not a deliberate mark of emphasis but simply an indication of the amateurism of the writer" (p. 104).

The book is divided into two major parts, "Paul's Autographic Subscriptions," which includes chapters 1–7, and "Paul's Large Letters," which includes chapters 8–12. Part 1 considers common literary conventions in the first century. In chapter 2, for example, Reece discusses the role of ancient copyists and the con-

cept of literacy in the first century. He then provides an overview of what may be known about ancient letter writing from the Greek, Latin, and Jewish traditions (chaps. 3–5). Chapter 6 explores Paul's writing habits and concludes that Paul's literary practices were "unexceptional" (p. 40) in the sense that his epistles generally comported with the common literary practices of his time. In keeping with this observation, Reece concludes that Paul would have likely included autographic subscriptions in all his letters, not just those containing a reference to his writing in his own hand (i.e. 1 Corinthians, Galatians, Philemon, Colossians, and 2 Thessalonians). Chapter 7 examines the common functions of autographic subscriptions. Based on his study of numerous extant writings from antiquity, Reece concludes that, among other things, autographic subscriptions were used as a means of authenticating a writing's authorship, legalizing various proposals or promises contained within letters, and adding a personal touch. Each of these functions would have certainly been of benefit to Paul in his written correspondence to various churches and communities. Paul's awareness of false writings, for example, may be observed in 2 Thess 2:2, a possible indication that his subscriptions were used, at least in part, to authenticate his epistles. Reece also notes that Paul's subscription in the Epistle to Philemon would have made the epistle serve as an affidavit, thus legally obligating Paul to follow through with his promise to repay his "debt" (Phlm 19). This is similar to the use of the subscription in Galatians, an epistle that Reece observes reads much like a legal document (p. 200).

Having established how autographic subscriptions functioned in ancient letters, the second half of the volume (chaps. 8–12) attempts to explain why Paul's letters were large and why he may have drawn attention to this in Gal 6:11. The chapters in this section examine numerous writings excavated from Eastern Judea (e.g., those found in Wadi Murabba'at, Nahal Hever, and Masada), the Roman fort of Vindolanda in Northern England, and the numerous Greek writings from Egypt found in locations such as Oxyrhynchus. His extensive study of these primary documents reveals that nearly 80% of ancient writings included subscriptions (about 2,500 out of the 3,200 examined). Of those that did, a little more than 15% (about 425 out of the 2,500) included a subscription in a second hand. He further observes that of the writings with a second-hand subscription, "The author's hand is larger than the scribe's hand approximately 15% of the time, smaller about 55 percent of the time, and about the same size about 30% of the time. Regardless of the hand size, the first hand is almost always less proficient" (p. 138). Therefore, while the majority of ancient letters did not contain a second-hand subscription with large writing, it was certainly not rare. As Reece concludes, "There is not much that is truly extraordinary about [Paul's] subscription" in Gal 6:11. "Paul's practices here," Reece suggests, "largely comport with the epistolary conventions of his time" (p. 107) and would have revealed "his basic, though functional, level of handwriting ability in comparison to that of his scribe" (p. 108).

Following his examination of numerous writings from antiquity, Reece considers what his findings may reveal about the composition and early circulation of the Pauline letters. Among other insights, he demonstrates that it was the custom of ancient writers such as Alexander the Great, Pliny, Seneca, and Cicero to main-

tain copies of their letters and that it is probable that “Paul kept copies of his writings, including his letters” (p. 212). This conclusion has become more widely accepted in the scholarly world during recent decades and has been defended by a number of scholars including Harry Gamble, E. Randolph Richards, and David Trobisch. While there are good reasons to affirm Reece’s conclusion that Paul did in fact maintain a collection of his letters, some of the inferences he develops from this conclusion are not entirely convincing. For example, Reece expresses scepticism that Paul would have included references to his own handwriting in manuscripts produced for his personal collection. Such references, he reasons, would have been needless in manuscripts not intended to be dispatched or read in public settings. This observation leads Reece to an important conclusion regarding the early formation of the *Corpus Paulinum*. As he argues, “The references to autographic subscriptions in our inherited versions of several of Paul’s letters suggest that these letters are based on copies that were actually dispatched by Paul to his recipients” (p. 212). In other words, rather than the arguably more natural and less complicated explanation that the earliest collection(s) of Paul’s letters were based upon the duplicate copies in his possession, Reece concludes that the earliest collections or editions of Paul’s letters developed from the acquisition of individual writings that circulated in various locations throughout the Greco-Roman world.

Reece’s conclusion that Paul would have found it unnecessary to retain references to his own handwriting in his personal copies will certainly convince many readers. However, it might be asked why subsequent generations of Christians consistently included these references in the copies they produced despite the fact that no copy of Paul’s writings would have contained the large handwriting that Paul referred to in the originally dispatched manuscript. As is well known, numerous details pertaining to matters with little relevance to those other than Paul and his original readers appear throughout his writings. Among other things, his epistles include numerous references to his travel plans, greetings to individuals unknown to readers of subsequent generations, and many other references that might be deemed trivial or insignificant except to Paul and his original recipients. The preservation of these references renders Reece’s hypothesis of the formation of the Pauline corpus difficult to maintain given that it requires one to accept that Paul had no qualms omitting certain details from the personal copies of his writings even though scribes from subsequent generations saw fit to include not only the subscriptions but other seemingly trivial information. Is it truly plausible to assume that copyists in later centuries had greater reason to retain information in Paul’s epistles than Paul himself?

This disagreement aside, Reece is to be commended for his well-researched and well-written scholarly study of literary conventions in the first century, particularly the practice of appending autographic subscriptions. In addition to his analysis of a substantial number of primary documents from the Greek, Latin, and Jewish traditions, the volume includes dozens of images of these sources, a helpful feature that enables readers to observe several of the common literary practices of ancient writers. While perhaps too narrow in focus to engender a large readership or to be assigned for a course, those interested in expanding their knowledge about first-

century literary conventions and how this information enables interpreters to appreciate various literary features of the Pauline epistles will find Reece's work to be an exceptionally helpful resource.

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God and the Idols: Representations of God in 1 Corinthians 8–10. By Trent A. Rogers. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2/427. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016, xvii + 258 pp., €79.00 paper.

This Loyola University Chicago dissertation by Trent Rogers, under the supervision of Thomas Tobin, examines the flow of Paul's instruction in 1 Corinthians 8–10. Specifically, Rogers argues that "Paul selectively uses different Jewish traditions (of representing God and defining idolatry) in order to bolster his prohibition of idol food (*εἰδωλόθυτα*) and permission of marketplace food" (p. 28).

This dissertation unfolds in seven chapters. Chapter 1 highlights the (apparent) contradictions between 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 and surveys prior interpretations regarding Paul's coherence or incoherence. Rogers dismisses the conclusion of source critics who attempt to partition these chapters into multiple letters. While siding with those who view Paul's argument as a unified whole, Rogers nonetheless faults them for paying insufficient attention to "the ways that Paul represents God and its implications for how idols are portrayed" (p. 215). He therefore proposes that 1 Corinthians 8–10 can be better understood by comparing Paul's representation of God with that of other Hellenistic Jews.

Chapter 2 provides an initial exploration on the varied understandings of idolatry held by Hellenistic Jewish authors. While the author of *Joseph and Asenath* promotes strong dissociation from idols, Artapanus permits a greater degree of interaction, for he portrays Moses as the founder of Egyptian cults and theriolatry. Drawing on the works of Moshe Halbertal and Avishai Margalit, and Richard Phua, Rogers suggests that the way to understand the various Jewish authors' "arguments about idolatry is to examine the manner in which they represent God" (p. 56). At the same time, Rogers provides justification for his overall comparative project by "locating Paul as an author who is interacting with larger conversations occurring in Hellenistic Judaism" (p. 50).

In the next four chapters, chapters 3–6, Rogers examines the polemic against false religion as found in various Hellenistic Jewish authors. The structure of these chapters follows a regular pattern. Each chapter comprises 5 sections: section A provides an overview of the structure and argument of the pertinent sections within the respective works; section B analyzes the argument; section C, their representations of God; section D, their understandings of false worship; and section E concludes the chapter.

Chapter 3 examines the polemic against false religion in the Wisdom of Solomon, especially chapters 13–15. While Wisdom makes an argument for the Jewish understanding of God, it nonetheless incorporates Greco-Roman philosophical

critique within its arsenal of arguments. Wisdom portrays God as Creator, the Existing One, Father, and eschatological Judge. It organizes pagan religion into nature worship, idolatry, and theriolatry; and it considers false worship to be a combination of wrong thinking about God and wrong action. The effects of such false worship are experienced internally and externally as futile hope and divine judgment.

Chapter 4 investigates Philo's polemic against false religion in *De decalogo*. Philo portrays God as Creator, Father, King, and True Existence. According to Philo, false worship is to honor the creature rather than the Creator, to engage in polytheism, and to worship idols. False worship is, however, not just an external act. It also comprises false thinking about God in two primary categories: ignorance and delusion. In contrast to Wisdom which explains idolatry as a genuine but misdirected attempt to seek God, Philo "places the origin of idolatry in the prideful heart" (p. 131).

Chapter 5 analyzes Josephus's polemic against false religion in *Contra Apionem*. Josephus aligns himself with Greek philosophers who ridicule pagan gods. Greek gods are not gods, as they are controlled by their passions, are bound by Fate, and are too similar to humans. Josephus, by way of contrast, portrays the Jewish God as singular, impassable, free of anthropomorphism, and providential. False worship is the "worship of many gods and worship of gods with non-divine qualities" (p. 153).

In chapter 6, Rogers finally turns to the biblical text and probes Paul's polemic in 1 Corinthians 8–10. This chapter is understandably the longest. After a quick survey of the entire letter, Rogers methodically exegetes chapters 8–10. He notes that "Paul's argument is significantly shaped by the role of Christ in the community" (p. 206). Paul places God and Christ in parallel, portrays God as both Father and Creator, and considers Christ as the agent of salvation. The disagreement that Paul has with the strong in Corinth centers not on questions about the identity of God, but on practical implications these beliefs have with idols. Chapter 7 concludes the dissertation with a summary of the preceding chapters; a synthesis of arguments by Paul, Wisdom, Philo, and Josephus; and a brief recap of the significance of this study.

Rogers's dissertation is a fine example of careful scholarship. His survey of the relevant material in the Wisdom of Solomon, Philo, and Josephus is thorough. He systematically examines the structure of the texts, analyzes their overall argument, and teases out their representations of God and understandings of false worship. Rogers's handling of the biblical material is also judicious. He interacts meaningfully with the relevant secondary literature and makes sound exegetical decisions. For example, he distinguishes *εἰδωλόθυστα* from *ἱερόθυτον*. The former refers to food sacrificed to an idol and eaten within the temple precincts; the latter to food bought in the *macellum* and eaten at home. Rogers also explains the apparent contradiction between 1 Corinthians 8 and 10 as two stages in Paul's overall argument against eating *εἰδωλόθυστα*. In chapters 8 and 9, Paul argues on the basis of love for other believers; in chapter 10, Paul argues on the basis of faithfulness to Christ.

Rogers's exegetical conclusions are neither new nor novel. Many have previously argued that 1 Corinthians 8–10 is a unified argument that prohibits the eating of *εἰδωλόθυστα*. Moreover, Alex Cheung, Wolfgang Schrage, and John Brunt were

earlier advocates for the two-stage argument. Rogers is certainly aware that he is not the first to make such claims. He, however, asserts that his contribution “has been to show *how* Paul argues by employing various representations of God in order to make particular points about the essence of idols and the acceptable interactions with them” (p. 229).

Rogers is to be commended for suggesting a different approach to the analysis of a passage that is heavily plowed. The execution of his approach, however, is not fully satisfying. First, Rogers devotes half of the dissertation to the analysis of idolatry in the Wisdom of Solomon, Philo, and Josephus. Given the time spent developing this background material, the 8 pages that are devoted to a comparative analysis of Paul and these Hellenistic Jewish texts appear light. Second, since the OT plays a significant role in Paul’s argument, not least in 1 Cor 10:1–13, a chapter that summarizes the OT’s view of idolatry would be helpful. In order to make the dissertation manageable, this chapter could replace one of the chapters on Hellenistic Judaism. Third, Rogers’s stated contribution in this dissertation is to show *how* Paul argues against idolatry by using different representations of God. Given this affirmation, the two sections that specifically address this issue in chapter 6 are too thin. Section C (“Representations of God”) and section D (“Understandings of False Worship”) together comprise only 4 pages in a chapter that is 58 pages long. The main bulk of the chapter is devoted to an exegetical analysis of 1 Corinthians 8–10. Perhaps most of the material that could be included under these two sections is already embedded in his exegetical discussions. Yet the burial of such information within an exegetical analysis that reads like a commentary does not help to showcase his stated contribution.

My comments are not meant to detract from the significance of Rogers’s contribution; rather, they are meant to suggest ways in which his argument could be restructured so that it receives the attention it deserves. Prior studies on 1 Corinthians 8–10 have focused on the definition of idol food, the location where such food is eaten, and the rhetorical devices that Paul employs. By emphasizing the theological grounds, Rogers reminds us that Paul’s prohibition against the eating of εἰδωλόθυστα is primarily filtered through the lens of Christ.

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Interpreting Revelation and Other Apocalyptic Literature: An Exegetical Handbook. By C. Marvin Pate. Handbooks for NT Exegesis. Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2016, 240 pp., \$23.99 paper.

This book, by a notable scholar and prodigious writer in the field of biblical eschatology, is intended to help students interpret biblical apocalypses and related biblical material. Unfortunately, its focus is too broad and its execution too haphazard to be useful for this purpose. *Interpreting Revelation* is the fourth volume in Kregel’s Handbooks for NT Exegesis series and follows the format of all books in the series. As such, it is divided into essentially three parts. The first three chapters

discuss the nature and background of the genre of apocalypse and related literature; the next four chapters focus on the pragmatics of interpreting and communicating the message of apocalyptic texts in the NT (including fully developed examples of exposition); and a final chapter and glossary provide the student with a bibliography and vocabulary for studying apocalypses and other apocalyptic literature.

In the first three chapters of *Interpreting Revelation*, Pate gives an extended discussion of the genre of apocalypse (which Pate calls at times “apocalypticism,” “apocalyptic literature,” and “prophetic-apocalyptic”), including surveying scholarly discussion on the definition of the genre, on sub-genres within especially Daniel and Revelation, and on the development of apocalyptic eschatology. His primary concern is to argue that the function of apocalypse is to inform the audience that their current suffering is an eschatological experience of the covenant curses of Deuteronomy and that the covenant blessings in the form of the kingdom of God or temporary messianic kingdom would soon arrive if the audience would repent. In this he follows N. T. Wright’s contention that the Deuteronomic “story of Israel”—sin, exile, restoration—informs all Second Temple Jewish thinking. Chapter 1 introduces this idea; chapter 2 lays out the primary evidence for the thesis from a variety of proto-apocalyptic texts in the OT and from the Olivet Discourse and Revelation; and chapter 3 applies the idea to a number of common theological themes in seven representative biblical and extrabiblical apocalypses, arguing that the “story of Israel” informs every element of the genre of apocalypse as identified by the Apocalypse Group of the SBL Genres Project.

In the next four chapters of the book, Pate walks the reader through the process of interpreting and communicating an apocalyptic text from the NT. Chapter 4 focuses on preliminaries to interpretation, providing a survey of NT textual criticism (both history and practice) and suggestions for translating a passage from Greek to English. Chapters 5 and 6 focus on interpretation itself, using Rev 1:1–3 as a model. Pate first discusses introductory questions regarding Revelation and attempts to show that Revelation is an *ekphrasis* on the Arch of Titus. He then does a literary and theological analysis of Rev 1:1–3, linking the passage thematically to “the story of Israel” and structurally to the covenant structure of Deuteronomy. Finally, Pate moves from interpretation to exposition in three steps. “First-century Synthesis” works to summarize the passage in a single sentence, asks about the needs of the first-century audience addressed by the passage, and considers contemporary needs that parallel those of the first-century audience. “Twenty-first Century Appropriation” identifies the connections between Rev 1:1–3 and the modern audience, the corrections that the passage offers to the modern audience, and the commendations that the passage makes to the modern audience. “Homiletical Packaging” considers how to present the material to a modern audience around a central point (in the case of Rev 1:1–3, Pate offers that “God is faithful to his covenant with Israel through Jesus Christ”). Chapter 7 then provides two examples of moving from text to sermon with apocalyptic texts, one from Rom 11:25–27 and the other from 2 Thess 2:6–7.

Interpreting Revelation will reward the reader in a few ways. Pate does provide the reader with some basic training in exegetical method and with a basic bibliog-

raphy for the study of the genre of apocalypse generally and of Revelation specifically. Additionally, Pate has numerous interesting and provocative exegetical discussions throughout the book. Especially helpful are those in chapter 7. However, these limited strengths are outweighed by pervasive shortcomings.

Primary among these, despite the informed discussion of chapter 1, is confusion over the critical distinction between the genre of apocalypse and an apocalyptic eschatology. This confusion leads Pate to focus on a genre(?) that he calls “prophetic-apocalyptic,” by which he seems to mean what scholarship has called “apocalyptic literature” (which, of course, is not a literary genre), and on explicating a certain eschatology as “the key to interpreting the genre.” Such confusion eventuates in his inclusion of examples of interpretation from Romans 11 and 2 Thessalonians 2, both of which he considers more or less “thoroughgoing” “prophetic-apocalyptic” texts but neither of which (let alone Rev 1:1–3) is an apocalypse.

This illustrates a second shortcoming of the book. Idiosyncratic ideas dominate what should be a more general book. Pate focuses more on the idiosyncrasies of his approach to Revelation than on the more general hermeneutics involved in *how* to interpret an apocalypse. Thus, for example, beyond the extensive focus on the eschatologizing of the covenant curses and blessings in an apocalyptic eschatology (in and of itself a not especially remarkable claim), the reader is told that Revelation is an *ekphrasis* on the Arch of Titus and that the structure of Rev 1:1–3 (and of Romans) is based on the covenantal structure of Deuteronomy. However, Pate provides no direction to the student on how to determine whether these or similar claims (e.g. significant allusions to the OT) are valid. There is similarly no discussion on how to track down the symbolism involved in apocalypses, which is the primary mode of communication in these texts. In fact, while properly laying out a description of genre that includes a unique combination of form, content, and function, Pate so exclusively focuses on the idiosyncratic function of eschatologizing the covenant curses and blessings that he provides virtually no discussion of how form or content inform the hermeneutics of apocalypse. In general, the amount of space given to background and ancillary discussions could have been spent much more profitably on explanations of the methodology he is applying generally and what that looks like when applied to the genre of apocalypse.

A similar critique can be leveled against the bibliography in chapter 8. Because the bibliography is of the sources cited in the book and not a basic bibliography on the genre apocalypse and on Revelation, it both lists a number of works that are tangential to the general needs of the student of apocalypse and includes a number of Pate’s previous publications on eschatology. Thus, we are provided with thirty-five works on textual criticism, Greek language, and NT studies generally and seventeen on eschatology or related themes, as well as a large number of extraneous works—commentaries on the Gospels and some OT books, books on *ekphrasis* and the Roman triumph, and books on the historical Jesus. By contrast, there are only four or five standard works on the genre of apocalypse, with quite a few standard works conspicuously absent (e.g., John J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature* [3rd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016]; Paul D. Hanson, *The Dawn of Apocalyptic: The Historical and Sociological Roots of Jewish*

Apocalyptic Eschatology [2nd ed.; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979]; and D. S. Russell, *The Method and Message of Jewish Apocalyptic* [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1964]).

Worse, the bibliography lists several outdated works (works that have been updated or have been supplanted in a series) and sometimes includes incorrect information. Similar editorial mistakes abound. Sources are occasionally cited incorrectly (e.g. Stephen L. Cook's chapter in *The Oxford Handbook of Apocalyptic Literature* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014] is referred to incorrectly as "Prophetic-Apocalyptic" and cited incorrectly, along with his *Prophecy and Apocalypticism: The Postexilic Social Setting* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995] as support for the genre "prophetic-apocalyptic"). Greek words are sometimes misspelled or otherwise mistreated (e.g., *sēmainō* is called the noun form of *esēmanen*). Other infelicities and typographical errors confront the reader regularly. These sorts of mistakes unfortunately lend the book a careless feel.

Marvin Pate has produced a number of thoughtful and thought-provoking studies related to biblical eschatology in the course of his career. He knows the subject well. However, this scholarly emphasis dooms *Interpreting Revelation* as a handbook for exegesis of apocalypses or even of other NT apocalyptic texts. It is too heavy on Pate's understanding of apocalyptic eschatology and too light on explaining the practice of exegesis as applied to this unique genre.

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Ancient Apocryphal Gospels. By Markus Bockmuehl. Interpretation: Resources for the Use of Scripture in the Church. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2017, xiii + 330 pp., \$40.00.

In this "deliberately brief and accessible guide," Markus Bockmuehl offers an introduction to the so-called apocryphal or noncanonical Gospels. This volume comes as the latest installment in the series "Interpretation: Resources for the Use of Scripture in the Church," which is aimed at teachers and preachers. Bockmuehl describes his approach as having five emphases. First, the book is meant to be accessible to non-specialists but also non-sensationalist, and so a centrist position is taken on most scholarly debates within the field. Second, since all apocryphal Gospels in some way presume the existence of the NT (a point that he demonstrates through the course of the book), they should be read *alongside* the canon as "paracanonical" or "epiphenomenal," supplementing the four Gospels rather than truly rivaling them. Third, although perhaps surprising, it should be kept in mind that no ancient Gospel offers "an alternative account of the kind provided in the four New Testament gospels" or "trace[s] what Jesus did and said and suffered from his baptism through his public ministry to his crucifixion and resurrection" (p. 30). Apocryphal Gospels should therefore be seen as something fundamentally unique and distinct from the canonical ones. Fourth, attention is given to intertextuality, or the relationship between canonical and noncanonical Gospels, which Bockmuehl describes in terms of "antecedence and influence" rather than strict literary depend-

ence. Fifth is an emphasis on social memory, which considers “the social, cultural, ritual, and religious dimensions of how communities remember their past and understand their identity” (p. 31).

The book contains six chapters, the first of which is a comprehensive introduction to the subject. Here we find definitions of key terms such as “Gospel,” “apocryphal,” and “gnostic” (Bockmuehl generally avoids the latter due to its misleading connotations). Chapters 2–5 examine the texts themselves. In line with his proposal that apocryphal Gospels are “epiphenomenal” in nature, Bockmuehl groups them according to their relation to the basic narrative structure of the canonical Gospels. So, chapter 2 examines “Infancy Gospels”; chapter 3 moves to “Ministry Gospels”; chapter 4 then treats “Passion Gospels”; and chapter 5 focuses on “Post-Resurrection Discourse Gospels.” A final chapter summarizes and concludes the study. In addition to the main bibliography, each chapter is followed by a short list of “Suggested Further Reading.” Also included is a glossary of technical terms.

In chapter 2, Bockmuehl concentrates on the *Infancy Gospel of James* and the *Infancy Gospel of Thomas*, the most influential and best attested of the Infancy Gospels, though some minor texts such as the *History of Joseph the Carpenter* and the *Birth of Mary* also have brief descriptions. Chapter 3 deals with a wide range of texts called “Ministry Gospels.” Here, Bockmuehl first discusses the so-called “Jewish Christian Gospels” (those according to the Hebrews, the Nazoreans, and the Ebionites), which he suggests might have been nothing more than paratextual supplements to the canon—such as a series of marginal glosses—rather than stand-alone *books*. Other fragmentary Gospels on papyrus such as Papyrus Egerton 2 are then treated together. Mention is also made of Marcion’s Gospel, the *Diatessaron*, the so-called “Secret Mark,” and the Agbar legend.

The subject of chapter 4 is “Passion Gospels,” which concerns primarily the *Gospel of Peter* and similar fragments, but later Gospels associated with Pilate, Nicodemus, and Joseph of Arimathea are also introduced. Chapter 5 is about “Post-Resurrection Discourse Gospels” and includes lengthy discussions of the *Gospel of Thomas* and the *Gospel of Philip*. Other texts included here are mostly those discovered at Nag Hammadi.

The sixth and final chapter, “How to Read Apocryphal Gospels,” proposes a reading strategy for reflection and discussion. Here, Bockmuehl reiterates some of his central emphases: apocryphal Gospels do not replicate or challenge the basic biographical narrative of the authoritative four, and they are best viewed as supplements to the canon rather than true rivals to it. In reality, only a minority of these texts “seem to intend explicit subversion or displacement of the fourfold gospel” (p. 233), and these evidently had very limited circulation and acceptance. This proposal comes as a challenge to those who wish to overemphasize the importance of noncanonical texts at the expense of the canonical books (or to claim that they were suppressed by the church), but also to those who choose to ignore them altogether, since—as para-texts—they constitute a valuable source of information about early Christian reception of the canon.

By way of evaluation, it is a delight to be able to say that this volume delivers on its stated aims. The volume is indeed accessible (though not at all superficial) as well as non-sensationalist. Both points are extremely significant. Accessibility is key because we are dealing with a huge body of texts spanning several centuries and multiple languages and with a field in which specialists tend to be quite polarized. Bockmuehl's writing is clear, concise, and informed. Equally as important is the book's non-sensationalist tone. It will surprise no one to say that the study of apocryphal texts today is often associated with media hype and the hollow promises of discoveries that will "change everything." Bockmuehl offers none of this. From cover to cover, he maintains a refreshing level-headedness.

Bockmuehl's cautious and balanced tone does not, however, detract from the fascinating nature of the subject matter; far from it. Taking these texts on their own terms, he explores the diverse and strange world of apocryphal literature. It was particularly interesting to read about the ways in which apocryphal Gospels have influenced mainstream Christian beliefs. The *Infancy Gospel of James*, for example, has in many ways shaped the conventional telling of the Christmas story, even within Protestant evangelical circles—whether we know it or not.

One area of potential confusion relates to the structuring of the book. As noted, Bockmuehl groups the apocryphal texts in relation to the spine of the canonical narrative (infancy, ministry, passion, and resurrection). This organization sounds straightforward but results in a few wrinkles. For example, according to this schematic, where does the *Gospel of Thomas* belong? Its distinctive genre—a list of sayings with virtually no narrative—does not easily slot into this taxonomy. Bockmuehl treats it in the category of "Post-Resurrection Discourse Gospels," though he is forced to mention that there is little if any indication of a post-Easter setting (pp. 180–81). Further, the piecemeal nature of the text hardly strikes one as a *discourse*. Similarly, the *Gospel of Judas* is also grouped within this classification; but on what grounds? Its explicit setting is a week *before the passion*. In such cases, the student might be misled with regard to the genre of these texts and/or their relationship to the canonical Gospels. In Bockmuehl's defense, however, the categorization of apocryphal texts is notoriously slippery, as there is really no obvious way to organize some of them.

The running thesis of the volume is bound to ruffle some feathers. Indeed, it is staggering to consider the fact that "no extant or attested ancient apocryphal gospels are known to offer a consecutive narrative of the life of Jesus from his baptism by John to his death and resurrection" (p. 227), and, as such, they are derivative and epiphenomenal in nature. No doubt some will protest. For example, might this situation simply be the result of our fragmentary evidence? Who is to say whether or not a fragmentary text such as Papyrus Egerton 2 could not have, in its original form (which is now lost), offered a rival account of Jesus's life and ministry? Bockmuehl's thesis is unlikely to persuade everyone, especially those committed to Walter Bauer's depiction of early Christianity in terms of "orthodoxy and heresy." Nevertheless, the author addresses these and other potential objections head-on and mounts a simple but persuasive case that cannot be ignored.

Bockmuehl has managed to provide a resource that is not just effective in introducing a complex subject, but also in providing a helpful frame of reference for understanding *what the apocryphal Gospels are* and *what they are not* in relation to the Christian canon. All told, this is a superb resource for students and scholars alike. For anyone in search of a robust, balanced, and authoritative introduction to the apocryphal Gospels, look no further.

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Jesus the Eternal Son: Answering Adoptionist Christology. By Michael F. Bird. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017, xv + 155 pp., \$18.00 paper.

The early creeds of the Christian church (Nicea, Chalcedon) declare that Jesus was already God's Son "before all ages," that he preexisted his earthly life and "became incarnate," that he was "perfect in Godhead," "consubstantial with the Father." The statements in the creeds are formulated positively, but obviously their aim is also to invalidate competing claims. Other "Christologies" are not acceptable; they do not bear witness to the truth about Jesus. Among these other "unacceptable Christologies" is adoptionism: Jesus *became* God's Son when God *adopted* him as such. Various forms of adoptionism have been defended, some locating the moment of adoption at Jesus's baptism, others at his resurrection. Some emphasize God's election, some Jesus's achievement.

Michael Bird's *tour de force*, entitled *Jesus The Eternal Son: Answering Adoptionist Christology*, argues that no form of adoptionism is promoted or even clearly reflected anywhere in the NT, nor was any form of adoptionism believed in the earliest decades of the Christian movement. The conclusion of his argument is stated like this: "And that finally settles how, when, and who first saw Jesus as a human adopted to divine sonship: it occurred sometime in the 190s or early 200s, in Rome, through a group of Theodotians" (p. 122). Yet Bird's more important goal is not to pinpoint the date, the place, and the perpetrators of the viewpoint that he and the early creeds consider heresy. His primary concerns are *to deny* that adoptionism was a viewpoint held far earlier, *to dispute* the view that it is taught within the NT, and *to argue against* the claim that adoptionism was the earliest view of the apostles and the primitive Christian church.

Bird's arguments are thorough and in their detail sometimes complicated. Happily, the main progression of thought is clear and straightforward (though the numbering in what follows is my own): (1) Rom 1:3–4 does not teach adoptionism, as is often claimed. (2) The narrative of Acts does not present the apostles promoting adoptionism, nor is it plausible to hold that the author of Acts inadvertently retained vestiges of early adoptionist teaching subsequently abandoned. (3) Jewish monotheism, though not quite monolithic, leaves little or no room for adoptionism. (4) The fact that various Roman emperors were considered to be adopted into divinity does not justify the viewpoint that Christians claimed something analogous for Jesus. (5) Mark's Gospel (widely held to be the earliest Gospel) does not teach

adoptionism, but on the contrary it presents Jesus as the embodiment of Israel's God, as God's eternal Son. (6) Second-century Christian and quasi-Christian literature that is often read as if it teaches adoptionism, actually does not do so. (7) Theodotian is the first clear adoptionist.

Nobody disputes the claim that Theodotian was an adoptionist. At stake is the crucial question: Who else was before him? Most important of all, was adoptionism actually a very early viewpoint, a viewpoint held by the earliest teachers in the church and either taught or at least still discernible within the pages of the NT?

If point six above fails to persuade, that invalidates point seven, but it does not invalidate the main concern of Bird's book. If any of the other five fails to persuade, Bird's conclusion is to that degree jeopardized. I am in strong agreement with most of Bird's arguments (see below); nevertheless, I voice a few concerns up front.

First, Bird's book reads at points as though the burden of proof must self-evidently lie with those who claim there was an early adoptionism. It is not clear to me why this should be assumed, unless Bird's own personal conclusions about Jesus are taken to be "true until proven otherwise." On page 118, Bird states: "My maxim would be: a baptism and a divine voice that says 'my Son' does not an adoption make. ... Stricter criteria for adoptionism are required that explicitly describe Jesus as moving from a state of non-sonship to divine sonship." I doubt most of us would want to eliminate from our confessions and creeds all claims that are not "explicitly described" (and then cogently defended) within the pages of the NT. Bird is correct: the NT fails to define and defend adoptionism explicitly. Yet that in itself hardly justifies the conclusion that it was absent.

Second, in his insightful examination of Mark's Gospel, Bird refers to various places where Mark's text both relates and distinguishes between "God and Jesus." Actually, Mark's text often uses "Son" instead of "Jesus" at precisely these points, and it uses "Father" rather than "God" in many of them as well. Thus the distinction and the connection is frequently not between "God and Jesus" but between "Father and Son" (see esp. pp. 90–92). This move on Mark's part actually aligns the text even more closely with the later creeds than Bird himself points out (see p. 71, n. 17). This, of course, does not weaken Bird's overall assessment of Mark; it actually strengthens it.

So now to a few of my affirmations. Bird's interpretation of Rom 1:3–5 helpfully points out that Paul does not link Jesus's new status as "Son of God with power" to *his own* being raised from the dead but rather to *the (general)* resurrection of the dead. The resurrection (his in the middle of time; ours at the end) is the occasion for the glorification of what we already were before. Paul's view is that, at the resurrection, we remain who we were before, but now experience that identity "in power." Just so, at his resurrection, Jesus remained who he was before, but now experienced it "in power." Romans 1:3–5 is thus a non-adoptionist text (see p. 21).

Bird's careful articulation of when and how extrabiblical sources help us interpret Scripture is also helpful. I quote at length: "Such literature can illuminate Mark and illustrate the range of reasonable resonances that the Markan text might have with readers immersed in such literature and traditions. However, such paral-

lelism becomes deeply problematic when the internal coherence and cumulative weight of Mark's narrative construction of Jesus's identity is nonchalantly set aside when an interpreter finds a parallel text and proceeds to argue to the effect that Mark's depiction of Jesus as A is really the same as the description of figure B in a parallel text" (p. 105, and see continuation of this point on p. 106). A significant strength of Bird's study is his judicious weighing of the significance (and sometimes the non-significance) of the parallelism that he and/or others claim to find between the NT's Christological texts and relevantly similar texts, both Jewish and Roman.

It would be tempting to quote at even greater length Bird's helpful guidance on what constitutes a valid reading of a Gospel. I limit myself to five lines of it: "The question is, what reading best explains the author's intentions, the dynamics inside the text, the intended response for the implied reader, and the experiences of real readers that we encounter in reception history? A preferential reading is one that can hold together all those factors with a firm coherence over and against alternative proposals" (pp. 75–76). In a scholarly world where some practice an unbridled reader-response approach that endorses whatever any reader chooses to make of a text and where others forget that we are dealing in narratives that actually require interpretation, Bird's approach is to be applauded.

Finally, Bird's reading of Mark, as a narrative that subtly but persistently reveals a Jesus somehow acting on God's behalf yet doing so mysteriously *as the embodiment of Israel's God*, cogently argues for what more and more Markan interpreters are now concluding. This Gospel, once thought to contain the lowest Christology of the four Gospels, actually contains the highest. Its high Christology may be less explicitly declared than John's is, but it reveals, for those with eyes to see, a Jesus who is not merely God's agent, not merely the promised messiah, but God in the flesh, the fulfillment of God's promise to come and live among the people of God. If I may, here is Geddert quoting Bird quoting Geddert: "[In Mark,] Jesus is what only God can be, does what only God can do, and claims the allegiance that belongs only to the one true God" (p. 102).

If that is Mark's viewpoint, it is most assuredly non-adoptionist! Or is it perhaps anti-adoptionist? What if Mark is combating earlier lower Christologies? If that really was the state of affairs, it would be a damaging blow to what Bird aims to prove. I think Bird's proofs are quite successful. Yet undoubtedly they will continue to be assessed and debated by theologians, historians, and biblical exegetes aiming to discern the earliest Christology (or Christologies) of the Christian church. And behind that question is, of course, the more important question still: Who was Jesus really?

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Preaching in the New Testament: An Exegetical and Biblical-Theological Study. By Jonathan I. Griffiths. New Studies in Biblical Theology 42. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2017, xvi + 152 pp., \$22.00 paper.

“Many reading this book,” begins Jonathan Griffiths, “would share the conviction that the preaching of the word of God is at the heart of God’s plans for the gospel in our age; that it is vital for the health of the church; and that it is the central task of the pastor-teacher. However, many who share those convictions about preaching might struggle to articulate a fully adequate definition of preaching from Scripture” (p. 1).

Griffiths’s book intends to address this important need to ground our theology and thoughts about preaching in the Scriptures. He sets about his task in three parts. Part 1 briefly asserts that God speaks through his word, God acts through his word, and God is encountered in his word. Drawing on the work of Claire Smith, he concludes this section by discussing three verbs that function as semi-technical terms for gospel proclamation: *euangelizomai*, *katangello*, and *kerussō*. Part 2, which is the heart of the book, surveys selected texts from the Pauline corpus (2 Timothy 3–4; Romans 10; 1 Corinthians 1–2, 9, 15; 2 Corinthians 2–6; 1 Thessalonians 1–2) and from Hebrews for exegetical insights on preaching. Part 3 summarizes and synthesizes those findings, concluding that preaching is a proclamation of the word of God and is connected to the preaching of Jesus, the apostles, and the OT prophetic tradition. Preaching is a declaration of a God-given message, a divine and human activity that constitutes an encounter with God. As such it has particular significance within the Christian assembly, distinct from other ministries of the word, and requires that preachers be commissioned for their work.

To appreciate the value of this book—and it is valuable—it is necessary to understand what it is and what it is not attempting to accomplish. Griffiths himself states, “This volume does not pretend to be a comprehensive study of what the Bible, the New Testament, or even the epistles have to say about preaching” (p. 133). He has intentionally limited the length, scope, and technical details to make the work as accessible as possible. My experience with other volumes in this series conditioned me to expect a more comprehensive treatment of the theme of preaching. However, Griffiths’s work should be evaluated in the spirit of 2 Cor 8:12: “the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have.” The gift that we have been given by Jonathan Griffiths is not an exhaustive biblical-theological study of preaching but something more like a cross between an academic study and a sermon.

By the end of *Preaching in the New Testament*, I did not feel the whole topic had been exhaustively covered, nor were important terms rigorously defined, nor was each point convincingly argued as in a purely academic study. Instead, more like a sermon, the book exposes its readers to important passages on preaching in the NT and consistently draws beneficial observations from each passage, reinvigorating a high view of the centrality and importance of preaching. I found myself confronted with fresh insights from familiar passages and heard myself saying “amen” at

multiple times throughout the book, even as I continued to think of additional questions that I would have loved for Griffiths to address.

One such example is Griffiths's treatment of the difference between preaching and teaching. He chooses not to define the terms up front, but instead slips in a short but useful discussion of the differences between the two ideas in the chapter on the preacher's charge from 2 Timothy 3–4. He believes that preaching entails teaching but that it goes beyond teaching, because it contains an urgent call to respond. Such a distinction raises a question in my mind that Griffiths does not answer: does God speak through preaching in a way that he does not through teaching and if so, why? Yet his insight as to the role of response in distinguishing the two was excellent.

Of all the chapters in the book, the final two, "Hebrews" and "Summary and Conclusions," are the highlight. Together they are worth the price of the book. It is not unusual that in a study of biblical theology the conclusions would be important. Yet his summary chapter goes beyond just recapping previous findings and instead allows Griffiths to draw in passages from the Gospels and other passages of Scripture that were not part of the earlier exegetical studies. This helps solidify and broaden the base for his conclusions from the limited set of texts studied in part 2.

It is not surprising that the chapter on Hebrews shines so brightly. Griffiths did his doctoral work in this area, and it shows. Whereas the other chapters in the book settle for biblical texts that are expressly about preaching and explicitly applied to post-apostolic situations, this chapter recognizes that there are passages of the NT that are implicitly applicable to the subject of preaching. For example, writing about the form of Hebrews, Griffiths concludes that modern preaching should seek to be an exposition of Scripture in light of Christ, and exegesis and doctrinal teaching should lead to heart-engaging and urgent exhortation. In the discussion of Hebrews 3–4, Griffiths points out that, though the author of Hebrews never explicitly states that his readers are hearing God's voice through his sermon, the quote from Psalm 95 makes evident that "as the writer expounds God's word through his own sermon that the congregation will hear God's voice" (pp. 109–10). This is a sophisticated hermeneutical point: the author of Hebrews recognized that by expounding Psalm 95 in his sermon, God was speaking to the congregation through Psalm 95. Therefore, when modern preachers proclaim Psalm 95, Hebrews 3–4, or any biblical text, God is speaking to the modern congregation and calling for a response as well. This gives the preacher the freedom to recognize that, while a text is written into a particular historical context, it is not intended by God to speak only to that context. Furthermore, because God is addressing his people through the preaching of the word, Griffiths shows from Hebrews 10 and 12 that God is being encountered in the midst of the gathered assembly, recreating what is happening in heaven. For the preacher facing the week-to-week burden of preparing yet another sermon, this is an ennobling and vivifying truth, one that I am so grateful to Griffiths for pointing out.

While I understand and support Griffiths's desire to keep the book short and accessible, the decision to bypass the issue of NT prophecy is, in my opinion, questionable. Griffiths does include an excursus on the biblical-theological

connections between NT preaching and OT prophecy, but this begs the question: What about prophecy in the NT? Griffiths may agree with Wayne Grudem (*The Gift of Prophecy in the New Testament and Today* [2nd ed.; Wheaton: Crossway, 2000]) and others that NT prophecy and preaching are distinct, but this is not universally accepted. Even if it were, showing how preaching is distinct from prophecy would strengthen our understanding of preaching and allow Griffiths the opportunity to discuss the issue of spiritual giftedness as it relates to preaching, another missing component. The missed opportunity is most keenly felt in the chapter on preaching in 1 Corinthians where 1 Corinthians 14 is not mentioned, even though perhaps no other chapter in the NT is as focused on the communication of truth in the gathered assembly. In the closing chapter Griffiths acknowledges that 1 Corinthians 14 might have some applicability to the subject but concludes that detailed exegesis of that chapter is beyond the scope of the book.

Other readers will find other topics or passages they feel have been overlooked. Such is the case when an author tackles a topic as important and widespread as preaching in the NT but consciously attempts to keep a narrow focus and limited word count. What should not be missed is that Griffiths has provided an encouraging and useful look at preaching in the NT. This work has the potential to help those who study and teach preaching, but it holds special promise for those who are engaged in the work of preaching, confronting them with truths from God's word about their craft. The best feature of this work is that it does something similar to what preaching is supposed to do: it is an explanation of the word of God that enables God's own voice on the subject to be heard, and for that Griffiths is to be commended and we should rejoice.

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The Task of Dogmatics: Explorations in Theological Method. Edited by Oliver D. Crisp and Fred Sanders. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017, 249 pp., \$29.99 paper.

The Task of Dogmatics consists of essays presented at the 2017 Los Angeles Theological Conference (LATC). This annual ecumenical conference, which began in 2013 (the first four conferences focused on Christology, the Trinity, the atonement, and Scripture), is organized by the book's editors: Fred Sanders, a theologian known for his work on the Trinity, and Oliver D. Crisp, analytic theologian and self-proclaimed Reformed Catholic. *The Task of Dogmatics* (subsequently, *The Task*) has theological method for its topic. Both the 2017 conference and book are dedicated to the late John Webster, whose influence in the book is only surpassed by that of Karl Barth.

The majority of contributors draw out entailments of the currently predominant, Barth-influenced understanding of dogmatic knowledge. I will refer to this perspective as the "infiltrated-prison view," the two aspects of which—Christological infiltration and humanity's perspectival imprisonment—both play a significant role in the book; however, the former aspect has a more critical, re-

demptive function. Because of the significance of Christological infiltration, I will first discuss the chapters that directly emphasize it, then describe those chapters that emphasize perspectival imprisonment, and then present the chapters that offer an alternative. After the summary, I will critique the book with three sections: identification of the infiltrated-prison view's strengths, identification of this view's critical problems, and support for the alternative.

"Christological infiltration" represents the following position: Christ uses Scripture to produce, without rational explanation, people's theological conceptions. By means of Scripture's witness, Jesus enters into people's perspectival prison, redeems them, and reconstructs their understanding. Contemporary books on theological method support Christological infiltration by emphasizing divine presence in Scripture and by downplaying rational defenses. This emphasis upon divine presence sounds like the following: "The light of God that shines in Jesus Christ is transmitted, first of all, through the prism of the biblical witnesses" (Migliore, *Faith Seeking Understanding*, p. 40), and, "God becomes really present with people in His Word" (Forrester et. al., *Encounter with God*, p. 56). God's authoritative presence becomes a defense for minimizing the idea that Scripture's facts can or should be rationally justified, for, "The facts of Jesus' life as brute-facts are not revelation-bearing" (Quash, "Revelation," 341). God's presence in Scripture allows for downplaying its propositional truth: "I love the Bible, because I meet God in its pages. ... So what's the problem? Many Christians have been taught that the Bible is Truth downloaded from heaven" (Enns, *The Bible Tells Me So*, 3). Scholars understand the Christological infiltration view to uphold Scripture's authority apart from any rational basis.

The chapters that support Christological infiltration include Scott Swain, "Dogmatics as Systematic Theology" (pp. 49–69), and Katherine Sonderegger, "Holy Scripture as Sacred Ground" (pp. 131–43). Swain reduces all of systematic theology (including apologetic defenses and biblical studies) to dogmatic theology based upon his understanding of Scripture as a direct vision into God's glory, "a view of God from God in the presence of God" (p. 61). In similar terms, Sonderegger's chapter chiefly asserts Scripture's divine authority; however, she makes an explicitly Barthian appeal to the idea that the Bible becomes a "mode of divine presence" where people meet God (p. 141). According to both Swain's and Sonderegger's presentations, the Bible gives people access to God's glory such that they, without rational justification, must treat Scripture as designating God's authority.

Brannon Ellis and Josh Malone, "Divine Perfections, Theological Reasoning, and the Shape of Dogmatics" (pp. 178–88), and Darren Sumner, "Christocentrism and the Immanent Trinity" (pp. 144–61) also affirm the idea of Christological infiltration. Ellis and Malone defend it in their argument that all theology must be Christomorphic, that is, Christologically informed (p. 181), because Christ, by means of Scripture, is the "principle of theological knowledge" (p. 185). Their view comports with Sumner's understanding that Christology must be theology's norming pattern; he appeals to Barth to defend the idea that the immediate revelation of Christ grounds all theology. According to both these chapters, people un-

derstand God's eternal, Trinitarian self-sufficiency only through Christological infiltration: the self-justifying scriptural revelation of Christ.

The Christological infiltration view entails perspectival imprisonment, also held by the majority of *The Task's* contributors. Perspectival imprisonment can be described in the following way: people have no intellectual access outside their worldviews. This perspectival-prison view does not mean that people's worldviews always influence their understanding (for the alternative view emphasizes this point as well); rather, it holds that people have no critical means to arbitrate between worldviews. Contemporary theologians express their view of this imprisonment through absolute denials of any degree of neutrality or objectivity: "A near consensus declares fallacious the idea of neutrality of 'facts,' no less as it involves the alleged objectivity of the interpretation of those facts" (Sherman, *Revitalizing Theological Epistemology*, 140–41). Authors in *The Task* defend perspectival imprisonment through their theologies of humanity and of God's nature.

Swain and Sonderegger defend perspectival imprisonment by means of reasoning about humanity's creaturely situatedness. Swain presents his perspectival-prison view as "Theology is not a view from nowhere" (p. 61), which means that theology is not a critical understanding separated from personal predispositions. Because people are creaturely bound, humility requires the denial of a neutral, prison-free, "God's eye point of view" (p. 65). Swain implies that pride seeks to judge Scripture's perspective, whether justifying or critiquing it; by contrast, humility submits to the creaturely vision of Scripture-mediated glory. According to Sonderegger's Barthian perspectival-prison view, Scripture's authority is "compatible with error" within Scripture (p. 137). The presence of God in Scripture, not the truth of Scripture's factual claims, makes it authoritative; otherwise, people would need a view from outside their perspective in order to "choose between text and reader" (p. 141). No outside perspective is possible; according to Swain, this demands humble submission and, according to Sonderegger, it entails Scriptural fallibility.

Ellis's and Malone's argument and Michael Allen's presentation—in "Dogmatics as Ascetics" (pp. 189–209)—ultimately root perspectival imprisonment in God's incomprehensible nature. Ellis and Malone draw implications about humanity from God's self-sufficiency and simplicity, whereas Allen, following Webster, focuses on the Trinity. Both chapters understand these "mystery" doctrines to imply that humanity cannot reason to God from within their perspectival prisons. People must simply submit to the Christological revelations of the Trinity and of God's aseity. These doctrines did not arise from and cannot be comprehended within people's prisons; therefore, people must intellectually deny themselves and find satisfaction in the mysteries that God provides through Christ in Scripture.

Presenting an alternative to the infiltrated-prison view, Kevin Vanhoozer's "Analytics, Poetics, and the Mission of Dogmatic Discourse" (pp. 23–48) and Henri Blocher's "Permanent Validity and Contextual Relativity of Doctrinal Statements" (pp. 107–130) advocate for a perspective that people are not absolutely cut off from rational evaluation by their perspective. Rather, according to what I will call a "clarified-perspective view," God enables interpreters to make sound evalua-

tions of Scripture. By using language, God brings about people's understandings of his reality in Christ.

According to Vanhoozer, theology is constituted through the linguistic formation ("poetics") of biblically generated thoughts and experiences: God enables people to understand his communication, drawing them into his economy of grace through the poetic formulation of sound judgments from and about Scripture (pp. 27–30). Similarly, Blocher makes the case that permanently valid truths can be translated across contexts (pp. 126–27). The dogmatic task is to formulate or to translate the Trinitarian, biblical phenomena in such a way as to bring about clarity of understanding.

In terms of critique, I will first discuss the strengths of (both aspects of) the infiltrated-prison view, then underscore critical problems with it, and finally argue that Vanhoozer's and Blocher's clarified-perspective view provides a clear path forward.

Positively, the Christological infiltration view encourages Christian dogmatics. Specifically, it affirms God's continuous redemptive activity in history rather than dismissing it out of hand, as does secular "scientism," which holds that truth must be repeatable and testable. Satisfyingly, all the contributors affirm that theology must not be limited to humanity's finite comprehension; rather, God is understood to work freely to illuminate his people. As such, these theological perspectives on dogmatic method are greatly superior to views that reduce theology to what humanity can comprehend.

Similarly, the book's dominant perspectival-prison view serves to encourage absolute dependence upon God's revelation. Just as the Reformation doctrine of total corruption magnifies God's saving grace, so also perspectival imprisonment magnifies God's grace in theology. Certainly, any adequate Christian understanding of knowledge must highlight that knowledge comes solely as a divine gift. Perspectival imprisonment is one way (though not the best, as I will argue) to conceptualize this idea.

Moreover, positively, the infiltrated-prison view serves church unity by providing common ground by which theologians across the ecumenical spectrum may freely speak theologically to both academy and church without continuously having to defend the possibility of theology. Though the contributors disagree about many matters, the widespread philosophical agreement creates a basis for analyzing Christian theology solely from within "the prison" of a Christomorphic perspective.

The first major problem with perspectival imprisonment is that it lends itself to theological anarchy as theology ultimately finds its authoritative grounding in itself rather than in Scripture and history. Dogmatic anarchy appears in the book in Sameer Yadav's chapter, "Christian Doctrine as Ontological Commitment to a Narrative" (pp. 70–86), in which historical reality and Scripture itself are taken captive in people's perspectival prison. In the spirit of George Lindbeck's (post)liberalism, Yadav proposes that the doctrinal narrative grounds itself. Tragically, anarchy results, as anyone who formulates a "Christian narrative"—Yadav states that this likely includes Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses—is legitimately

involved in Christian dogmatics (p. 78 n. 15). A position such as Yadav's should be troubling to anyone who believes in divinely-given doctrines that have been authoritatively revealed in Scripture and in the historical events presented in Scripture.

The second major problem is that perspectival imprisonment cannot help but result in dogmatics that is experientially determined: if the historical record of special revelation does not form the doctrinal rule, then only personal experience remains as a standard. The most evident experientialist dogmatics occurs in James M. Arcadi's "The Word of God as Truthmaker for Church Proclamation: An Analytic Barthian Approach to the Dogmatic Task" (pp. 162–177). Arcadi argues that a church's Sunday morning dogmatic proclamation must be judged by the degree to which Christ reveals and reconciles. The church's dogmatic task, given the Christ-event, is not ultimately to proclaim the historical death and resurrection of Christ or to expound correct Scriptural teaching but to generate by any means—including fog machines or a distorted Fender—conditions that "put the congregation in contact with Jesus Christ the truthmaker" (p. 176). While Arcadi seeks to differentiate his view from theological pragmatism or convenience, similar to these views, he offers no critical means to identify genuine contact with Christ.

A final problem is that perspectival imprisonment results in instability of knowledge. For example, Sonderegger's argument for scriptural fallibility results from the prison-induced destabilization of knowledge. Similarly, NT theologian Chris Tilling, in "Knowledge Puffs Up, but Love Builds Up": The Apostle Paul and the Task of Dogmatics" (pp. 87–106), utilizes Scripture to defend knowledge destabilization along "Barthian" lines. Tilling argues that Paul, in 1 Corinthians 8, binds knowledge "to the name Jesus Christ and to the relational or participatory nature of necessary knowing" (p. 100). In Tilling's understanding, even God's oneness is not a "brute theological fact" or "conceptual abstraction" but must be relational, participatory, and provisional (p. 100). Because knowledge is always relational (prison-dependent), the Corinthians should not have claimed to possess objective knowledge of God. A better understanding than Tilling's, however, is that Paul rectifies the Corinthians' contextual misapplication of a correct, abstract conceptualization; by no means does the apostle destabilize knowledge by absolutizing its provisionality.

Another chapter that introduces dogmatic instability is Gavin Ortlund's "Why Should Protestants Retrieve Patristic and Medieval Theology" (pp. 210–33). Although he rightly defends patristic and medieval retrieval, Ortlund overreaches when he critiques B. B. Warfield and others for seeking to filter historical theology instead of aiming to listen to it. In contrast, Ortlund calls for theologians to appreciate church history "on its own terms and in its own context" (i.e. according to their own perspectival prisons) rather than viewing history as something primarily to be "disentangled" by the Reformation perspective (p. 215). According to Ortlund, Protestant theology cannot claim to be a stabilizing perspective, for Reformation doctrine is not "the castle in which we safely live"; indeed, theologians should not have "a practical *sola reformatione*" (pp. 214–15). But in response to Ortlund, if not even the Reformation paradigm—the Pauline gospel (represented by

the five *solas*)—can be thought of as relatively secure, then the rule has become *sola instabilitatem*.

In conclusion, I offer a preliminary commendation for Vanhoozer's and Blocher's clarified-perspective view. While the complexity of *The Task* will not greatly serve busy pastors, scholars interested in the future of theological method beyond Barth will find Vanhoozer's and Blocher's chapters to be valuable. Interestingly, both contributions support their clarified-perspective view with sophisticated appeals to contemporary philosophy. Vanhoozer uses Charles Taylor's understanding of language as a constitutive "medium of intersubjectivity, an enabling condition" for forms of thinking and experience (p. 31). Importantly, Vanhoozer's theological theology serves to justify historical inquiry. Similarly, Blocher appeals to Paul Ricoeur and Taylor to argue that the parameters of the original, historical context forever determine the validity of Scriptural statements. This validity does not change even as scholars translate Scripture's meaning into a new context. Instead of using the picture of a perspectival prison, Blocher uses the illustration of an ever-present but unnecessary mist that theologians like himself must thin (pp. 107–8).

Such insistence on intersubjectivity and translation put significant space between these two theologians and the others. This difference is manifest in the gap between Vanhoozer's portrait of Webster as a perspective-clarified theologian (pp. 31–37) versus Allen's presentation Webster as a prison-infiltrated theologian (pp. 195–200). Readers of *The Task* will have to decide which is the better construction of Webster; either way, evangelical method will still be better served by the clarified-perspective view.

If Vanhoozer and Blocher are correct, and I suspect they are, then people are not imprisoned after all. Language serves as a God-given medium by which he leads people to justify doctrine by poetically formulating (Vanhoozer) and validly translating (Blocher) thoughts and experiences of people separated from one another subjectively, culturally, and spacio-temporally. May Christianity's eternally valid and historically revealed truths ever be poetically translated to the greater glory of God.

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The Trinitarian Christology of St. Thomas Aquinas. By Dominic Legge. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017, 256 pp., \$95.00 hardback.

The evangelical theological world is going through something of a renewal of interest in the work of Thomas Aquinas. The present offering by Dominic Legge, who teaches at the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, DC and who is also the Assistant Director of the Thomistic Institute, is going to be welcomed as an excellent introduction to the Christology of the Angelic Doctor.

Legge's aim is to demonstrate that the Christology developed by St. Thomas is Trinitarian through and through. The perception that he wishes to dispel is that Aquinas does not pay sufficient attention to the actual events of salvation history

and that he develops his Christology in a predominantly abstract manner. Karl Rahner has been responsible for this perception in large measure, through his attack on Aquinas's notion that any of the divine persons might have become incarnate. If that is the case, Rahner suspects, there is no intrinsic relationship between the incarnate Lord and the eternal Son, as a unique divine person.

A second common critique at which he aims suggests that Aquinas's Christology is too singly driven by the notion of the hypostatic union, so that no room is left for an operation of the Spirit in the life of Jesus. Should that be the case, Christ's personal holiness and activity would be explained by his being the second person of the Trinity, leaving the Spirit to idle, and by consequence rendering Christ inimitable by the faithful.

Legge proposes to address these very serious concerns by setting Christology within a theology of the divine missions, as the proper framework for understanding the person and work of Christ. He thus divides the book in three parts. The first part unpacks a theology of the divine missions in general terms; the second part focuses on Christology proper, more specifically on the hypostatic union; finally, in the third part, Legge discusses at length the relationship between Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Legge rightly situates the Christological problematic under a theology of the divine missions in part I. From a Thomistic standpoint, this is fairly standard. For the readership of this Journal, however, it needs to be pointed out that without a proper anchoring of the person and work of Jesus Christ in its triune fount, the Christological mystery will be misunderstood. Tracing Christology to the mission of the Son reliably grounds the historical person in the procession of the Son. Moreover, as Legge ably shows, it properly connects the mission of the Son to the mission of the Spirit, and thus Christ himself to the Spirit. Protestants have, by and large, drifted away from a framework of the divine missions and from the service of this doctrine as a kind of doctrinal control. One can speculate about the reasons for this, but my personal suspicion is that it has to do with a particular Reformational aversion to scholastic language and metaphysical notions. By the time Protestant theologians return to metaphysical work, somehow the doctrine of the divine missions never recovers its controlling function.

A mission is, according to Aquinas and Legge, the extension of a procession to include a relationship to a temporal and created effect. Because it is the extension of a procession, it includes in it the other processions, including their order in relation to one another. In a divine mission no change takes place in the Trinity, or in the divine person itself. Rather, the created effect is the one that is changed in the process of being "drawn" into this relation.

Legge makes much of the language of being "drawn." The notion of the divine missions indicates a movement whereby creation comes forth from God (*exitus*) but is also in the process of returning to God (*reditus*). The created effects of the missions are precisely the vectors according to which we are drawn back into the Trinity. These distinctions are deeply fecund. The notion of a created effect allows for a distinction between the common and inseparable operation of the whole Trinity and the distinct *termini* of the operations. The effects themselves,

while produced by all three persons, nevertheless orient the creature to one particular person of the Trinity. A distinction between efficient and exemplar causality explains this. God's efficient causality is single, because the three persons are a single principle of divine action *ad extra*. However, the various effects they create have a specific relationship to distinct divine persons.

Particularly interesting from an evangelical perspective is the discussion of the mission of the Holy Spirit, whose effect is the creation of so-called "habitual grace," or that quality of the soul by which we are disposed to receive the person of the Holy Spirit. Legge argues that Aquinas "affords only a relative priority to habitual grace. The true priority in a divine mission is not on the side of the creature or created effect, but on the side of the divine person who is sent." (p. 41). The presence of the divine person and the created effect that is brought about are inseparable. Thomas uses the analogy of the seal to explain this: the seal is the presence of the divine person, while the shape left is the created effect that is the consequent effect of its presence in creation. It is important for Protestants to come to grips with this discussion, because it grounds the debate about the priority of created grace or uncreated grace in salvation. Protestants typically worry that the language of habitual grace conditions justification and union with Christ upon a formal modification and elevation of the soul, typically through love, in addition to faith. Legge does not enter into this ecumenical controversy; however, he clarifies much about what Thomas means by habitual grace.

Under this same Part I, Legge engages in a discussion of invisible and visible missions. The invisible missions are those in which the divine persons are sent to dwell in the believer, whereas the visible missions imply created effects that are perceptible through the senses. It is notable that Aquinas argues that there are four visible missions of the Holy Spirit: "at the baptism of Christ, at the transfiguration, in Christ's breath in the upper room on the evening of Easter Sunday, and at Pentecost" (pp. 56–57), while the Spirit has had invisible missions throughout salvation history, even prior to the visible missions of the Son. This raises the all-important question of the relationship between the missions. Aquinas holds that there was a mission of the Holy Spirit to the patriarchs, for example. But this raises a dilemma, because it implies that there can be a mission of the Spirit in isolation from, or at least prior to, the mission of the Son. Also, if we grant with Legge that there was an invisible mission of the Spirit to the Virgin Mary at the conception of Jesus, then we also have to grant that the mission of the Spirit is constitutive, and a condition, of the mission of the Son. The implications of this for *Filioque* ("and the Son") are not hard to miss. If processions are revealed by the missions, and the mission of the Spirit makes possible the mission of the Son, it should follow that the Spirit himself plays a role in the procession of the Son himself, just as the Spirit does in the Son's mission. It is somewhat disappointing that Legge does not enter in this conversation among Thomist (and Lonerganian) scholars about the order of the missions. In fact, Legge's discussions of dissonant literature are usually confined to the footnotes, with one or two exceptions.

The nature of the hypostatic union is treated in part II. As we saw, Legge is trying to respond to a number of allegations that seem to center on the relationship

between the Christ event and the second person of the Trinity. The difficulty is apparently created by the doctrine of inseparable operations, which holds that every economic action of the Trinity has all the persons as subject and agent; as such, there are no proper actions of the persons in the economy. How, then, can the incarnation be of the Son alone? Moreover, how may the actions of the Christ be the reconciling actions of the Son, as opposed to those of the Father or of the Spirit? The principle of inseparable operations, then, appears to sever the intrinsic link between the second person itself and the result of the incarnation, not least through Thomas's claim that any one of the divine persons might have become incarnate.

The framework of the missions again proves decisive in responding to these difficulties. It is fitting that it is the second person of the Trinity, as Word and Son, that is the means through which creatures return to the Trinity, because the Word is the *ratio* itself of the creatures. Thus, as Word, the second person has a particular "affinity" (p. 68) to creatures, as their exemplar. Because the Father always acts through the Word as his self-knowledge, it is "most fitting that the Word be the divine person who becomes incarnate" (p. 70). Legge lists a number of other reasons showing the fittingness of the incarnation of the Word himself. He then shows the fittingness of the incarnation of the second person as Son, as Image, and as Author of sanctification.

This is an excellent discussion and Legge easily demonstrates the depth of Aquinas's thinking on this topic, a depth not always appreciated by critics. Still, there are some outstanding issues that Legge does not treat. These are some additional complaints about Aquinas's Christology. A first complaint is that Aquinas orders the incarnation to reconciliation, such that, had humanity not needed redemption, there would have been no incarnation. A number of authors have pointed out that Aquinas's doctrine of creation through the Word is not intrinsically ordered to the eventual union of humanity with the Son; the incarnation is only necessary given the fall. This raises the issue of the role the incarnation plays in the *reditus*. A second complaint touches on the ends of non-human creation. The complaint is that the return of creation to God, through its union with the Word, who is a procession by way of intellect, seems to leave out non-intellectual creation. How does the non-rational world find its end in the Word? We should not make too much, though, of the absence of an engagement with these critiques.

Also in part II, Legge engages the vexing issue of the relationship between the hypostatic union and the Trinity. First, Legge demonstrates that the terminus of the assumption is the person of the Son, even though the principle of the assumption is the Trinity as a whole. He repeats his argument that these relations to a terminus are "vectors into a divine person" (p. 105). There are two ways in which a creature can be drawn into a divine person as a terminus, and only two ways: The first way is by way of exemplar causality, whereby creatures come to resemble the personal property of the divine person; such may be seen in the indwelling of the faithful by the Holy Spirit. A second way is according to being, and this way is true of the incarnation alone. Without saying as much, Legge is firmly rejecting Rahner's sugges-

tion that there can be a quasi-formal way in which believers are drawn into the divine persons.

Because the human nature of Jesus Christ is actuated by a union of being with the second person of the Trinity, the “personal *esse*” of Christ is nothing but the personal mode of being of the Son. Important consequences follow for the actions of Christ. First, Christ’s humanity bears the Son’s personal property and thus “everything in that humanity takes on the filial mode of the Son” (p. 112). Thus, for example, the human will of Christ is in conformity with the Father’s will, not by any impulse coming from the human nature itself, “but because his human nature, and thus his human will, is ‘in the divine hypostasis’ of the Word” (113). As a second consequence, every action of Christ is from the Father (John 5:19). This is entirely consistent with the doctrine of inseparable operations, as expounded by Legge and Aquinas. However, Legge draws a further consequence from the claim that Christ’s human nature is the instrument of the Word, namely, “that every human action of Christ is an action of the divine Word in person—it belongs *properly* to him and *not* to the Father or the Holy Spirit” (p. 117; Legge’s italics). Here Legge appears to depart from the rule of inseparable operations of the Trinity, which should suggest that the actions of the incarnate Christ are the actions of the eternal Son by appropriation. Again, in a single footnote (p. 117 n. 60), Legge mentions a single author, Kevin O’Shea, who articulates this position, yet without saying more to clarify his apparent departure from the rule.

Now this is a particularly vexing issue and at the very least the difficulty needs to be raised. Scripturally, we wish to affirm that Christ’s actions are the actions of the Word. But how are we to make such an affirmation without flaunting the inseparability rule, equally derived from Scripture and a requirement of Trinitarian monotheism? Certainly, in virtue of the fact that the human nature of Jesus Christ terminates in the person of the Son, such that it is actuated by it (and not by itself, lacking its own hypostasis), its actions are those of the Word in a primary sense. But the Word has no proper will of his own, neither is it a principle different than that of the Father when acting economically. So, at the very least we have a difficulty here in terms of the coherence of this position with the broader tradition that Legge embraces.

The final part of the book is a very insightful engagement with Aquinas’s Christology, with a view to the role of the Holy Spirit in Christ’s person and work. Again, the framework is given by the divine missions. Legge argues that, because the missions extend the processions, the mission of the Son will entail a mission of the Spirit; accordingly, the coming forth of the Word aims at the kindling of love for God. The two missions are inseparable and simultaneous (p. 150). Furthermore, Christ as man, Legge argues, “relies on—indeed, cannot do without—the Holy Spirit in accomplishing the work given to him by the Father” (p. 132). The Spirit, as the one through whom Christ’s humanity receives the gift of habitual grace, disposes his humanity to be the instrument of the Word. This disposition of Christ’s human nature to receive such a mission of the Son is an extremely important element in the Thomistic understanding of the missions. In the evangelical-Catholic dialogue over the nature and necessity of created grace, it is extremely important to

realize that, according to Aquinas, Christ himself required such a grace as a condition of his being the recipient of a mission.

Legge shows how in Aquinas, this habitual grace is neither an automatic consequence of the hypostatic union, nor simply a fitting consequence from it; rather, it is a gift, not reducible to the grace of union and received through the mission of the Holy Spirit into Christ's humanity. The reception of a mission and gift from the Holy Spirit, Legge argues, constitutes the proper boundaries of a Spirit Christology. Legge does not explicitly relate his exposition of Thomas with the current conversation over Spirit Christology in biblical studies, but he does affirm a convergence with the work of James D. G. Dunn!

Legge further demonstrates how the actions of Christ take place under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Interestingly, he assumes that Jesus's miracles are divine operations, failing to ask whether they might be precisely human actions in the power of the Holy Spirit. He further shows how Christ sends the Spirit to the faithful through his human nature, not his divine nature.

There would be much to discuss here, but I do want to identify a final point of tension in Legge's extremely illuminating and lucid study. He insists that the mission of the Holy Spirit is not relegated to the post-Christ era, but many others had also received a mission of the Holy Spirit: John the Baptist, Zechariah and Elizabeth, Simeon, Mary (p. 160). As I have said, this view appears to upset the order of the missions, opening up a scenario in which there are missions of the Spirit that appear to be independent of the mission of the Son (as in the case of patriarchs) or constitutive of the mission of the Son itself. The consequence is either separating the two missions or threatening the *Filioque*. A solution, I submit, is to strictly consign the mission of the Spirit to its post-Pentecostal dispensation and to speak of all the other undoubted activities and infillings of the Spirit in terms of operations rather than missions. As such an operation is simply the production of an effect, whether it be the supernatural transmission of knowledge to a prophet or the empowering of Samson. In addition to the production of such effects, a mission draws the creature into a union with the divine persons. In this case, a mission of the Holy Spirit would be consequent upon the mission of the Son and not simply simultaneous with it or constitutive of it. This does not deny an activity of the Spirit, for instance, at Jesus's conception. The additional advantage of this choice would be that greater weight is given to the development of Christ's own human knowledge and consciousness of his vocation precisely as a preamble to his reception of the mission of the Holy Spirit at baptism.

All this is to say that Legge has provided an excellent example of the hospitality of a Thomistic Christology to a thoroughly biblical and even critical approach to the person and work of Jesus Christ. While the precise synthesis between the doctrine of the divine missions and the results of exegesis remain a matter of dispute, there is no question that anchoring Christology in the doctrine of the divine missions is precisely the Scriptural thing to do.

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Introducing World Religions: A Christian Engagement. By Charles E. Farhadian. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015, xxiv + 600 pp., \$49.99.

In an age of increasing globalism and shared knowledge, the need could not be greater for an up-to-date, well-researched, theologically-balanced, and feature-rich introduction to world religions from an explicitly Christian perspective. Charles Farhadian, Professor of World Religions and Christian Mission at Westmont College, offers precisely this in his new textbook *Introducing World Religions*.

The thick-paged, full-colored volume boasts a plethora of pedagogical tools including timelines, maps, tables, lists, charts, a 74-page glossary, and rich photographs. Quotations of primary sources are identified by centered red text while secondary source quotations are placed along the page margins in gold italic text. The content that most directly addresses Christians' and Christianity's relationship to other world religions is found in (1) light green "Christian Reflections" portions scattered throughout the book and (2) the concluding section of the last chapter.

The religions covered include (in order) Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Taoism and Confucianism (one chapter for both), Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Teachers using the text will find little trouble integrating primary source readers into a world religions course. Robert Van Voorst's *Anthology of World Scriptures* (Cengage, 2016), for example, follows the order and content of Farhadian's volume almost perfectly (the major difference being the addition of Shinto and division between Daoism and Confucianism). The chapter on Christianity is generally treated in the same manner and length as the other chapters.

The tone of Farhadian's narrative is never bland. Each chapter begins with a "Contemporary Snapshot" to pull readers into the subject matter from the events and movements of our own age. Each chapter also follows a carefully ordered structure: introductory remarks, "Origins and Concepts," "Worship and Practice," and "Modern Movements." This order flows logically in the minds of readers asking "What is this religion and where did it come from?" "What is it like?" followed by "What is it like today?" Chapters end with a timeline, key terms, and bibliography for further reading.

If the goal of the book is to respectfully grasp world religions by seeing what they are and what they have to offer on their own terms, then *Introducing World Religions* appears to be a success. Polemics are kept to a bare minimum, as are apologetics. Depending on the reading audience, this may be either disappointing or refreshing. The degree to which a Christian world-and-life view shapes Farhadian's presentation of other world religions is difficult to answer and is not always easily identifiable. The "Christian Reflections" portions are usually interrogative and less assertive, typically probing areas of interest by way of (1) identifying parallels between figures, ideas, histories, and more in world religions; (2) taking a Christian concept and exploring how it interprets a concept in another religion; (3) identifying similarities or differences in claims, stories, and practices between religions; and (4) drawing social observations regarding ritual, ethics, and communal life.

Nevertheless, Farhadian is straightforward when appropriate. In the chapter "New Religious Movements," a reflection portion notes that "the lack of historical-

ly verifiable archaeological data mentioned in the Book of Mormon has raised serious doubts about the historicity of the stories” (p. 471). Similarly, in the chapter on Islam, Farhadian offers, “Something that distinguishes a Christian from a Muslim is the Christian affirmation that the Holy Spirit, referred to in the New Testament as the Advocate (John 14:15–17), enters the life of the follower of Jesus to guide and reassure her. ... Since Muslims do not have a concept of an indwelling spirit of God, they rely on the insights of Islamic scholars, imams, and jurisprudence (*fiqh*), to decipher ethical decisions” (p. 439).

The “Christian Reflection” portions are not always immediately connected with the content of the page on which they appear but sometimes seem to address matters that may have arisen in the minds of readers after some considerable ground has been covered. Farhadian’s choice in addressing particular issues in particular places is prudent and rarely overbearing. In fact, for many readers, these sections may function as the most valuable and interesting material of the book itself.

The concluding section under the last chapter (“New Religious Movements”) addresses the issue of pluralism and Christian distinctiveness, with a clear summary of the three classic categories of pluralism, exclusivism, and inclusivism. This section leaves something to be desired, however, especially as other contemporary works of a similar theological tone and reading level, such as Daniel Migliore’s *Faith Seeking Understanding* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), address this topic in short order and yet more thoroughly. If there is any complaint I have about the book, it is simply that this subject matter (for which readers may have purchased the book in the first place) occupies so little space and implements so few models beyond the increasingly stale models of the early and mid-twentieth century.

Introducing World Religions does more than adequate work, however, in its earlier chapters on religion in general. This first chapter (“The Persistence of Religion”) recounts the various theories of religion (from Freud to Marx to Durkheim to modern theories) and the integral, multi-contextual nature of religion. Readers who have not studied world religions before will find this chapter particularly enlightening, if not altogether challenging.

As mentioned before, Farhadian’s tone and perspective is consistent throughout and serves to create a lucid read that is both engaging and sober. The issues addressed regarding Christian theology are generally broad enough not to alienate any particular professing believer (and hopefully no member of another religion). This is not to suggest that everyone will be satisfied or that clear positions have not been taken. For example, in “Christian Reflections” we read, “What do you make of the fact that Lord Buddha, Lord Mahavira, and Jesus Christ all had ‘enlightenment’ experiences around the age of thirty? Is there something universal about the development of human beings that would allow for greater insight around that age?” (p. 181). This is an interesting question, though many Christians may fail to draw the parallel of Jesus’s baptism and temptation and/or transfiguration (if that’s even what is being referred to) with Mahavira and Buddha’s singular moment of omniscience. Another example comes from the chapter on Christianity, which contains (in my view) a short and necessary critique of Christian Zionism.

Nevertheless, many dispensational Zionist evangelicals will undoubtedly find it distasteful or simply unnecessary.

Any world religions monograph would inevitably contain similar such cases as these, and they hardly constitute reasons for a substantive critique. The vast majority of the “Christian Reflections” portions consists of excellent questions directed toward Christian readers who may have not thought through their own faith. If for nothing else, then, reading *Introduction to World Religions* may serve as an excellent platform (whether in a church, Bible-study, or academic context) to shape Christians’ own perceptions about what it means to follow Christ.

Newer editions will hopefully include a more substantial and up-to-date section (chapter) on pluralism and how Christians might think of their faith in relation to others. Nevertheless, the first edition of *Introduction to World Religions* successfully strikes every balance one might desire: the right amount of primary sources, secondary source engagement, illustrations, reflections, and elaborations on various aspects of world religions. Highly recommended.

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The Church as the Image of the Trinity: A Critical Evaluation of Miroslav Volf's Ecclesial Model. By Kevin J. Bidwell. W.E.S.T. Theological Monograph Series. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2011, x + 270 pp., \$24.80 paper.

“A resurgence of Trinitarian interest gained momentum in the twentieth century, and it is showing little sign of abating in the twenty-first century” (p. 235). With this assertion in mind Kevin Bidwell (Ph.D., University of Wales: Trinity Saint David) engages the discussion noting the connections between Trinitarian theology and ecclesiology. In this monograph, which is Bidwell’s published dissertation, the author takes as his dialogue partner Miroslav Volf, particularly his work *After our Likeness: The Church as the Image of the Trinity*.

Bidwell claims that the thesis of Volf’s work attempts to ensure that a Trinitarian framework informs the relationship between persons and community for Christian theology (p. 3). Thus, Bidwell determines to focus on this thesis as the central component of his research, critically appreciating and evaluating all aspects of Volf’s proposal and offering some of his own theological propositions on the subject along the way. The ultimate goal of this monograph, according to Bidwell, is “to develop an understanding of the church from a reformed perspective” (p. 155). In this way the work is more specifically aimed at critique, though there is a fair amount of constructive theological formulation, particularly regarding how the doctrine of God connects to the doctrine of the church.

After a foreword by Robert Letham, Bidwell’s doctoral supervisor, the author locates his research (chapter 1) amidst all the recent works on the doctrine of the Trinity. After citing key contributors such as Barth, Rahner, Torrance, and Gunton, Bidwell introduces Volf and his belief that a thoroughgoing Trinitarian theology can deeply shape and reinvigorate our ecclesiology. After giving a brief overview of

After our Likeness, wherein Volf argues for a Free Church, egalitarian, ecumenical ecclesiology based on his vision of the Trinitarian God, Bidwell outlines the remainder of the book's research and methodology.

In chapters 2–4, Bidwell shows the theological influences on Volf's theology. This is a helpful section and Bidwell justifies it in stating, "Most often a theologian's paradigm is like an iceberg, with only a fragment of a person's assumptions exposed in open view" (p. 8). Accordingly, Bidwell spends chapter 2 on Jürgen Moltmann's influence on Volf. Moltmann served as Volf's doctoral and postdoctoral supervisor at the University of Tübingen and appears to be Volf's preferred theological source. Moltmann holds to several theological ideals (pp. 22–23) that shape his—and Volf's—theology of God into a social Trinitarian, non-hierarchical construction, which in turn yields an egalitarian non-hierarchical ecclesiology. This understanding of Moltmann is crucial in rightly interpreting Volf and assessing his presuppositions.

Bidwell notes other influences on Volf (chapter 3) such as Wolfhart Pannenberg, Catherine Mowry Lacugna, and Judith Gundry-Volf; the latter two most notably contribute to Volf's feminist hermeneutic. Bidwell questions whether Volf has read Pannenberg accurately due to the fact that Pannenberg and Moltmann differ so markedly in their construction of Trinitarian theology; this criticism of not reading an author accurately will be a continued theme in this work. Chapter 4 teases out eight theological tenets held by Volf: a non-hierarchical Trinity, a communal and egalitarian ecclesiology, a direct relationship between the Trinity and the church, a rejection of ecclesial individualism and hierarchicalism, the endorsement of feminist ecclesiologies, an ecumenical approach, missiological value, and a perceived need for a model that engages with the catholicity of the church (pp. 41–43). Bidwell highlights how these presuppositions are demonstrable in Volf's earlier writings and give shape to his later works. Ultimately, Bidwell asserts that Volf's theological construct "promotes an egalitarian, anti-monotheistic vision of the Triune God, where perichoresis is the central thread that holds together a reenvisioned identity for humanity" (p. 51). This identity is one of total equality, antithetical to all forms of hierarchy.

Chapter 5 focuses on Volf's use of John Smyth of the English Separatist tradition as his primary source for formulating his Free Church ecclesiology. Attention is given specifically to Smyth's continuity and discontinuity with the Separatist tradition and Volf's use of this particular theologian. According to Bidwell, one consistent mark of Smyth's theology is its evolutionary development, of which Volf fails to adequately take account. As such, Volf points out only certain aspects of Smyth's theology that further buttress his own points; for Bidwell, if Volf had taken Smyth's theological trajectory into account he would have strengthened his overall argument.

Bidwell continues his critical evaluation in chapters 6–9, highlighting Volf's dialogue with two preeminent theologians from the West and East, respectively: Joseph Ratzinger and John Zizioulas. Chapters 6–7 focus on Ratzinger, the Roman Catholic theologian who served as Pope Benedict XVI. Ratzinger's Trinitarian theology can be described as "oneness-relatedness of persons-personhood as pure

relations” (p. 95); thus, it appears that Augustine exerted direct influence on Ratzinger’s formulation. This directly impacts Ratzinger’s ecclesiology, which he says is shaped by the Trinity and is most readily seen in the sacraments and the unity of the church. Volf’s assessment of Ratzinger is telling in that he assumes Augustine’s influence on Ratzinger; therefore, because Augustine places an emphasis on the unity of God, so does Ratzinger. This view of the Trinity directly affects Ratzinger’s ecclesiology, as he holds to a hierarchical, unified church. This results in a God and an ecclesiology diametrically opposed to Volf’s conceptions, as he seeks to espouse a non-hierarchical, egalitarian ideology. Bidwell asserts that, while Augustine is the primary influence in the Trinitarian theology of Ratzinger, Volf does not do justice to the fact that both Augustine and Ratzinger emphasize relations of the Godhead as well. Also, while Volf seeks to make close connections between the Trinity and the church, Ratzinger and the Roman Catholic Church are more generalized in their approach; thus, for Bidwell, Volf does not critique this point accurately.

Chapters 8–9 focus on Volf’s reading of John Zizioulas, the metropolitan of Pergamon in the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. Zizioulas takes the Trinity as the interpretative lens for understanding the church, and his doctrine of the Trinity is founded on the concepts of monarchy, communion, and hierarchical order among the three persons. His ecclesiology upholds both the universal and local church, with an emphasis on the bishop and the eucharist. There is much more agreement between Volf and Zizioulas than between Volf and Ratzinger due to their direct connection between the Trinity and ecclesiology as well as their acknowledgement of the difference between Eastern and Western conceptions of the Trinity. However, the primary disagreement between these theologians comes in their formulations of the Trinity, again with Volf seeking to advocate for a social model. Bidwell concludes the chapter by pointing out that, while there are indeed differences between Eastern and Western formulations, Volf’s social Trinity does not fit with either category. As such, “Volf’s newly conceived doctrine of the Trinity remains remarkably isolated from the majority of Christendom, and it is still far from being compatible with the broader scholarly consent” (p. 237). This is a serious criticism that Bidwell adequately demonstrates, thus putting the onus on Volf and other likeminded scholars to further substantiate their claims.

Having laid the groundwork adequately in assessing Volf’s presuppositions and dialogue partners, Bidwell concludes (chaps. 10–14) with a critical assessment of five successive proposals Volf puts forward in *After our Likeness*. These proposals are the ecclesiality of the church; faith, person, and church; the Trinity and the church; structures of the church; and the catholicity of the church. Bidwell assesses the validity of these proposals as well as Volf’s methodology, engaging with them in a highly critical fashion while still seeking to affirm what he can. There are two main theological premises that Bidwell affirms: First, in contrast to Volf’s solely Trinitarian approach, one should adopt a Christo-trinitarian hermeneutic to ensure that Christ is the theological starting point while the worship of the Triune God remains the ultimate goal. Second, one should primarily apply the doctrine of the Trinity to the church’s worship, piety, and missionary message, not to the struc-

tures of the church, and in ecclesiology one should seek to develop a doctrine of the church from the Trinity.

This book is especially helpful in that it works through the connection of two crucial doctrines (the Trinitarian God and ecclesiology) and does so in dialogue with an influential theologian and his particular formulation of the connection between these two loci. Several strengths in Bidwell's work should be noted. First, the author not only does a thorough job of critically analyzing Volf's model, but he underscores his theological influences and presuppositions in a detailed manner. Many critical analyses look solely at a specific primary source and its contents, but Bidwell highlights Volf's context by highlighting the works of several authors who were influential to his thinking. If one is to understand Volf adequately, one must rightly understand Moltmann. This background is needed to rightly assess Volf's proposals, and Bidwell is to be commended in this regard.

The author also gives helpful background on Smyth, Ratzinger, and Zizioulas. Again, if one is to rightly evaluate Volf's use of and dialogue with these theologians, one must properly understand how they articulated their theology, specifically in this instance their theologies of the triune God and of the church. Through careful analysis Bidwell demonstrates that (1) Volf's assessment of particular ideas of these other theologians often lacked proper definition, or (2) he simply assumed things rather than proving them.

In terms of shortcomings: Regarding Volf's proposal of "the ecclesiality of the church" (chap. 10), Bidwell rightly demonstrates that Volf stakes his entire case for his ecclesiology upon the significance of Matthew 18:20 (p. 181). Bidwell later states that Volf's staking his entire ecclesiology on the tenuous exegesis of one text weakens his overall ecclesiology and thus destabilizes the remainder of Volf's monograph (p. 238). I am certainly in agreement with Bidwell's assessment, but due to the fact that he accuses Volf of "a notable absence of biblical exegesis," it would be nice if Bidwell had included more exegesis of his own. Bidwell rightly demonstrates the proper use of the Church Fathers, as well as several other commentators and exegetes, for interpreting Matt 18:20. It would bolster his case, however, if he included more than one paragraph of his own exegetical work (p. 181), thereby showing from the text itself, not just commentaries, that Volf has come up short in presenting his case, thereby strengthening his critique of Volf.

A similar criticism can be leveled at chapter 11 where Bidwell assesses Volf's use of Scripture. The author works well through Romans 10, demonstrating the flaws in Volf's exegesis and rightly critiquing spurious proof-texting. However, at the end of the chapter Bidwell makes an appeal to authority without advancing his own claims exegetically (see p. 191). He should have ensured that he does not fall into the same error as the one whom he critically evaluates.

These weaknesses, however, should not detract from what is otherwise an immensely helpful work. Bidwell rightly and effectively critiques what has become a fairly popular work and model for the Trinity. He makes a significant contribution to a growing field, particularly by engaging with both Trinitarian theology and ecclesiology. By interacting with Miroslav Volf, Bidwell also introduces several other crucial theologians from varying ends of the theological spectrum. I would highly

recommend this volume, but it may best be understood by those with a working knowledge of Trinitarian theology (along with its various traditions and proponents), ecclesiology, and the theology of Volf. This work will carefully guide readers into the relevance of Trinitarian theology and our appropriation of it for the right ordering of the church and the proper worship of the triune God.

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