

## BOOK REVIEWS

*The Persistence of God's Endangered Promises: The Bible's Unified Story.* By Allan J. McNicol. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2018, 248 pp., \$102.00.

As the subtitle states and the book's author confirms, this worthy read attempts to argue that the Bible presents a unified story. In his introduction, Allan McNicol states frankly his purpose with the words, "I wish to suggest in this book that true and worthwhile connections can be made between the Testaments because the Bible (as one book) is held together by a unifying narrative" (p. xi). The remainder of the author's work focuses on the ambitious task of identifying and justifying that core unity within the biblical story.

In the first three chapters, McNicol surveys the rise and fall of the Grand Narrative of Scripture as a result of the Enlightenment, describes the failed attempts by Christian theologians to put it back together, and offers his solution to the dilemma. The Grand Narrative of Scripture was held together by the acceptance of typology and the acceptance of the scheme of prophecy-fulfillment. These shadows of Christ in the OT were revealed in the NT and bridged the great divide between the Testaments. The underlying belief in the historicity of the events related in the Bible was foundational in undergirding the Bible's metanarrative. Following his mentor Hans Frei's analysis in *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative*, McNicol opines that with the rise of the Enlightenment, the biblical narrative became detached from its historical mooring as more and more of the Bible's history was rejected and reclassified as saga or myth, beginning with the stories in Genesis. In response to these assured results of historical criticism, the meaning of the Bible's narrative was reinterpreted as reflecting the human condition or allegorized (p. 26). Subsequent attempts by later interpreters to bridge the chasm between the Bible of the critics and its story are examined and found wanting. For example, Childs's canon criticism may provide a necessary corrective to the atomistic results of historical criticism with its canonical reading, but it fails to uncover any unifying factor between the testaments.

At this point in the book, the author suggests that only a literary model can pave the way forward for biblical theology. McNicol's proposed literary model is similar to the story world created in the great 18<sup>th</sup>- and 19<sup>th</sup>-century realistic novels. In his opinion, such a structure fits the Bible well. It provides a narrative framework for a story that stretches from the creation of Adam to the conversion of the nations in Revelation. In his opinion, this literary setting encompasses the diverse genre in the Bible and finds middle ground between an arid historical reading and a purely aesthetic literary approach (p. 29). The essence of his unifying narrative "centers around the story of the people of God, whom the Creator and Redeemer will never let go no matter how troubling a situation they may find themselves in or how small and insignificant they may appear to be" (p. 43).

In section II (chap. 4) of his work, McNicol endeavors to trace this unifying idea in the OT story. In sum, the narrative revolves around Yahweh's promise to pour out his blessing on the created order through the emergence and preservation against all odds of his people, the children of Abraham, his witnesses (p. 74). For example, the narrative shows God keeping his promises when it looked as if all hope was lost by liberating his weak and powerless people from slavery in Egypt and captivity in Babylon. His people are not only endangered by these world powers, but also by their own sinfulness; however, God continues to keep his promises by showing faithfulness to his covenants in the narrative. McNicol notes the gracious behavior of the Babylonian monarch towards the exiled sinful Jehoiachin at the end of the book of Kings as just one example as God assures his people he will keep his promise to David's descendants.

Section III, which deals with the NT, comprises the majority of the author's efforts (7 chapters). To quote McNicol, "They concentrate on the impact of the life and mission of Jesus the Nazarene with respect to the revolutionary changes that emerged within the people of God in the first century of our era" (p. xii). Chapter 5 deals with the life of Jesus depicted across the Gospels. Jesus is designated the "king of the Jews" who announces that the eschatological promises of God were in the initial stages of being fulfilled and whose resurrection after the ignominy of the cross mocks the evil intent of humans everywhere.

The rest of the chapters deal with Israel's response to Jesus's coming through the voices heard in the NT books. Matthew ends with Jesus's call to evangelize the nations, which provides a strategic link between the Hebrew Scriptures and the Gentile mission (p. 117). Paul the apocalypticist's world was framed by radical upheaval, and he believed he was living in the last days as he encouraged the people of God to live quietly as a countercultural community awaiting the coming judgment and the new world order. According to Paul, Abraham's faithful descendants are those who live by the outcome of Christ's faithfulness and this would include the Gentiles presently and ultimately his Jewish brethren. For Luke, God's people are always the same: Israel. Both Israel and the church have a common destiny as they participate in the fulfillment of God's promises. Marginalized Israel (Zacchaeus) and even Samaritans and Roman jailers will experience the consolation of Israel through Christ (p. 157). The kingdom of God in Mark comes not as Israel perceived with a new Davidic ruler ascending the throne and ruling the nations, but by the way of the cross, which results in a kingdom of marginalized followers united by faith in Christ, forgiveness, and prayer.

In key non-Pauline letters, one finds marginalized groups who have reason to question God's promises. Even the church is rife with immoral teachers in the vein of Balaam rather than followers of a crucified Messiah. But as Peter states, the scoffers are wrong and God will fulfill his word, though his people suffer for a time like their Lord (2 Pet 3:9, 10). The Johannine books continue this idea of God's endangered promises winning out in the end, much to the surprise of the world's power structures. According to John, Christ comes to his own people who did not receive him (John 1:11), yet in the very next verse, the apostolic witness states that the Word's coming expressed the very power of God on behalf of his people.

Kingdoms built on human power will crumble to dust, but the marginalized Israel of God will be at the forefront of the human community in God's new Jerusalem, as the Apocalypse attests.

McNicol's call to read the Bible as one would read a "good realistic novel" with attention to all the literary conventions of plot and character development is laudable. Surely, such an approach is called for in understanding narrative as a genre. In addition, the trajectory of God's unfailing promises to his people does seem to be helpful in crossing the great chasm between the two testaments and uncovers at least one plausible unifying factor for biblical theology that bears further study. More problematic is uncovering what the author means when he describes the biblical narrative as a literary expression that "stakes a claim to being an ultimate expression of reality" (p. 208). Make no mistake, McNicol is an orthodox historical critic who applauds its use while still bemoaning the fact for all its achievements it has failed miserably in providing a firm foundation for biblical theology, since the discipline focuses on dissecting texts rather than integrating them into a coherent narrative. For McNicol, the loss of the Grand Narrative was inevitable once historical critics had determined the historical claims in the Bible's story were not accurate. While he hopes to salvage the Bible's truth by analyzing and evaluating its claims from a literary perspective, he fails to persuade me (and I suspect many other evangelicals at least) why one should accept the Bible's ultimate truth claims simply because the story makes such "tyrannical" assertions. It won't do to classify the Bible as akin to an 18<sup>th</sup>- or 19<sup>th</sup>-century realistic novel as if that resolves the issue. The very classification as a "realistic novel" assumes that one can easily distinguish the historical settings in the novel from its fictional aspects. To suggest with McNicol that one can stake one's final destiny on metaphysical claims made in a reality one only obtains in a literary setting strains credulity. The literary work may make all kinds of absolute claims about the nature of reality, but how does one know such statements are true? While I would agree that the biblical narrative's "real world" is in part the journey of the people of God, the narrative's existence in a literary context is not what makes the journey real. It is rather the narrative's historical connection to real events and people, albeit through a theological lens, that stamps it as reflecting reality. McNicol's astute observation that God's endangered promises persist throughout the canon would be better placed on a solid historical foundation lest the Grand Narrative continue to remain in shambles.

David D. Pettus

Rawling School of Divinity, Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

*ESV Archaeological Study Bible*. Edited by John D. Currid and David W. Chapman. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017, xxii + 2024 pp., \$49.99.

The *ESV Archaeological Study Bible* is another in a long line of similar Bibles published in the last two decades. Each book begins with brief discussions on the theme, archaeology's contribution to our understanding of the book, and an outline. Each page includes cross-references, footnotes related to text-critical concerns, and

exegetical commentary and archaeological and historical insights. The Bible is accentuated with charts, maps, and color photos. The study notes include an abbreviated timeline of significant OT, intertestamental, and NT characters and events with proposed dates (pp. 10, 1346–47, 1358–59, see also 2021–23). Interspersed throughout are sidebars that contain pertinent archaeological discoveries and discussions related to historical, sociological, and economic concerns. Each Testament begins with introductory essays related to historical background issues. A detailed timeline can be found at the back (pp. 2021–23), along with over 100 pages of helps, which include essays germane to archaeology and the Bible, a glossary, charts, bibliography, indexes, and fifteen full color maps.

Generally speaking, the authors of the textual notes come from a more maximalist perspective and regularly challenge the assertions of minimalist scholars. This is exemplified by the conclusion that Deuteronomy resembles ancient Hittite treaties of the second millennium as opposed to the later Assyrian treaties of the first millennium (p. 239).

While I could give a more extensive discussion on the particulars of this study Bible, I will focus the bulk of my review on aspects of the book I found problematic. To begin, John Currid's treatment of the Pentateuch includes a map for the possible location of Sodom in the southeastern region of the Dead Sea (p. 39). However, he does not mention the ongoing archaeological work at the northeastern area of the Dead Sea at Tall el-Hammam led by Steven Collins. While some may not adhere to all the hypotheses adopted by Collins, this is an important site in the discussion on the location of Sodom. Next, while Currid mentions the Story of Sinuhe in conjunction with the early life of Moses, the oft-noted connections to the Legend of Sargon are noticeably absent. Finally, although Currid appears to hold to a late-date perspective for the exodus (p. 68), he provides a concise and somewhat balanced presentation of both theories (pp. 86–87, 477; see notes on pp. 186, 271, 284, 286, 288, 299, 301, 305, 307, 311, 334).

One of the more disappointing sections of the study Bible is the block on Joshua–Ruth, which is written by Steven Ortiz. Ortiz offers virtually no evidence for an alternative to the late-date theory of the conquest (cf. pp. 285 n. 1:4; 287 n. 2:15, 306, 308, 334 n. 3:3). He also fails to mention the alternative theory proposed by Bryant Wood regarding the date of Jericho's destruction (*BAR* 16.2 [1990]). Furthermore, Ortiz does not mention the extensive excavations at Khirbet el-Maqatir (1995–2000, 2009–2016) as a possible site of Ai. Instead, he suggests that any search for Ai is futile because Ai may have only been a small outpost of Bethel (p. 295). This conclusion does not take seriously Wood's findings that Maqatir fits the biblical account better than the site of Et-tell (p. 297 n. 8:9). Despite these concerns, Ortiz's work on identifying many of the cities noted in the last half of Joshua and in Judges is helpful.

Catherine McDowell's discussion on 1 Samuel 17 should have included the important work of Yosef Garfinkel at Khirbet Qeiyafa, especially the ostrakon found in 2008. Also, when dealing with 2 Samuel 5, apart from a few passing comments (e.g., pp. 581 n. 14:1; 648 n. 36:17–21), McDowell fails to note the im-

portant work of Eilat Mazar in the City of David and the Ophel or the work of Shimon Gibson on Mount Zion.

On the other hand, David Adam's work on the Wisdom Literature and the Psalms is some of the most detailed of the OT contributions. There are only minor issues in these books. For example, on page 820 n. 79:2–4, Adams lists Ezek 32:4–6 as an example of non-burial, which was evidence of “the judgment of God on *his faithless people*” (italics mine). However, this passage is dealing with Egypt, not Israel/Judah. Ezekiel 6:4–5 would have been a better example.

Boyd SeEVERS's commentary on the temple vision of Ezekiel would have been strengthened had he noted the parallels with other ANE temple-building protocols. Also, the Judean *melek* seals associated with Jehoiachin could shed light on how Ezekiel may have viewed the illegitimacy of Zedekiah vis-à-vis Jehoiachin.

All in all, most of the material in the study notes after the period of 586 BC is not that controversial, and apart from a few concerns, most readers will have minimal issues with the content. Therefore, the remainder of this review will cover four other critiques: concerns, errors in content, deficiencies, and errors in editing.

*Concerns:* My first concern is that the length of commentary for each book is not balanced (cf. Deuteronomy and Psalms or the Major Prophets and the Gospels). While this may be more related to the research and writing style of a particular contributor, one would have expected the editors to have balanced this in some way. Second, some readers will definitely take issue with the theological bent and biases of some of the contributors' scriptural interpretations (see above), which seem to push against a plain reading of the text (e.g., p. 1823 nn. 6:4; 6:7–8). Third, while not a major problem, there is duplicated information in the study notes such as the discussion on the Ketef Hinnom Amulets and the Tel Dan Stele (cf. pp. xxi, 196, 1259). Note also the repetition of the maps of the Transjordan conquest (pp. 216, 243) and of the maps in each Gospel (pp. 1365, 1430, 1470, 1538//1420 and 1423, 1461–62, 1525–26, 1579–80).

*Errors in content:* In the list of contributors on page x, Boyd SeEVERS is not the “current supervisor of excavations at Khirbet el-Maqatir”; he was a square supervisor. Second, on page 576, the map sidebar states that Saul's and his sons' bodies were placed in the temple of Dagon. This is incorrect. Their bodies were placed on the walls of Beth-shean (cf. 1 Sam 31:10 and sidebar, p. 421). Third, on page 600, note 1:14, it states that “Ahab supplied 2000 chariots to Shalmaneser III for the battle of Qarqar in 853”; however, Ahab actually used the 2000 chariots in a coalition *against* Shalmaneser III. Later, on page 1290, n. 5:10, Mark Chavalas corrects this historical error.

*Deficiencies:* First, some books were sparse in their commentary related to archaeology. Second, it is surprising that especially for the NT portion, the editors did not include an essay on numismatics or a related numismatics chart especially in light of the role coins play in dating archaeological sites of this period. While a number of references are made to the coinage of the Hasmoneans, Jewish revolt, and Roman period, only four pictures appear throughout with brief sidebars (pp. 1400, 1522, 1610, 1732). Third, the comments section on frankincense and myrrh on page 1369, n. 2:11 would have been better if cross-referenced to the discussion

and descriptions on page 953. Fourth, although the Bible is very user friendly, those who use this Bible a lot will find the pages are very thin and easily damaged.

*Errors in editing:* On page 891, note 3:9–10 in the second paragraph it should read “the book of Proverbs addresses.” Page 1265 note 5:8–9 should read “This constellation appears ...” On page 1296, note 1:13 should be “Assyrian conquerors,” and on page 1297, note 2:11 begins with a sentence fragment. On page 1303, in note 1:10, the second sentence is missing a definite article before “fortress city.” On page 1305, in note 2:18–19, on the last line of the page the line should read “covered in gold and/or silver.” On page 1306, note 3:12, on line four, “arm” should be “army.” Finally, on page 1339, in note 3:16, on line three, the abbreviation for Isaiah should be “Isa.”

Despite these concerns, I must admit that I was pleasantly surprised by the amount of content and helps throughout the study Bible. While I may not be carrying it to every class I teach, I will definitely be using it as a resource. Pastors and lay people alike will find this study Bible very useful and “meaty” even though they may have to spit out a few proverbial bones along the way.

Brian Neil Peterson  
Lee University, Cleveland, TN

*The Hermeneutics of the Biblical Writers: Learning to Interpret Scripture from the Prophets and Apostles.* By Abner Chou. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2018, 251 pp., \$23.99 paper.

Abner Chou, John F. MacArthur Endowed Fellow at The Master’s University, offers a valuable contribution to the continuing discussion surrounding the use of the OT in the NT. As Chou himself notes, his thesis accords well with the work of Beale, Kaiser, Carson, and Bock, who argue for a continuation of meaning between the two Testaments. Accordingly, Chou contends that the hermeneutic of the apostles is based upon that of their predecessors, the prophets. Further, the prophetic-apostolic hermeneutic is one to which modern interpreters should adhere. He explains that such a hermeneutic “provides us the certainty that the way we were traditionally taught to interpret the Bible is the method the Bible upholds. Literal-grammatical-historical hermeneutics is not a modern formulation, but how the biblical writers read the Scriptures” (p. 23).

In order to develop his thesis, Chou first examines the manner in which the prophets utilized previous revelation. Through analysis of copious examples, Chou determines that the prophets were careful exegetes of the Scriptures that were available to them. They adhered to authorial intent in both particular details and broad themes while blending theological concepts from a variety of texts. Chou asserts that as the prophets drew upon previous revelation, they expounded upon meaning that was present already “within the parameters of significance the original author established” (p. 89).

Throughout his discussion of the prophetic hermeneutic, Chou contends that the prophets spoke “better than we give them credit for” (p. 95). Although the prophets did not have exhaustive knowledge of future events, they had sufficient

“awareness to legitimately set up later authors to use their writing” (p. 95). Thus, Chou pointedly argues against *sensus plenior*, in that the prophets were aware that they wrote and spoke of issues that extended beyond their own historical milieu.

With such foundations established, Chou offers evidence that the apostolic hermeneutic mirrors the prophetic. First, he argues that the apostles frequently used introductory formulas to depict the OT as the basis for their reasoning. Second, the apostles presented themselves as the successors to the OT prophets. Third, the apostles juxtaposed Scriptures in the same manner as the OT prophets, in that they “did not read and write about the Old Testament atomistically but rather intertextually” (p. 129). To validate his assertion, Chou evaluates several of the more difficult instances of the use of the OT in the NT (e.g. Hos 11:1 in Matt 2:15; Zech 11:4–9 in Matt 27:6–10; various psalms in John 19; and Isaiah and Genesis in Gal 4:21–31, among others). Chou’s arguments are convincing as he uncovers complex chains of intertexts wherein the apostles synthesized previous passages to explicate God’s work in salvation history.

In the final three chapters of the book, Chou illustrates how such hermeneutical consistency impacts theology. He briefly traces the theological viewpoint of each NT author, touching on Christology, ecclesiology, soteriology, and morality. He also expands upon his assertion that the modern Christian should read Scripture in the same manner as the prophets and apostles, i.e. in regard to authorial intent, historical setting, and literary setting. To be clear, Chou maintains that both the prophets and apostles had the liberty to convey new revelation, whereas modern believers do not. However, the issue under discussion is the manner in which previous revelation should be interpreted and applied. Therefore, Chou concludes with a section on the proper application of Scripture.

The book ends on a weak note, as the concluding three chapters seem rushed and slightly incongruous with the preceding material. As Chou demonstrates the interpretive process and theological outworking of his hermeneutic, he offers a diluted version of material that can be found in most biblical hermeneutics textbooks. More troubling is Chou’s treatment of homosexuality and women ministers in the final pages of the book. He offers a one-sided argument in which he implies that those who disagree with him practice unsound hermeneutics. Regardless of where one falls on either subject, Chou provides a gross oversimplification of these controversial issues, which should not have been mentioned if they were not to be given a fair discussion.

Nonetheless, the first five chapters, in which Chou explicates his thesis, are worthy of attention. His arguments are well substantiated, and his treatment of difficult passages is insightful. Although further scrutiny will be required to test Chou’s thesis across a more comprehensive range of passages, his detailed research is promising. Furthermore, the book is accessible, such that both the church and the academy will benefit.

Andrea L. Robinson

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, New Orleans, LA

*Interpreting Scripture with the Great Tradition.* By Craig A. Carter. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018, 254 pp., \$27.99 paper.

The main thrust of this work is to encourage modern readers to recover a patristic hermeneutic when studying the Bible, instead of being bound by the methodological standards, and particularly the philosophical presuppositions, of historical criticism, Enlightenment rationalism, and naturalism. The Great Tradition, as it is called, is identified as an exegetical method of looking at the whole Bible as Scripture, but more specifically as divine revelation and words about and from Christ himself—a method informed by apostolic exegesis, Nicene orthodoxy, and creedal understanding. Interpreting the Bible this way allows for allegorical (*spiritual*) readings and exegetical conclusions that take into consideration a holistically Christocentric salvation narrative that runs the span of the OT and NT.

In the first of two major sections, Carter offers a scathing critique of naturalistic metaphysics insofar as he claims adherence to this system results (has resulted) in a rejection of classically held Christian hermeneutical values that then culminates in the denial of the possibility of special revelation, the relocation of interpretive authority from the church to the academy, and the development of a “new religion” characterized by secularism and either abandonment or redefinition of Christian orthodoxy (p. 15). In a succinct but sometimes bombastic manner, the author traces the philosophical movement of the 17<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> centuries and points out the link between the shift in metaphysics and the shift in biblical hermeneutics. His focus is specifically to highlight the historical-critical rejection of the doctrine of inspiration and the classically held presuppositions of Christian Platonism, which he defines according to Augustine’s own valuation of the philosophical system.

In contrast to the proposed dangers of modern interpretive models, Carter argues for three main aspects of the kind of precritical, classical Christian hermeneutics he espouses: spiritual exegesis, Nicene dogma, and Christian Platonism. Spiritual exegesis includes both a recognition that God is speaking through his text and that God is the content (*res*) of his text and thus allows for dynamic interplay between the intent of the divine Author and the intent of the human author in interpretation. Thus, a text may have two meanings, a *literal* meaning and a *spiritual* meaning (*sensus plenior*). Adherence to Nicene dogma refers to the acknowledgment that orthodox doctrine (knowledge of God/Trinity specifically) necessarily precedes the ability to understand the Bible. Carter recognizes that “a certain kind of circularity is inevitable” in this line of thought (p. 33). Finally, Carter sees Christian Platonism, which he cites as the dominant philosophical outlook of the early church, as a necessary component in the recovery of premodern exegesis as the tenets of this perspective (anti-materialism, anti-mechanism, anti-nominalism, anti-relativism, and anti-skepticism) were displaced in the Enlightenment.

In the second section, Carter turns his attention to clarifying the method and limits of practicing pre-critical exegesis that results in allegorical interpretations, or as Carter prefers to say, “spiritual interpretation.” First, the assumption that the entirety of the Scriptures is a single, unified attestation of Jesus Christ is crucial. This fundamental recognition is a major feature of the book’s argument and is ex-



plicated in every chapter but serves here as the general foundation for reading the Scriptures (primarily the OT) spiritually. In order to do this, one must concede that (1) biblical interpretation is a spiritual discipline and thus cannot be faithfully done without the mind of Christ; (2) apostolic exegesis in the NT should serve as a model to modern interpreters; and (3) the rule of faith is the guide to keeping spiritual interpretations within the bounds, making Nicene orthodoxy a fence for possible meaning (p. 130). Importantly, Carter goes into depth about the relationship between the *literal* sense (what the author meant) and the *spiritual* sense (the deeper meaning pointing to Christ). In his method, the literal meaning always comes first and must be related to the spiritual meaning lest the authority of Scripture be undermined. In fact, the literal sense is the “controlling sense for all valid meanings” (p. 187). This does not mean, however, that the literal sense will always be identical with the spiritual sense, but all spiritual meaning must be consistent with or grow out of the literal sense. In this way there are no qualms with Augustine interpreting Exod 3:2 as a Christophany or Psalm 3 as a declaration of Christ, since these interpretations flow out of the literal meaning, do not subvert the literal intent of the passages, and are connected with analogical language to Jesus. Carter concludes by arguing for the recovery of this kind of exegesis, and at the very least the acknowledgement that the so called “Alexandrian” school of thought is an acceptable exegetical methodology for modern readers.

*Reading Scripture with the Great Tradition* is a provocative foil to what many will learn in seminary as the “correct way” to interpret the Bible—namely, that the locus of meaning is found in the critically scientific and contextual pursuit of the human author’s intent alone. This work sets Christological exegesis on the table with historical criticism and modern scientific approaches and asks the reader to think historically about the use of each method in the history of the church. The strengths of this book are its clear survey of hermeneutical history and consistent encouragement for readers to consider what is at stake in their methodology—maintaining interpretive presuppositions that may or may not have roots in the early centuries of Christianity. One weakness is that Carter does not really address what to do if several individuals come up with several competing spiritual interpretations of the same text. What if a modern reader gleaming a spiritual meaning interpreted a text differently than one of the patristic writers? Sometimes, Carter overstates his case and his language may come off as incendiary; however, he is supremely Christ-centered and obviously wants to see the exegetical trajectory of modern preachers lead them to preach Jesus boldly. This book is a call to arms for the validity of spiritual exegesis, and most definitely calls those who have heard about the Antiochene/Alexandrian divide to reconsider the validity of allegorical exegesis.

Joe Slunaker  
California Baptist University, Riverside, CA

*Biblical Truths: The Meaning of Scripture in the Twenty-first Century.* By Dale B. Martin. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2017, ix + 394 pp., \$40.00.

Every time I attend the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature (SBL), I try to sit in on every session with Dale B. Martin. It is not because I always agree with his presuppositions or conclusions on biblical matters; rather, it is because Martin is engaging, thought-provoking, judicious, and kind. I leave his sessions grappling with what blind spots I may have and areas that I need to think more deeply about.

Martin challenges the status quo with another what I will call “paradigm shift” book (see also *Pedagogy of the Bible: An Analysis and Proposal* [Westminster John Knox, 2008]). Historically, scholars have attempted to unearth a theology of the OT or NT (or both). Martin believes that no one—because of the limitations of historical criticism and ingrained theological biases—can fruitfully excavate a theology from the Bible. “So expecting to find orthodox Christian doctrine ‘in’ the texts of the New Testament read in their original historical context is unrealistic and anachronistic” (p. 29). For Martin, the interpreter actually does theology *with* the NT; doctrine and practice then follow. This book contains Martin’s “experiments in theological interpretation of Christian scripture that use but are not subservient to historical methods and historical criticism” (p. 5). One will ask, of course, the obvious question: Are the experiments “successful”?

Martin is not shy about his approach: “I attempt to offer a nonfoundationalist, postmodern, Marxist, orthodox, ecumenical, and provisional theological interpretation of the New Testament” (p. 32). At first blush, the reader might think this is an impossible endeavor. I beg to differ. While I may disagree with aspects of Martin’s approach, one must wrestle with his overall theological experiment. Is there validity to Martin’s approach? Are there some benefits from such an *avant-garde* approach?

Martin unfolds his argument like a standard systematic theology textbook: with a nearly 40-page introduction followed by chapters on (1) Knowledge, (2) Scripture, (3) God, (4) Christ, (5) Spirit, (6) Human, and (7) Church, concluding with a rather exhaustive, but unfortunately tendentious bibliography (a little more about that later).

Strategically, I will spend most on my review on Martin’s *Introduction* since it undergirds his entire theological experiment. His other chapters have sparks of brilliance and points of contention. So rather than “cherry-picking” from each chapter, I will attempt to focus my attention mostly on his *Introduction*.

Martin’s robust *Introduction* covers a lot of ground. He begins with an overview of what he suggests is a failed genre in biblical studies: “Biblical Theology.” It is a problem, according to Martin, with the way one does history and theology. His thesis is blunt: “Modern theologies of the New Testament were failures from a Christian point of view precisely because what they ended up offering was bad history, bad theology, or both” (p. 18).

Martin rightfully notes that before modernity, the disciplines of biblical and theological studies were inseparable. With the rise of historical criticism, a wedge was slowly placed between them. One outcome was that a historical investigation

of the Bible should precede a theological one. The problem has been (and continues to be) the damage this split has done to our reading and interpretation. In certain ways, historical criticism created a false “hope”—whether or not the interpreter could actually “tease out” history from theology in the Bible. Those who argue that the NT is simply an historical text that can only be understood by historical criticism (often rendering “bad history”) suffer the same biases with those who say that the NT is simply a religious text to blindly believe in (often rendering “bad theology”). How we understand “history” and “religion” and their relationship is a key ingredient in Martin’s experiment.

Martin then briefly examines the major players of the biblical theology genre (beginning c. 1800s): Johann Philipp Gabler, Martin Kähler, Karl Barth, Rudolf Bultmann, and finally George Eldon Ladd (who represents the “evangelical” approach). Martin makes a persuasive case with each of these interpreters that it is difficult, if not impossible, to “transfer the ancient world into ours, and we must also be careful not to impute our own ideas to the ancient text. Rather, we must carefully discern what in the ancient text is applicable for us—and what [is] not” (p. 8).

Martin purports that historical criticism alone is misleading to the interpretative process, since it is unwise to think the interpreter could actually understand the mind and context of the original writer. This is not to suggest that historical criticism does not have its place, but it is not the primary tool—as has been often taught in the academy—that will get us what we want (and need) from the Bible.

Martin’s book stems from his own faith journey as well as his many years teaching the Bible: “I gradually came to be dissatisfied with the reigning control such historical methods attempted on Christian interpretation of scripture. I came to believe that theological students were not being adequately taught how to think theologically and how to read Christian scripture for creative *theological* purposes rather than *historical* purposes” (p. 5). One genuinely senses that Martin is thinking about his students at Yale and elsewhere while writing his book. Peppered throughout it, Martin shows his pastoral sensibilities; for example, his discussion on “Idolatry,” pp. 144–48, is brilliant. Thus, this is not simply an academic tome, but also an attempt at biblical “pastoral care.” This is important even if one disagrees with Martin’s overall approach or some of his specific conclusions. Martin deeply cares about what he teaches and whom he teaches, and sees congruency between the creeds he recites in church on Sunday and the lectures he offers to students on Monday. Overall, Martin sees theology as a second act, so to speak (think liberation theology): “My approach is just to admit that Christian theology, when done right, *proceeds* from Christian practice and belief rather than *preceding or prescribing* Christian practice” (emphasis added, pp. 32–33).

I would give Martin’s approach a qualified “yes and no” response. He is insightful to observe that we are all inevitably trapped in the proverbial hermeneutical circle, but this does not disavow the theologically rich prescription of, say, the teachings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. Granted there are different approaches to the Sermon on the Mount; yet the text (i.e. actual words) has shaped Christian behaviors and virtues. Perhaps it is a “chicken-and-egg” conundrum, but

I do see the possibility of texts offering a prescriptive “theology” for the reader, which then would precede Christian practice.

Martin rightly contests a purely foundationalist approach to the Bible—one that two prominent evangelicals have already challenged (see John Franke and Stanley Grenz, *Beyond Foundationalism: Shaping Theology in a Postmodern Context*). One criticism about Martin’s debate with George Eldon Ladd (*A Theology of the New Testament*, 1974) is that it feels a little like a “straw person,” since Martin does not tackle someone who may more thoroughly represent the corollary of “good history” and “good theology” (e.g., N. T. Wright’s multi-volume *Christian Origins and the Question of God*). I am puzzled that Martin does not tackle any of Wright’s work, since Wright is doing something more recent and quite different methodologically than Ladd. This is not to suggest Wright’s scholarship would completely debunk Martin’s theological experiment, but Wright’s influential scholarship, I believe, must be reckoned with. Who knows—perhaps Wright’s scholarship might have persuaded Martin to rethink some of his presuppositions and conclusions? Furthermore, more conservative and evangelical folks nowadays read Wright rather than Ladd.

Perhaps Martin’s title tells it all—*Biblical Truths* (note the plural). Theology is often done in reaction to something—namely, an author’s reaction to something he/she finds troubling. I think Martin has concluded, much like the ill-fated quest for the historical Jesus (see D. Allison’s death-knell in *The Historical Christ and the Theological Jesus* [Eerdmans, 2009]), that a theology of the NT that uses historical criticism is futile and potentially counterproductive. Martin’s remedy is embodied in a three-word phrase: “Throughout this book I am trying to illustrate that the truth of a theological statement lies not in some property inherent in the statement itself but how it is interpreted. There are no theological statements that are true in all and every sense. Only ‘in a sense’” (p. 247, emphasis added). I had to ponder this phrase for a while. One wonders what Martin would say about the apostle Paul’s creedal statements in 1 Cor 15:3–4. Would the Corinthians have understood these theological statements true only in a sense? That’s for a future conversation.

The question remaining is: Has the author perhaps overcompensated when tackling a troubling flaw? In other words, might the pendulum have swung too far the other way? In a sense, the jury is still deliberating.

By necessity, Martin’s book should be read, pondered, and debated. And, yes, I look forward to sitting in on Martin’s sessions at the next SBL meeting.

Joseph B. Modica  
Eastern University, St. Davids, PA

*Inductive Bible Study: Observation, Interpretation, and Application through the Lenses of History, Literature, and Theology.* By Richard Alan Fuhr Jr. and Andreas J. Köstenberger. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2016, 384 pp., \$34.99 paper.

Richard Alan Fuhr serves as associate professor of Biblical Studies at the Liberty University Divinity School, while Andreas J. Köstenberger recently joined the

faculty of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary after serving faithfully for many years at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. The book's back cover states that Fuhr and Köstenberger joined forces to write a "practical, relevant, and time-tested approach to interpreting Scripture."

The book is divided into four units: introduction, observation, interpretation, and application. Each unit has two to five chapters each. The first unit is made up of two chapters: (1) "The Task of Bible Interpretation: Bridging the Gaps" and (2) "Inductive Bible Study: A Step-by-Step Approach." The first chapter argues the Bible is not an easy book to study because of the historical, literary, and theological challenges the modern reader faces. Still, God wants to reveal himself in Scripture and he can be understood through the Bible's message. In the second chapter, the authors acknowledge hermeneutics has both an art and a science component to it. They suggest seven sensible principles for thinking through Scripture: the literal principle, the contextual principle, the one-meaning principle, the exegetical principle, the linguistic principle, the progressive principle, and the harmony principle. It is in this chapter that the inductive and deductive approaches are compared and contrasted. The deductive approach is called assumption-based while the inductive one is affirmed to be evidence-based. Furthermore, the inductive method goes from observation to interpretation to application. Five reasons for preferring the inductive study conclude the chapter; the inductive method is also hailed as personal, practical, and beneficial.

The second unit, titled "Observation: Engaging the Text," comprises chapters 3–7: (1) "Comparing Bible Translations: Translations as Tools of Observation" (chap. 3); (2) "Asking the Right Questions of the Text: Listening Actively to the Text" (chap. 4); (3) "Reading with Discernment: Determining Significant Terms" (chap. 5); (4) "Having Eyes to See: Observing Literary Features" (chap. 6); and (5) "Determining Literary Units: Basic Discourse Analysis" (chap. 7). Chapter 4 is very beneficial because it gives sample interpretive questions and ties them in with specific biblical passages such as 1 Timothy 2 and James 1. Chapter 5 is basically about how to do word studies, while chapter 6 provides an introduction to literary features and figures of speech. From the five chapters that make up the second unit, chapter 7 is the one that is unique to such a work since discourse analysis (or text linguistics) is such a narrow branch of linguistics. The authors do a good job summarizing the structural analysis features, but they also realistically point out that "it's highly unlikely that any of the biblical authors ever intended their messages to be outlined or diagrammed, and in some cases these procedures can actually impose a false structure on the text" (p. 176).

The third unit is titled "Interpretation: Investigating the Text" and comprises chapters 8–12: (1) "Considering the Context: Historical, Literary, and Theological Kinds of Context" (chap. 8); (2) "Interpretive Correlation: Comparing Scripture with Scripture" (chap. 9); (3) "Discovering the Meaning of Words and Phrases: Lexical and Contextual Analysis" (chap. 10); (4) "Thematic Correlation: Synthesizing Motifs for Topical Study" (chap. 11); and (5) "Consultation: Using Research Tools to Enhance Our Study of the Text" (chap. 12). I believe the strength of this book is in this part that it indeed takes one through the five steps of interpretation,

leaving no interpretive stone unturned. Each chapter is clear and filled with relevant information needed for one to do in-depth, inductive Bible study. The charts and figures are the icing on this hermeneutical cake for those who are visual learners. Chapter 8 outlines the importance of considering the hermeneutical triad of historical, literary, and theological contexts. Indeed, to not consider any of these contexts is to foolishly rest on a two-legged stool. Yet, the authors realistically affirm that “considering the context is a skill that requires time to develop” (p. 211). Chapter 9 reminds us what the Reformers taught, namely that Scripture interprets itself with Scripture. This “interpretive correlation ... has an inward focus, serving to inform and safeguard the interpretation of Scripture” (p. 214). The ample examples of valid and invalid correlations are very useful. Chapter 10 is a good introduction on how to do word studies, while chapter 11 gives helpful hints as to how to synthesize data. Chapter 12 is another practical chapter about how to use research tools such as commentaries, Bible dictionaries, and even journal articles.

Lastly, three chapters (chaps. 13–15) comprise the application unit: (1) “Establishing Relevance and Legitimacy: Assessing the Text’s Applicability to Us Today” (chap. 13); (2) “Appropriating the Meaning: Living Out the Text in Our World” (chap. 14); and (3) “Doing Theology: The Outflow of an Inductive Approach to Scripture” (chap. 15). The table titled “Five Steps for Finding Parallels between Interpretation and Application” is followed by descriptive paragraphs on how to “discover how the original author intended his original audience to apply the written text,” how to “determine the appropriate boundaries of what the text can and cannot mean for today,” and how to “develop potential scenarios in which the text can be applied today” (p. 314).

If this book were a cake, I would call it a hermeneutical cake with inductive Bible Study icing. The chapter on discourse analysis would be the sprinkles that can make the cake more attractive but most people will either ignore or remove. Most of the ingredients can be found in Köstenberger’s and Patterson’s *Invitation to Biblical Interpretation: The Hermeneutical Triad of History, Literature, and Theology* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2011) and its abridged version *For the Love of God’s Word: An Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2015). The authors achieve what they attempt to do, and the book is indeed ideal for anyone who desires to better understand and teach Scripture. However, the thin chapter on biblical theology and the lack of exercises/assignments don’t make it an ideal textbook. For anyone looking for a textbook on hermeneutics I recommend *Grasping God’s Word: A Hands-On Approach to Reading, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible* by J. Scott Duvall and J. Daniel Hays (Zondervan) or the above-mentioned work by Andreas J. Köstenberger and Richard D. Patterson.

Tiberius Rata

Grace College and Theological Seminary, Winona Lake, IN

*From Hermeneutics to Exegesis: The Trajectory of Biblical Interpretation.* By Matthew R. Malcolm. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2018, 192 pp., \$24.99 paper.

Whenever I pick up a new book, my first thoughts are related to the necessity of the work. I ponder whether the book actually contributes substance to the overall academic discourse or whether it is simply retreading the same timeworn themes with a new cover from a different publisher. And I must admit that a tinge of skepticism has colored my perspective recently as I, like Qoheleth, have grown weary with the exponential publication of books (Eccl 12:12).

Matthew Malcolm's *From Hermeneutics to Exegesis* is a refreshing exception. It is an important work for at least three reasons: (1) it offers clarification to the often-muddled distinction between hermeneutics and exegesis; (2) it expounds a robust, and I believe evangelical, view of hermeneutics that pivots slightly from the recent stream of evangelical books on hermeneutics; and (3) it functions as a digest of Anthony Thiselton's influential yet dense and, at times, opaquely philosophical treatises on hermeneutics. I have a greater respect for Thiselton's concepts after having read Malcolm.

Malcolm's stated goal for the book is "to help readers become more attentive, and more self-aware, interpreters" (p. xvi). He begins by highlighting the differences between hermeneutics and exegesis. Hermeneutics, which is more abstract, "means the study of what is happening when effective interpretation or understanding takes place" (p. 5). Exegesis, on the other hand, is the "intentional, attentive, respectful interpretation of a particular written text" (p. 6). He likens exegesis to an interview process that involves "both *priming* (that is, pre-interview homework) and *refining* (that is, continually cultivating one's general sense of the text by asking particular questions of it)" (p. 103, italics original).

Malcolm's view of hermeneutics incorporates aspects of objectivity and subjectivity. He does not neglect the need for proper analysis of words and sentences, which provides a measure of control in interpretation (see chaps. 8–11). But he also emphasizes the "locatedness," or horizon, of the reader as just as valid. This is where Malcolm's work provides a fresh perspective for evangelical hermeneutics that differs from the evangelical tendency to overemphasize objectivity. He posits, from a brief reflection on the parables, that "according to Jesus, reaching understanding—arriving at a right interpretation—is not simply a matter of decoding grammar and syntax. Some of those who did this right and were personally familiar with Jesus's first-century cultural context still found themselves hopelessly lost" (p. 2). Further, he states that Jesus "saw their lack of understanding as arising from *who they were*: they were people in danger of having hardened hearts" (p. 2, italics original). With that one simple observation, Malcolm convinced me that there must be room for the subjective in our hermeneutics.

The format of the book lends itself to engaging study because each chapter concludes with "Questions for Discussion." The book, then, could profitably be used in a small group or Sunday School setting at church, but I believe it also has real value for college and seminary students as an introductory text. It would function well as, to borrow a concept from Malcolm, a *priming* text for more compre-

hensive works on the subject, such as Grant Osborne's *Hermeneutical Spiral* or Anthony Thiselton's *Hermeneutics*.

Michael Snearly  
Red Hill Church, San Anselmo, CA

*Introducing the Old Testament*. By Robert L. Hubbard Jr. and J. Andrew Dearman. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018, xxii + 538 pp., \$40.00.

In *Introducing the Old Testament*, Robert L. Hubbard Jr. and J. Andrew Dearman have combined their tremendous wealth of experience in teaching and writing about the OT. The careers of both are noteworthy for both quality and longevity in the field. Hubbard retired as a naval reserve chaplain and is currently a professor emeritus at North Park Theological Seminary, having spent over two decades there. His bibliography includes several OT commentaries and books. Dearman also has a long career of teaching OT and has written several books on OT culture, archaeology, and history. Collectively, the two form a formidable duo of information and capability from which this work resulted.

*Introducing the Old Testament* is arranged into six main parts. Part 1 deals with the introductory matters and OT history. Part 6 is the conclusion discussing the canon and text of the OT. The other four parts divide the OT into Torah, Historical Books, Prophets, and Poetry. The text is supported with numerous tables, diagrams, maps, timelines, a glossary, transliterations, and two indexes.

Hubbard and Dearman liken the design of *Introducing the Old Testament* to that of a beginner's swimming lesson curriculum. The point is that just as beginning swimmers learn technique in the shallow end of the pool and advance by applying those lessons in the deep end, each chapter of *Introducing the Old Testament* begins in the shallow end and inspires students toward the deep end of personal research application. According to the authors, each chapter "orients readers to the background and contents of the OT book (or books) under consideration" (p. 3). In the "shallow-end" portion of the book, they explain "the basics—how the book originated, its historical or cultural background, its literary features and main characters, and its structure" (p. 3). Also in these sections, they "highlight seven *programmatic texts*—key biblical statements that articulate the OT's foundational theological themes—themes that the NT further develops and that form the basis for Christian beliefs. These texts mark theological and thematic threads that knit the OT and NT together to form the Bible" (p. 3, italics original). However, Hubbard and Dearman state that "the most important section ... is the *reading* section. It asks the reader to dive into the deep end—the adventure of actually reading and engaging with the OT itself, *every* chapter, warts and all" (p. 4, italics original). These design concepts are set within the authors' careful regard for the historical context for each biblical book. The authors state, "The surrounding historical situation helps shape the literary piece and, consequently, it is best understood in light of that situation" (p. 6).

The title *Introducing the Old Testament* is indeed an accurate one. The authors rightly introduce the reader to the OT and its inherent complexities. While the



broad focus of the book is on the introducing aspect, the authors also discuss, albeit at an introductory level, some rather advanced issues. There are full chapters that discuss the issues of OT history, the nature of prophets and prophecy, and the finer details of Hebrew poetry. Inside other chapters, the authors include discussions on complicated issues such as the archaeology of Jericho, Ai, and Hazor, the authorship of Isaiah, and ownership of the land. In this work, a student is truly introduced to a wide array of OT topics and the great intricacy of others.

As noted by the authors, the “reading” sections of *Introducing the Old Testament* are the points where the tires meet the pavement, or to use their analogy, the point where the reader jumps into the deep end of the pool. These reading sections are indeed one of the strengths of *Introducing the Old Testament*. The authors have included questions that consistently push the readers into the deep end of the pool by returning them to the deep waters of the text itself. The questions are very text-oriented. Yet, for a book that introduces the OT, there are too many subjective or application questions and too few content questions. The balance is much in favor of the subjective questions like the following: “Please list what you think to be the three or four main themes of *Judges*. Given the book’s audience, why would you say the book’s compilers gave these themes special stress?” (p. 146). Or consider this example: “Both Zerubbabel and Joshua are called ‘Branch’ (Zech 3:8; 6:12). How do you interpret that term?” (p. 391). If the target readers are those beginning to learn the OT, ones to whom the OT is being introduced, how are they able to answer such questions without first learning the textual content?

In this regard, *The World and the Word* by Merrill, Rooker, and Grisanti (B&H Academic, 2011) is the antithesis of *Introducing the Old Testament*. The questions asked in *The World and the Word* are particularly content-oriented, asking questions such as “What is the chronological problem with the history of the judges?” (p. 298) or “What gods did the Israelites worship in the book of Judges?” (p. 299). Too many “What do you think?” opinion questions seem to allow the beginning learner too much latitude. In my judgment, suitable application principles can only be made when the basic textual content is learned and understood. Yet too many content-only questions will hinder the beginning reader in applying the text to personal situations. A balanced set of content and application questions seems best. In the case of *Introducing the Old Testament* more content questions might better serve the beginning reader.

*Introducing the Old Testament* is broadly evangelical and the authors hold a high view of the biblical text and its history. The work contains many of the best characteristics of a preferred textbook. It compares well with *The World and the Word* and with *A Survey of the Old Testament* by Hill and Walton (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.; Zondervan, 2010), although the latter is in its third edition, is more “polished” in form, and offers several supplemental helps. If the publishers of *Introducing the Old Testament* supplement this textbook with other helps, it could become a favorite OT introduction of many.

Chet Roden  
Liberty University School of Divinity, Lynchburg, VA

*Creation Care: A Biblical Theology of the Natural World.* By Douglas J. Moo and Jonathan A. Moo. Biblical Theology for Life. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018, 256 pp., \$24.99 paper.

This book is written by a father, Douglas Moo, who is a professor at Wheaton College, and his son, Jonathan Moo, who is an associate professor at Whitworth College. Both teach NT, but Jonathan also teaches environmental studies. Some parts of the text are written by only one of the authors and they indicate this at times, but most of the text seems to be a joint effort of the two writers.

This book about creation in the Bible is in a series called “Biblical Theology for Life.” This series addresses biblical theological issues and makes practical applications of these issues to life today. Each of the books in the series follows the basic sequence of three topics: “Queuing the Questions,” “Arriving at Answers,” and “Reflecting on Relevance.” This book follows this sequence and addresses the major concerns of this series.

In section 1 “Queuing the Questions” there are two chapters “What Do Christians Have to Do with Creation?” and “How Do We Think Biblically and Theologically about Creation?”

In section 2: “Arriving at Answers” there are seven chapters: “A Beautiful World,” “Members, Rulers, and Keepers of Creation,” “Humanity and the Earth, Israel and the Land,” “A Creation Subjected to Frustration,” “Jesus and Creation,” “What Counts Is the New Creation,” and “I Am Making Everything New!” The first four chapters relate to the OT and the last three relate to the NT.

In section 3: “Reflecting on Relevance” there are five chapters: “The Gospel and Creation Care,” “Humans and Creation: Understanding our Place,” “Wisdom and Creation Care,” “Creation in Crisis<sup>2</sup>,” and “Caring for Creation and Worshiping the Creator.”

This is a good model for doing biblical theology. Approaching the Bible with our own questions helps us find guidance from the Bible to address modern concerns. The final section highlights the practical applications of theology for issues of today. While all three issues are important, separating them into three sections produces some redundancy and makes it difficult to keep the three sections connected. There is much practical application throughout the book. It is hard to remember the questions from the first section when one is engaging the “answers” in the second section. In the final section it is easy to forget the questions and answers. The final section “Reflecting on Relevance” did not seem well integrated with the rest of the book.

The book is addressed to evangelical Christians with a high view of Scripture. Many evangelicals have shown little interest in the natural world or environmental issues. Some doubt scientific views about climate change and the role of humans in producing this climate change.

While the Bible begins with creation, these initial chapters have often been viewed as a prologue to the more important salvation history that follows. This salvation history relates to the people of Israel in the OT but then changes to indi-

viduals in the NT. Some evangelicals who focus on the good news are only concerned about personal salvation.

NT texts seem to say that the present world that we live in will soon pass away and the real goal is to go to heaven and escape from this world. If this world is passing away, and the goal is eternal life in heaven, why should one devote much attention to this world? The authors think Christians should be engaged in caring for the world that God has created. They are aware that many evangelicals do not agree with them and spend time advocating for their view. In chapter 9, the authors argue for a “transformation model” of the world in which “this creation, while changed in many ways, will endure into eternity” (p. 146). The other model is the “replacement model” that “the present universe we live in will be destroyed and replaced by a new one” (p. 146).

The title of the book, *Creation Care*, indicates the central concerns of the book. God has created the world and its creatures and humans as creatures should care for creation. The subtitle *A Biblical Theology of the Natural World*, is problematic. The authors note the problem with using the term “nature” for the world (p. 25). Too often it relates to a deistic view of God who created the world in the past and then withdrew from the world.

One of the challenges of a biblical theology of the world is that there is much more material about the created world in the OT than in the NT. The authors note that the OT is not used much in many churches today, so to find out about the created world in the Bible more attention should be given to the OT. This raises important hermeneutical questions about the relationship of the OT to the NT. Should the NT get the final word?

Four chapters are devoted to the OT (pp. 45–113) and three to the NT (pp. 114–167). The treatment of creation in the OT seemed too brief. Little attempt was made to address historical contexts of texts or how different accounts of creation may reflect different views of creation. More attention to creation in wisdom theology and also in prophetic books would have been helpful.

The discussion of the theme “creation” seemed largely to relate to God’s initial establishment of order in the world as is reflected in Genesis 1 and not to “ongoing creation” as reflected in Psalm 104:27–30. More attention could have been given to God’s ongoing relationship to the world, including sustenance and blessing.

The book is well written, and the authors do not get bogged down in scholarly debates. The book is practical and engaging. They have some good sidebars throughout their book with quotations from various writers like Wendell Berry, Aldo Leopold, Rachel Carson, and Richard Bauckham. They cite important writings in their footnotes but do not include a bibliography or recommended reading list at the end of the book.

It is good to see evangelicals engaging with the theology of creation and reflecting upon how we should live in the world God has created for us. This book provides many helpful reflections on biblical texts that provide support for these

views. It will encourage readers to think more deeply about these issues and seek ways to change how they view the world and how they should live in the world.

Stephen A. Reed

University of Jamestown, Jamestown, ND

*Genesis as Torah: Reading Narrative as Legal Instruction.* By Brian Neil Peterson. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2018, xvi + 196 pp., \$25.00 paper.

The Genesis narratives are commonly understood as accounts of the earliest history of the world and Israel's earliest ancestors. However, this is not the complete picture. In *Genesis as Torah: Reading Narrative as Legal Instruction*, Brian Neil Peterson (Associate Professor of OT and Hebrew at Lee University) ably demonstrates that, rather than serving merely as a record of Israel's prehistory, the book of Genesis also functions as instruction that reinforces the teachings of the Torah.

The preface and introduction present Peterson's main points and methodological approach. Here Peterson relies upon scholars who argue that the Pentateuch's narratives offer legal instruction, such as Calum M. Carmichael (e.g. *The Origins of Biblical Law: The Decalogues and the Book of the Covenant* [Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992]) and James W. Watts (e.g. *Reading Law: The Rhetorical Shaping of the Pentateuch* [Biblical Seminar 59; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999]). Peterson's primary argument is that the author of Genesis "sought to present not only the early history of the world and how Israel became a nation, but more importantly he sought to present specific instruction on key legislative aspects of the Torah ... [and] to show what certain laws actually looked like in a 'real life' setting" (p. xiv). Thus, according to Peterson, the book of Genesis should be read "in order to determine what the author was attempting to teach Israel as a nation" (p. xvi).

While acknowledging that the Genesis traditions contain later updates and additions, Peterson argues for their antiquity, whether in oral or written form. Peterson also contends that the Pentateuch is largely a biography of Moses and that the book of Genesis contains many parallels with the life of Moses (e.g. Jacob blesses his sons before he dies, just as Moses blesses the tribes of Israel). For Peterson, therefore, the implied author of the book of Genesis is Moses, and the implied audience is the Israelites encamped on the plains of Moab just prior to entering Canaan. The narratives of Genesis thus reinforce the laws given by Moses at Mount Sinai.

The remainder of *Genesis as Torah* systematically works through Genesis, showing how the book functions as legal instruction. Three chapters are devoted to the Primeval History ("Genesis 1–2: Creation as Foundational to God's Torah," "Genesis 3–4: The Analogical Role of the Fall of Humanity," and "Genesis 5–11: The Flood and Babel: How to Avoid the Judgment of God"), and three chapters are devoted to the Ancestral Narratives ("Genesis 12–25: Abraham as an Example of Righteous Behavior," "Genesis 26–36: 'Israel' as an Example for Israel," and "Genesis 37–50: The Life of Joseph: How to Live in Exile").

The content and structure of these chapters vary, but each chapter discusses several key elements with respect to the portion of Genesis it covers. First, Peterson examines connections between Genesis and the Ten Commandments (e.g. God's resting on the seventh day of the creation week serves as a precursor to the Sabbath). Second, Peterson explores how Genesis contains both legal (e.g. Abel's and Cain's sacrifices anticipate the Levitical sacrificial system) and historical (e.g. Abram's sojourn and departure from Egypt in Gen 12:10–20 foreshadows the exodus) antecedents to specific laws and events from Exodus through Deuteronomy. Third, Peterson considers the contribution of Genesis to our understanding of God's nature (e.g. the story of Joseph reveals God's sovereignty).

Peterson succeeds in demonstrating that the book of Genesis functions as instruction. *Genesis as Torah* is well researched and well argued throughout. Peterson judiciously evaluates many possible intersections between Genesis and Torah that have been presented by other scholars. In addition, Peterson also offers a number of considerable new insights of his own, particularly with respect to the teaching of Genesis on sexual ethics. The result is an impressive and relatively comprehensive body of research and argumentation.

Furthermore, *Genesis as Torah* offers many significant contributions to our understanding of the book of Genesis, biblical narrative, and biblical law. In demonstrating that Genesis was written as instruction and not only history, the book enriches our understanding of this foundational biblical book's purpose and how we should read it. In addition, *Genesis as Torah* adds to current discussion of the rhetorical relationship between law and narrative in the Hebrew Bible by showing how narrative and law can dialogue with and reinforce one another. This, in turn, contributes to our comprehension of how biblical narrative can be read ethically, which enhances our understanding and application of OT ethics.

I have only two minor critiques of the book. My first criticism is the overall lack of synthesis within each chapter and in the book's conclusion. Peterson covers so many different topics that it is not always easy to follow the relationship between sections or to keep the overall picture in mind. My second criticism is that Peterson should have devoted more attention to Gen 26:5, which explicitly states that Abraham kept God's commandments, statutes, and laws. This passage could be interpreted in several different ways, but regardless of the interpretation adopted it remains foundational for understanding how the Ancestral Narratives—and therefore also the bulk of the book of Genesis—provide legal and historical antecedents to Torah. It is unfortunate, therefore, that Peterson spends only a single paragraph (pp. 100–101) discussing this passage's importance.

To summarize, despite some minor drawbacks, *Genesis as Torah* offers a well-researched and well-argued case for reading the book of Genesis as legal instruction. It grants Genesis additional significance within the canon of the Hebrew Bible, improves our understanding of this foundational book's purpose, and contributes meaningfully to our understanding of narrative ethics in the Pentateuch.

Benjamin J. Noonan  
Columbia Biblical Seminary, Columbia International University, Columbia, SC

*Echoes of Exodus: Tracing a Biblical Motif.* By Bryan D. Estelle. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2018, xiv + 392 pp., \$40.00 paper.

The Exodus motif (EM) shapes Bryan Estelle's exploration of current trends in biblical hermeneutics. The introduction poses the guiding question: How has the exodus event been transformed, repackaged, and "eschatologized" in the Hebrew Bible and NT? The author attempts to bring clarity to definitions of intertextuality and typology, and seeks to break new ground in understanding echoes, evocation, and allusion in biblical literature. Mindful of the suspicion regarding the term "metanarrative," Estelle chooses to call God's grand narrative a "meganarrative." From a theological perspective, he also seeks to bridge the gap between participationist and justification models of atonement, reminding his readers that we are both "in Christ" and "justified by Christ."

Chapter 1 ("Hermeneutical Foundations") introduces intertextuality—the awareness that full meaning depends on interaction with other texts, cultural influences, and readers. Given the presumed distinction between intentional and unintentional echoes, the question arises: To what extent can meaning be ascribed to the author when text and reader also play a significant part in the interpretive quest? Estelle maintains a robust understanding of inspiration, seeking coherence between authorial intent and meaning. Contents of the first chapter are fleshed out in an appendix that is devoted to a more in-depth treatment of intertextuality.

Chapter 2 is a review of intertextual connections between the creation and exodus themes. Key points are: (1) the Genesis creation account is not merely a mythological reworking of ANE battle motifs because God *spoke* creation into existence; (2) God's creation is his cosmic temple, and the end point of creation is a summons to worship; (3) Sabbath rest is God's enthronement over creation. The interval between creation and exodus is defined by the covenant of grace with Abram (Genesis 12 and 15). Genesis 15 articulates a direct link with the exodus.

Chapter 3 addresses the cultural language and motifs that convey the significance of the exodus event. The pervasive ANE combat myth surfaces here; the sovereign King of the universe subdues both chaotic waters and the self-declared divinity of the pharaoh. Estelle prefers the term "mytho-historic" in which motifs from the creation narrative intertwine with the archetypal journey through the waters and wilderness to the mountain for worship in the covenant relationship. The Song at the Sea is transitional as it anticipates the future journey to the land and ultimately the Temple. Expanding the boundaries of the EM to encompass this much of Israel's experience may lead to identifying an inordinately large number of EM echoes in subsequent chapters.

Chapter 4 addresses the EM refracted through the textures of Psalms 114, 118, 23, 77, 78, and the 105–106 pair. Psalm 23, joining God as Shepherd with God as Host, initially seems an outlier in this collection, but it represents a new journey through the wilderness in order to dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Readers will expect a significant focus on Isaiah (chap. 5), given that chapters 40–55 echo the EM, anticipating the return from exile. Some surprises in light of the richly complex fabric of Isaiah: Estelle does not deal with Isa 40:28–31 and its

powerful Creator language. Also, a deeper probing of the interwoven themes in the song cycles (servant, sovereignty, polemic against idolatry, and redemption) might yield remarkable fruit in this exploration.

Chapter 6 addresses exilic and post-exilic texts. Both Jeremiah and Ezekiel emphasize the new covenant. Return to the land and worship on the mountain of the Lord are the goals. The same threads appear in Ezra as the return to Jerusalem is laced with echoes of the first exodus. A question that “echoes” in the scholarly world is whether return and reform fulfill Israel’s expectations of the new exodus or whether they still considered themselves “in exile.” This reverberates into the NT textual environment.

Mark and Matthew are the focal points of chapter 7. Mark’s opening reference to Isaiah 40, interwoven with Exod 23:20 and Mal 3:1, suggests Israel was not ready for the Lord’s coming; a right response to Elijah was necessary to avoid God’s judgment. The Markan EM moves to Jesus’s baptism, where the voice of the Lord echoes the word spoken at Sinai. Matthew’s presentation of Jesus casts him as recapitulating Israel’s history. Familiar connections reflect patterns of redemptive history viewed through Christological lenses.

Chapter 8 probes selected pericopes in Luke-Acts. Jesus’s sermon in the synagogue in Nazareth (Luke 4) is presumed to point toward the fulfillment of a new exodus. The author cites Susan Garrett’s work linking Stephen’s speech in Acts 7 with Luke 4, but the connections do not seem entirely clear. He also gathers all the uses of “the Way” in Acts but does not explore that collection through EM lenses. Promise, fulfillment, and the new exodus permeate Matthew, Mark, and Luke-Acts. The author does not address John.

Israel’s story lies behind Paul’s quotations, allusions, and echoes (chap. 9). The new exodus has been inaugurated in the Christian community. The original exodus, the new exodus in Isaiah, and the Gospels all influence Paul—not a surprising conclusion for the careful reader of Paul and heartening theological affirmations, to be sure. How they all link directly to the EM is occasionally a puzzle.

In 1 Peter (chap. 10), the EM is a guiding metaphor with emphases on the blood of Christ as the unblemished Passover Lamb and images of the exodus from Egypt. To maintain at this point in the book that Passover plays a central part in Scripture is not really groundbreaking. Further, the claim that Peter has transferred the people of Israel’s attributes to Christians—the “Church is the new Israel”—is a thread working its way through parts of the treatments of Paul and Peter. For readers uneasy with supersessionism, it might raise possible flags.

Revelation (chap. 11) “recharacterizes” the EM for the eschaton. Everything is new. Now there is no longer any sea—or chaos—because the waters are destroyed as God brings people to the New Jerusalem for worship.

The book’s final chapter summarizes prior chapters and highlights several conclusions: (1) the ideological baggage associated with intertextuality does not preclude the method from serving readers well; (2) God’s redemptive plan is embedded in the EM as it reverberates through Scripture; and (3) as an application, the Lord’s prayer echoes themes and language from the EM.

Estelle's citation of secondary literature is robust. He is also to be lauded for referencing unpublished papers by his students. The extensive footnotes are as valuable as the text itself. The question arises: For whom is the book written? The references seem to suggest professionals in the discipline. The broad scope, however, and brief treatments of large swaths of Scripture imply that its target audience includes those who need to grow in "allusional competence" (the ability to recognize embedded texts). One might wish for more in-depth probing of how the echoes are "echoing." Much of what is elucidated regarding intertextual connections are indeed those gems that readers who have been steeped in the Scriptures for decades have long noted and relished. To be sure, that kind of reader may be a vanishing species, so for others, this book can play an important role.

Elaine Phillips  
Gordon College, Wenham, MA

*Ruth: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary.* By Jeremy Schipper. Anchor Yale Bible 7D. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016, 221 pp., \$65.00.

This is volume 7D in the Anchor Yale Bible Series whose general editor is John J. Collins. Jeremy Schipper is an associate professor of the Hebrew Bible at Temple University. This volume replaces an earlier commentary by Edward F. Campbell Jr. Though replacing Campbell, a great literary debt to the earlier author is acknowledged. Schipper also wrote *Disability and Isaiah's Suffering Servant*.

This is a project with very high production values. With a respected imprint and impressive credentials at the authorial, editorial, and publisher levels, this volume is a worthy addition to the Anchor Yale Bible Series. The avid reader will appreciate the print (although a slightly larger type font would have been better), binding, and jacket aesthetics that always enhance the reading experience. With the deluge of digital media, I respect the effort to provide quality in print media represented in this book.

With more than fifteen pages of bibliography and significant indices, this work presents itself as a substantial contribution to the analysis, exegesis, and application of Ruth. Schipper includes an extensive introduction that examines the cultural backdrop of the story. This is marked by painstaking research. A new translation is offered that bears a distinct colloquial tone. Schipper offers this thesis of his commentary:

It concentrates on the nature of relationships in Ruth. Among other things, a focus on relationships foregrounds the negotiations throughout the book of ability, asymmetrical authority, blessings and their absence, divine activity, ethnicity, exogamy, gender, *hesed*, household structures, human desires, impoverishments, labor, patriarchy, religious expression, responsibilities of the clan, sexuality and status, among other topics. (p. 29)

Schipper writes, even when dealing with fairly technical matters, in a readable style. He presents his comments systematically and coherently. He also displays considerable fluency in Hebrew, deftly opening linguistic keys in the text, especially



identifying figurative language. He concludes that all the conversations in Ruth are spoken as poetry. He highlights wordplay by uncovering alliteration, anagrams, assonance, puns, and rhymes:

To be clear, one cannot verify whether these literary effects reflect authorial intent or whether the author was even aware of them. Thus, I do not endorse Campbell's claim that the literary crafting of the book reflects the fact that the author "was a genius." Further, other scholars have noted many, if not all, of the literary efforts that I discuss. I only claim that my translation has benefited from the ingenious analyses of Ruth by many scholars before me, including Campbell. Nevertheless, there is at least hard evidence that the narrative style creates a number of these literary effects for the commentator to exploit. (p. 7)

This book includes much background material, and in doing so could be a valuable tool for connecting the reader to the time period of Ruth. However, there is no connection in the book to the master theme of all Scripture, which is Christ. Schipper has no listing in the index for "Christ," "Jesus," or even "Messiah."

And while Schipper does not address the metanarrative of Christ in Ruth, he readily finds opportunity to discuss what he considers a significant error:

Instead of ahistorically assuming that all texts reflect on or two constant sexual identities, queer readings foreground how interpretive strategies may uncritically privilege certain relationships over others, be it Ruth and Naomi, Ruth and Boaz, or some other relationship. To be clear, noting the tendency toward heterosexual-normative interpretations of Ruth does not mean that mapping other understandings of sexual desire onto the characters is any less presumptive. (pp. 37–38)

Schipper does concede in his preface that he intends to offer no "definitive word on the book of Ruth that forecloses all other exegetical possibilities." Rather, he says, "I aim to provide detailed discussions of the text in order to assist readers in asking whatever questions they may have about the book and its contents more precisely, including the many important questions that I have not anticipated" (p. xi).

From a larger perspective, it is apparent Schipper accepts the value of the ancient document that Ruth appears to be and acknowledges its presentation of the providence of God in some form or fashion. However, Schipper never discusses the inerrancy or infallibility of the text. He does not reject inerrancy; he never addresses the matter. He presents Ruth as a fascinating ancient Near Eastern document of uncertain composition as to date, authorship, or even genre. In that case, the value of this commentary is lessened by the fact that it presents Ruth as a short story of modest interest and importance, except as an opportunity to discuss current socio-economic or sexual ethics implicit in another text from antiquity.

David Pitman  
Institute of Reformed Baptist Studies, Mansfield, TX

*Psalms*, vol. 2: *Psalms 73–150*. By C. Hassell Bullock. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2017, xviii + 622 pp., \$39.99 paper.

C. Hassell Bullock follows up on his work from Volume 1 in the Teach the Text Commentary Series. Baker made an excellent choice in bringing Bullock back for an encore. However, Baker made one crucial mistake the second time around: this series touts itself as a gap-filler for pastors/teachers that distills scholarship into a “clear, concise, attractive and user-friendly format” (p. xi). Bullock’s first Psalms volume (*Psalms 1–72*) populated at least every other page with wonderful color illustrations that enriched that first volume. It was Baker’s decision to change this second volume (*Psalms 73–150*), as well as other volumes in the series, to an all black-and-white text format. It is a jarring effect for those prior readers of Bullock’s first volume, akin to children being handed a black-and-white newspaper comic script minus supporting illustrations after holding in their hands full glossy comics. Other options such as hosting these graphical elements on a server exist. Hopefully, future editions could look for a creative solution to bring back the color illustrations to Bullock’s second volume.

Aside from this publisher’s decision, Bullock’s second volume follows the same ambitious format found in each book in the series with five main divisions: (1) “Big Idea”; (2) “Key Themes”; (3) “Understanding the Text”; (4) “Teaching the Text”; and (5) “Illustrating the Text.” Divisions 1–2 establish a thematic overview of each psalm through bulleted points, division 3 takes a more exegetical/commentarial direction, and divisions 4 and 5 move toward application, especially within a preaching context. Beyond these basic divisions, nine “Additional Insights” occur throughout the volume that pause to take notice of special issues arising from various psalms.

Bullock’s “Big Idea” division, as its name suggests, frames the whole psalm. It contains beautiful devotional from a master wordsmith. Some examples of this are: “In God’s great mercy our bad decisions may lead us not to the end of the road but to a cul-de-sac of grace where we can make a U-turn” (p. 67); “God constructs his kingdom out of the building blocks of his own character” (p. 98); “The praise of heaven is the tuning fork for our earthly praise” (p. 227); and “Our pursuit of God turns out, by grace, to be God’s pursuit of us” (p. 503). These Big Ideas organize the rest of the discussion of each psalm.

The “Key Theme” division pairs together with the Big Idea in the same gray box and gathers together typically 2–4 theological formulations culled from each psalm. Bullock displays a refined literary sense in capturing the main veins of each psalm. He recapitulates and expands upon these initial themes during the later applicational sections in divisions 4 and 5.

After the simple blocked box of the first two divisions, the “Understanding the Text” division comprises a more complicated organizational structure that subdivides into “The Text in Context,” “Outline/Structure,” “Historical and Cultural Background,” “Interpretive Insights,” and “Theological Insights.” “Interpretive Insights,” despite its alliterative sound, awkwardly substitutes for what other works would simply call a commentary. Bullock follows the editorial preferences here but

these headings could be streamlined further into exegetical, outline, and commentary sections.

Operating from this simpler threefold organizational, Bullock places each psalm in its historical and literary context. Bullock follows the accepted tradition of five books within the Psalter. His current volume (vol. 2), then, covers the hypothetical Books 3–5 of the Psalms that roughly correspond with the exilic and post-exilic periods. Yet, Bullock keeps this original time setting of the psalm loose, allowing content within the psalm to dictate its own time setting. For instance, for Psalm 93, he concludes with Howard's historical moorings in the 10<sup>th</sup> century or earlier (p. 158).

Bullock also utilizes hints within the Psalter to get behind the text, as it were. He assigns each psalm to a genre specification but recognizes the amorphous nature of genres. For instance, Bullock sees Psalm 115 as operating as a psalm of trust, praise, and lament (p. 330). Bullock also looks often to a psalm's ancient and modern liturgical usage. For Psalm 132, Bullock argues its processional terminology found relevance in Moses's day, then during the Davidic dynasty, and finally to "commemorate the restoration of temple worship" (p. 451) in the post-exilic era.

Despite the individual assessment of each psalm, Bullock favors an approach that looks at intertextual connections. Bullock insists that the psalms "cannot be interpreted as stand-alone psalms but have to be interpreted in relationship to their neighboring psalms" (p. 559), and he methodically follows through on this for every psalm. Additionally, he brings in pericopes outside of the Psalter where shared vocabulary exists often in tabular form. For instance, Bullock places Psalm 144 against a compilation of psalms in another column and 2 Samuel 22 (p. 539).

To round off the exegetical section, Bullock adds an outline and verse-by-verse commentary. Readers of Bullock's first volume will notice greatly expanded outlines with many more subpoints included, though Psalm 118 curiously lacks an outline (p. 349). The magnified outlines dovetail well with the purpose of providing greater helps for teachers/pastors. Bullock frequently critiques a particular translational rendering for falling short of capturing the nuances present in its Hebrew antecedent and replaces it with a more felicitous option. The commentary offers greater clarity for key phraseology for a pastor or teacher without the scholarly clutter found in other commentaries. At times, this leads to an oversimplified treatment or imprecision. For Psalm 88, Bullock discusses the psalmist's undisclosed illness with "leprosy being one of the proposals" (p. 119). Yet, he never supports this difficult exegetical attribution, nor does he acknowledge the scholarly unanimity that the leprosy of today, better known as Hansen's Disease, cannot be the same as biblical skin disease, since Hansen's Disease only emerges in a later historical period.

Bullock really shines when it comes to the application section found in the "Teaching the Text" and "Illustrating the Text" divisions. By their very nature, psalms whisper various tropes and imagery more than shout a unified theological propositional truth. Bullock, utilizing his many years of pastoral experience, distills each psalm down to one or two key theological statements to develop. Take the voluminous Psalm 119: Bullock strips this down to the three themes of God's love and laws, God's nearness, and God's constancy (p. 369).

Each psalm concludes with a way to illustrate the principles gleaned from the “Teaching the Text” section. Typically, these illustrations draw upon ruminations of an ancient Reformed theologian like Calvin, an excerpt from a more modern book, the words of a hymn, biographical vignette from a Christian figure, lessons from history, and even personal anecdotes. Given Bullock’s longtime teaching career at Wheaton College, it comes as no surprise that campus literary icons such as George McDonald and C. S. Lewis feature prominently with his illustrations. A lesser known figure such as Lilius Trotter, an Algerian missionary and writer, pops up no fewer than seven times. While Bullock provides a rich source of historical illustrations, the volume would benefit even more from an occasional illustration such as movies or YouTube videos that might appeal to a younger audience.

Bullock deserves credit for his consummate skill in bringing to completion a valuable study on the Psalms to teachers/pastors. As both a longtime teacher and pastor himself, Bullock speaks perfectly to his target audience. What sets Bullock’s writing apart is the depth of his spiritual insights, not only in explicating the meaning of the psalms for a bygone era, but showing its abiding relevancy. Bullock notes for Psalm 120 that “somewhere in the spiritual acoustics of his life the psalmist had heard God call him to become a pilgrim. . . . And so may we exchange our tourist credentials for those of a pilgrim, to embark on a journey as we renew our sense of destiny” (p. 120). In so doing, we realize that we, too, can join our voices in a symphony of praise to God that echoes through the ages.

David M. Maas  
Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

*Proverbs: An Introduction and Commentary.* By Lindsay Wilson. Tyndale OT Commentaries 17. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2018, xxi + 324 pp., \$22.00 paper.

Lindsay Wilson serves as the academic dean and senior lecturer in OT at Ridley College in Melbourne, Australia. Wilson specializes in the wisdom literature of the OT. He has authored a commentary on the book of Job in the Two Horizons OT Commentary series (Eerdmans, 2015) and co-edited *Interpreting Old Testament Wisdom Literature* (InterVarsity, 2017). Wilson’s new volume in the Tyndale OT Commentary series replaces the older but beloved commentary on the book of Proverbs by Derek Kidner. Kidner’s commentary is now reprinted in the series, *Kidner Classic Commentaries* (InterVarsity, 2018).

After the front matter, which includes a seven-page bibliography, the commentary proceeds with a substantial introduction to the book of Proverbs (51 pp.). It then presents a two-page interpretive outline of Proverbs before initiating the section of commentary proper. The book contains two excurses: an “Additional Note on the Immoral Woman in Chapters 5–7” (pp. 96–99), and an “Additional Note on Interpreting 8:22–31” (pp. 124–27). Regarding the latter, Wilson contends that Proverbs 8 depicts wisdom not as a divine being, but as “an extended personification, that is, as abstraction made personal in order to be remembered more easily” (p. 127).

The commentator offers a set of seven hermeneutical principles tailored for proverbial wisdom literature and couched as tips for preaching the book of Proverbs (pp. 45–46). One such principle bears repeating here: “Always approach the individual proverbs through the gateway of chapters 1–9. Proverbs 1–9 establishes the framework needed for understanding each particular proverb, based on three main messages: the fear of the Lord, choosing wisdom not folly, and the need to have our character transformed. . . . Once we have these three features in place, we are ready to interpret the individual proverbs” (p. 45). Thus, chapters 1–9 constitute “the key to interpreting observations about daily life (found extensively in the rest of the book)” (p. 141).

Indeed, “The fear of the Lord is the motto of the book” (p. 61). According to Wilson, the book’s purpose is to “train a person, to actively form character, to show what life is really like, and how best to cope with and manage it” (p. 10). Put another way, the book of Proverbs majors on “the connections between our character and the consequences that follow” (p. 20). Wilson also calls attention to other emphases within the book of Proverbs, such as the important role of the community in the formation of personal godliness (e.g., p. 9).

The sentence sayings of Proverbs 10–22 can unite to form strings and clusters—an intentional and discernable literary structure. Wilson concludes that the proverbs in this section of the book “are not *simply* randomly arranged” (p. 16, emphasis original). His interpretation differs from that of the commentary’s consulting editor, Tremper Longman, who sees more of a random placement of these proverbs (p. 14).

Throughout the commentary, the author offers many practical reflections for contemporary living. For example, the discussion of Prov 23:20–21 does not shy away from addressing the modern taboo of overeating: “Many Christians heed the warning against too much alcohol, but ignore the danger of overeating” (p. 255). Moreover, Proverbs 31 provides lessons for everyone: “Both men and women need to be like the ‘Proverbs 31 woman!’” (p. 324). The “iron sharpens iron” proverb (Prov 27:17) implies that friends who differ improve one another: “We need to have our rough edges knocked off, and we need to do the same to our friends” (p. 287).

In conveying the message of particular proverbs dealing with the topic of wealth, Wilson takes a strong stance against the modern-day prosperity gospel (e.g., p. 84). He reminds readers that “our wealth at any given instant cannot be a reliable measure of our righteousness or wisdom” (p. 21). Elsewhere he asserts, “You cannot diagnose a person’s spiritual condition from their wealth” (p. 7).

Wilson’s edifying and well-written commentary expounds the text of Proverbs with care and good judgment. His fine contribution will no doubt provide a basis for ongoing discussion and benefit the church for years to come.

Mark A. Hassler

Virginia Beach Theological Seminary, Virginia Beach, VA

*Basics of Greek Accents.* By John A. L. Lee. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018, 110 pp., \$14.99 paper.

The topic of accents is often omitted in introductory NT Greek grammars. In this compact volume, John A. L. Lee presents a primer for Greek accentuation that seeks to fill this void. Packaged as part of Zondervan's language resource library, this book is formatted as eight one-hour lessons to be used in the classroom for beginners of Greek or intermediate students with an "unsure grasp" of accents (p. 7).

Each lesson teaches principles and patterns of Greek accentuation, with examples grouped into categories such as declensions, word endings, or mood. Each chapter also offers exercises, given in two sets: in-class and homework. The exercises consist of unaccented words, phrases, and sentences to which the student can add accents. Answers to the exercises are provided among the appendices.

In lesson 1, Lee offers the "basic rules" of accents, pointing out that they are *patterns* rather than fast rules. After delineating the functions of the accents (acute—*á*, grave—*à*, circumflex—*ã*) and how they interact with vowels of different lengths, Lee gives four basic rules regarding the placement of accents on syllables. For example, if the last syllable is short, an accent can occur on the *last*, *second-last*, or *third-last* syllable. However, if the last syllable is long, the accent can only occur on the *last* or *second-last* syllable.

In lesson 2, Lee addresses verbs, presenting one important rule: the accent is *recessive*, occurring as far from the end as possible within the rules presented in the previous lesson. He presents a list of examples using the *λύω* paradigm. Then, Lee gives exceptions to the rule of the recessive accent: certain infinitive and imperative forms such as *λελυκέναι* and *λαβέ*.

Lesson 3 on nouns and adjectives teaches that each declinable word has its own accent, which remains in the same position in the same form (acute or circumflex) unless required to change by the basic rules. Lee groups words according to their endings, indicating that common types generally keep the same accentuation. For example, he groups words that end in *-ιά* like *οικία* and *ἀδικία*, or words that end in *-μα* like *ὄνομα*, *σῶμα*, and *πᾶγμα*. After giving examples of unpredictable accents, Lee demonstrates the difference between standard declensions and irregular declensions.

In lesson 4, Lee presents a list of commonly-used words, urging the student to become familiar with how each is accentuated. This lesson is divided into different parts of speech, including demonstratives, articles, propositions, and numerals. He points out the differences in accentuation between similar words, such as *αὐτός* and *οὗτος*, or *ἄρα* and *ἄρα*.

In lesson 5, Lee addresses participles as well as feminine plural substantives. He explains that some forms of participles follow the "home base" rule in lesson 3, while other forms are identified by the accent's distance from the final syllable. He categorizes accents of participles into groups: *recessive*, *special position*, and *compound words*. For feminine genitive plural forms, Lee explains that while feminine plural

nouns are consistently accented on the last syllable, adjectives and participles are not.

Lesson 6 on contraction addresses contract verbs such as φιλέω and τιμάω. The rule of thumb is straightforward: Consider the uncontracted form. If the accent is on one of the contracting vowels, the accent will stay on the resulting contracted vowel, which is always long. The accent does not change if it is on another vowel.

In lesson 7, Lee describes enclitics, unaccented words that affect the accentuation of the preceding word. Main enclitics include first-person and second-person singular pronouns (με, μου, μοι, σε, σου, σοι), all forms of τις, non-interrogative που and πως, most forms of είμι, and particles like γε and τε. Lee provides a table showing patterns of accentuation, showing when the presence of the enclitic adds an acute to the previous word or when a two-syllable enclitic like έστιν receives an accent. After explaining successive enclitics, Lee describes proclitics, unaccented words that occur before a closely associated word, such as ό, εί, έν, and ού.

In the final lesson, “Scaling the Heights,” Lee describes a list of miscellaneous accentuation patterns for those who desire to take their knowledge a step further. This includes the optative mood, the behaviour of specific enclitics like είμι and φημι, elisions like ταύτ’ έστί for ταύτά έστι, vocatives, use of the diaeresis for separating vowels, and patterns in Epic and Lesbian Greek dialects.

Lee’s book has a number of strengths that make this book a valuable resource. The lessons are presented in a graded order, with each lesson building on the previous content. The abundance of exercises for both the classroom and homework provide ample opportunities for the reader to practice. Lee’s efforts towards simplicity make the lessons accessible, as he moves from patterns to examples and exceptions. In a number of places, Lee helpfully demonstrates how the accent determines translations, such as in his treatment of determining whether άπολυσαι (pp. 57–58) is infinitive, optative, or imperative. Lesson 4 on “Good Words to Know” is especially valuable and arguably should be included in first-year Greek grammars.

Some caveats must be given to those intending to use Lee’s book alongside Zondervan’s “Basics of ...” texts, especially William D. Mounce’s *Basics of Biblical Greek* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003). First, Lee’s content is not limited to NT or even LXX Greek. He frequently uses forms and constructions found elsewhere, such as θάλαττα, νιν, and ήδίων. Second, Lee’s ordering of cases (nominative, accusative, genitive, dative) is different than Mounce’s and may confuse students working with both books. In addition, Lee leaves several concepts unexplained that are also omitted from Mounce’s grammar, such as deciphering whether an instance of α, ι, or υ is long or short (p. 11). If one plans to use Lee’s book alongside Mounce’s grammar, other resources such as a morphology volume would be helpful.

In addition, Lee’s book does have some flaws. Some of his wording begs for clarification. For example, Lee places τιμή in both “standard” and “unpredictable” lists (p. 25). He also states that the circumflex “can be on the last or second-last syllable, but only on a long vowel,” but it is unclear whether the circumflex’s limita-

tion to a long vowel only occurs on the second-last syllable or anywhere. Also, Lee states that the accent in nouns “remains in the same position and in the same form, unless it is required to change by the basic rules” (p. 23). However, Lee does not specify if the “same position” refers to the *same morpheme* or the *same number of syllables from the end*. In a number of places, Lee lists the forms of a word but does not offer a full paradigm, leaving the reader to wonder if the rule consistently applies to the omitted forms. This is where having a morphology volume alongside Lee’s book would help. In addition, the reader is often left without an explanation of how an accent ends up in its final place. Some examples with step-by-step application of the principles learned in previous lessons, perhaps in flowchart format, would helpfully give the readers a process to replicate.

It has been over thirty years since D. A. Carson published the thorough volume *Greek Accents: A Student Manual* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985). While Carson’s book still holds tremendous value for reference, Lee’s contribution fills a void by offering an approach to Greek accentuation formatted for classroom use. Lee’s simple and accessible approach is a welcome guide for both students and teachers.

Daniel K. Eng  
University of Cambridge, Cambridge, UK

*Exile: A Conversation with N. T. Wright*. Edited by James M. Scott. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2017, xv + 343 pp., \$40.00.

N. T. Wright is undoubtedly one of the most influential NT scholars active today. His work on “Christian Origins and the Question of God” has provided fresh insight into the task of interpreting the NT, with important contributions in the fields of hermeneutics, history, and theology. However, although Wright’s work has been affirmed by many, his reconstruction of Second Temple Judaism and early Christianity has not been devoid of controversies. Scholars from various fields have questioned his approach, particularly when it comes to his use and interpretation of the historical evidence and the theological picture emerging from his historical analysis.

The cornerstone of Wright’s system is the notion of “ongoing exile,” that is, the idea that the majority of Jews in the Second Temple period, despite the geographical placement of Jewish people in the land, still thought of themselves as a people experiencing the exile as divine punishment for Israel’s sins. For Wright, it was this fundamental notion and the hope for restoration that fueled several different Jewish responses, among which Jesus’s announcement of the arrival of the kingdom of God and the subsequent claims of the Christian church are to be situated. The notion of ongoing exile functions in two important ways in Wright’s scheme. It provides a concrete historical background to understand Jesus’s fundamental claims, while also functioning as a lynchpin between Jesus’s eschatological ministry and Paul’s gospel proclamation. Theologically, the result is a reading of the NT that challenges traditional interpretations in Western Christianity. It is not an



exaggeration to say that Wright's entire work relies heavily on this foundational concept.

This is what makes *Exile: A Conversation with N. T. Wright* such a stimulating collection of essays. The book, edited by James M. Scott, is the product of a symposium held on the same theme in 2010 at Trinity Western University in British Columbia, Canada. The essays are meant to continue the conversation initiated in the conference. At points, Wright and the essayists make references to what must have been a lively interchange. In terms of its format, after an enlightening introduction by the editor, the book opens with a lead essay by Wright, followed by responses grouped according to various disciplines. Wright then offers a counter-response, addressing the main points of the essays. The prevailing tone is courteous but also at points direct and confrontational.

Wright's lead essay can be described as a helpful summary of his extensive scholarly work. It is clear that the essay is not meant to be a detailed study, nor to present original research, but to offer a broad analysis that draws from the author's other writings. From a pedagogical standpoint, the essay may easily be utilized as a compact introduction to Wright's views.

The essay begins with Wright's fundamental thesis of the Jewish experience of ongoing exile—an experience drawn from the Jewish understanding of the continuing Deuteronomic narrative of sin-exile-restoration (p. 21). Wright's starting point is the prayer of Daniel 9, with its strong Deuteronomic overtones, whereby sin and exile are presented as a "single historical sequence" with the hope of restoration emerging on the basis of God's covenantal faithfulness (p. 23). Wright goes on to discuss the importance of Daniel 9 and its "seventy weeks" for the calculations of the end of exile in the Second Temple period and other appropriations of the Deuteronomic historical sequence in Jewish eschatological expectation. Anticipating the criticism to his focus on select texts, Wright discusses some potential exceptions to the notion of ongoing exile but gives little ground to his critics. With the exception of the book of Judith, Wright still sees in these texts some sense of expectation for the termination of the exile, even if muffled by an aristocratic affirmation of the status quo. For Wright, the evidence overwhelmingly indicates a prevailing notion of continuing exile in Second Temple Judaism, and the scholarly resistance to acknowledge it stems from a refusal to consider the evidence in this light due to commitments to a preconceived historical reconstruction (p. 35).

Central to Wright's thesis is the role of the temple in the narrative of continuing exile. The temple was understood as the meeting point between heaven and earth, a microcosm of the whole creation, and the central symbol upon which Jewish kingship was founded. Therefore, its restoration became the centerpiece of Jewish post-exilic eschatological hope.

Wright then goes on to situate Jesus and Paul in this narrative, summarizing his arguments from previous works. Jesus's fundamental message was the arrival of the kingdom of God, a radical narrative summoning "all to celebrate with him the real return from exile" (p. 46), which was happening in his own ministry. In this narrative, Jesus reconfigured the central Jewish symbols—Israel's national identity, Torah, land, and temple—around himself, with his death and vindication providing

the resolution of Israel's drama, "the ultimate liberation of the people of God from the exile that lay deeper than the exile of Egypt or Babylon" (p. 61). Similarly, Paul saw the essential narrative of Israel climaxing in Jesus the Messiah, Israel's true representative. Wright identifies four major themes by which Paul articulated this narrative: creation and new creation, Israel, Torah, and humanity. Again, Wright stresses that the exile and the expectation of its reversal are the underlying assumptions that tie together all these thematic threads in Pauline theology. Wright then concludes with a brief discussion of the theological implications of this reading: a this-worldly, participatory, and corporate notion of salvation, whereby individuals are called to participate in the people of God and his program of the renewal of all things. Wright provocatively articulates this theology in opposition to the Platonic idea of an other-worldly, escapist, and individual salvation, which Wright sees as the prevailing view in classic Western Christianity.

The responses to Wright in the volume range from explicit support to strong criticism. However, in general, Wright's thesis is welcomed by the majority of contributors, who nevertheless call for some nuancing. In the responses from the field of OT/Hebrew Bible/Septuagint studies, Brueggemann calls attention to the different sociological layers in Ancient Judaism, alerting to the possibility that the texts Wright utilizes to reconstruct a pervasive notion of ongoing exile might in fact be representative of the ideology of the elite who saw the possibility of eventually retaining the land for themselves and not of the prevailing experience of the common Jew. Similarly, Kiefer calls for a more nuanced evaluation of the exile experience, showing that for some Jews it had rather positive connotations and not only "life under the wrath of God." In contrast, Hiebert explores several samples of exile terminology in the LXX, arguing that the translators reflected a sense of continuing exile in their translational choices.

In the section on early Judaism, Philip Alexander, in a remarkable essay, surveys instances in Jewish late antiquity where expressions of Jewish nationalism can be observed. Alexander also offers a comparison with the sentiments of modern Jewish Zionism, concluding that a sense of ongoing exile stands as a plausible concept underlying Jewish nationalistic ideologies. Kugler, although broadly agreeing with Wright, calls for a more cautious approach when it comes to the Dead Sea Scrolls, arguing that the perception of ongoing exile among Qumran covenanters was diverse and that the variety of interpretive schemes present in Qumran might constitute a paradigm for the diverse understandings of the theme among first-century Christians. Still focusing on the Dead Sea Scrolls, Peters looks at how the expectation of the end of exile among the Yahad Essenes differs from that of Christianity, with the anticipation of a violent overturn of the enemies by YHWH.

From the field of NT studies, McKnight finds himself in complete agreement with Wright's reconstruction of Second Temple Judaism, using his thesis as the foundation of his own biblical-theological scheme. In a somewhat provocative tone, McKnight situates Wright's and his own end-of-exile scheme in opposition to the classic creation-fall-redemption-consummation framework prevalent in Reformed theology. Turning the attention to Wright's application of the exile theme to Paul, Cummins recognizes the importance of the concept in Pauline theology but em-

phasizes that the theme is “deeply embedded within wider associations” (p. 218) and should therefore be evaluated with caution when it comes to its controlling force. Cummins highlights the “apocalyptic” aspect of Paul’s theology, which although working from within the historical-narrative dimension, does something “new and fresh.” In this way, exile should not be seen as a controlling narrative but as “functioning within the all-encompassing economy of God.” Eskola offers the harshest critique, suggesting a certain inconsistency in Wright’s emphasis on both exile-restoration *and* covenant. For Eskola, Wright stresses the end-of exile scheme in his historical reconstruction, but when it comes to Paul, he remains a covenantalist (p. 245), a combination that in Eskola’s view is not fitting.

The final assessment comes from systematic theologians. Boersma does not have a problem with Wright’s historical reconstruction but is strongly critical of Wright’s resulting theological picture, particularly in relation to his criticism of tradition. For Boersma, Wright is “rather harsh and maladroit” in his critique of the Reformers (p. 257), and he insinuates that Wright has created a straw man out of tradition in order to establish his views (p. 259). Boersma then advances his core criticism, namely that a purely historical approach reduces the theological categories in a way that “dislodges historical and earthly realities from their eternal, heavenly anchor” (p. 262). For Boersma, Wright would be well served by a more sacramental approach to history, with assistance of “at least some Platonic categories” (p. 264). Finally, Radner, in a similar way, offers a critique of Wright’s historicized theology, arguing that exile, like other historical categories, needs to be interpreted figurally. In this sense, exile can have multiple referents as the concept is applied to the experience of Christians across time.

In summary, the criticism to Wright in the essays can be divided in three main categories. The first is related to the interpretation of the historical data itself and the reconstruction of a prevailing concept, all of which is seen as problematic given the diversity of the historical context. In his response, Wright affirms he never claimed that all first-century Jews believed themselves to be in exile, but that it was the experience of a significant number of Jewish groups and, most importantly, that the sentiment was strong enough for the claims of Jesus about the arrival of the kingdom of God to be understood as an eschatological reversal of the curse of exile. Indeed, one wonders whether the concept of ongoing exile needs to be as pervasive in Second Temple Judaism as Wright’s reconstruction suggests in order for his thesis to stand. Even if not pervasive, the concept clearly had enough traction among certain groups, and that much Wright seems to have argued convincingly; and his views are corroborated by many of the contributors. Perhaps the issue is not how pervasive the concept was, but whether it would have been strong enough for people to interpret Jesus’s claims in that framework, which seems plausible. The second criticism is related to Wright’s interpretation of Pauline theology, which seems to draw less explicitly on the theme of exile. On this Wright agrees (especially with Cummins; p. 317), that the theme in Paul appears subsumed under different categories. Wright’s real quarrel is with the third criticism advanced by systematic theologians, namely, that Wright’s historically oriented hermeneutics falls short of the depth of the realities of God. In a rather strong rebuttal, Wright

boldly affirms, “if, as the New Testament declares, the living God has revealed himself fully and finally within history, any step away from history must be a step towards idolatry” (p. 324). Interestingly, both Wright and Boersma highlight the need for a constructive conversation between biblical and dogmatic theology. It is undeniable, however, that the pictures emerging from these approaches, at least as represented in the volume, are in significant tension. Despite the obvious conflict and the noticeable frustration of both parties, I still see the conversation as constructive—at least insofar as it brings light to fundamental theological issues—with the potential of serving as the basis for an even more fruitful dialogue.

*Exile: A Conversation with N. T. Wright* is undoubtedly a testament to the importance of Wright’s work and to the importance of the theme of exile itself. The conversation is certainly worth continuing.

Mateus de Campos

Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, South Hamilton, MA

*Jesus and the Future: Understanding What He Taught about the End Times.* By Andreas J. Köstenberger, Alexander E. Stewart, and Apollo Makara. Wooster, OH: Weaver Book Company, 2017, 196 pp., \$15.99 paper.

*Jesus and the Future* is a book “not written for the experts and Bible scholars, but for anyone interested in what the future holds, especially for Christians” (p. 17). The authors of *Jesus and the Future* decry the current situation in the church regarding eschatology. They believe that scholars through their “scholarly jargon and complicated end-time scenarios” have obscured rather than clarified what the Bible (especially Jesus) teaches about the future (p. 17). They claim with boldness that, once the reader has finished this book, “we hope you’ll agree that knowing what the future holds for Christians is within our reach” (p. 17). The authors believe that Jesus’s teaching on the end “is simple enough to be grasped by every Christian and it is profound enough to change your life” (p. 17). The application of eschatology is helpfully stressed throughout the book. The “truth touches life” segments interspersed throughout the book are helpful in applying Jesus’s words about the future. Here the authors deal with several practical areas such as the reality of persecution (pp. 48–49), the Christian’s role in God’s kingdom (p. 50), and the need to stay awake (p. 80).

In this work the authors seek to explore the teaching of Jesus about events that would take place later in the first century (especially in AD 70) and other events that remain yet in the future (especially Christ’s return and the full establishment of his kingdom). Jesus was a true prophet who accurately predicted the future. His veracity can be particularly seen in his prophecy of the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70, a historical event that Jesus predicted in the Olivet Discourse. Since Jesus accurately predicted the Jewish War, he can be trusted in his other teachings about the future.

The book is divided into two parts, with part 1 examining Jesus’s teaching in the Olivet discourse, his major discourse on the future (chaps. 1–4). The authors

here deal almost exclusively with Matthew 24 and not with Matthew 25. By doing so, they lessen to a degree the stress of the discourse on the second coming of Christ in Matthew, the main focus of Matthew 25. They do, however, cover the parallel texts in Mark 13 and Luke 21.

Part 2 covers “Other Teachings of Jesus about the Future in the Gospels,” such as coming persecution (chap. 5); the judgment of Jerusalem (chap. 6, a subject already stressed in their interpretation of the Olivet discourse); the need for patient waiting for the coming of the Son of Man” (chap. 7); the future resurrection, judgment, reward, and punishment (chap. 8); and the teaching about the future in John’s Gospel (chap. 9). The passages and subjects these chapters address—such as persecution, patient waiting, and rewards and punishment—are vital eschatological teaching for the church and the believer, but they are often not given the weight they deserve.

The authors begin with the Olivet discourse, because (as they rightly say) many use it as the key to interpreting Jesus’s other teachings about the future. Jesus’s prophecy of the destruction of the temple is Jesus’s response to his rejection by the religious leaders, and the Olivet discourse is Jesus’s answer to the disciples’ question, “When will the temple be destroyed?” Therefore, in the view of the authors, most of the discourse deals with the destruction of the temple. Their stress on the events in AD 70 in the Olivet discourse and elsewhere in the Synoptics is echoed in “Appendix 2: The Future at a Glance” (pp. 194–96), where the majority of passages on the future in Matthew, Mark, and Luke are placed under the category: “Growing Conflict Leading to the Imminent Judgment of This Generation in the Year 70.”

In a section on interpretive views of the Olivet discourse, the authors say the main interpretive difficulty is that Jesus seems to indicate that within that generation the temple will be destroyed *and* Jesus will return (p. 26). The authors discuss four approaches to that difficulty. First, some say Jesus was wrong, since he did not return within a generation. The authors rightly affirm that the resurrection vindicated Jesus as a true prophet. Second, some interpret Jesus’s statement about “this generation” as not meaning Jesus’s contemporaries; instead they leave room for the return of Christ long after the time of Jesus’s contemporaries. The authors say this approach takes the language of Jesus’s return literally. I personally would take this straightforward (literal) approach to the prediction concerning Jesus’s return. The authors do not label the approach, but it is usually called a futurist approach. According to the authors, the focus of this view is not on the timing of the destruction of the temple but on events that will occur thousands of years later. However, from the vantage point of first-century believers, the timing of the return of Christ and that of the great tribulation immediately before it (Matt 24:29) were not known and not necessarily thousands of years later. The majority of scholarly futurists rightly affirm that no human knows the time of Jesus’s return. One must be ready for it no matter in which time one lives. Third, interpreters labeled by the authors as preterists are said to take everything in the discourse, including Matt 24:29–31, to be fulfilled in the events of AD 70. Fourth, in the view of the authors, many others

are simply confused about when Jesus is referring to the destruction of the temple and when he is referring to the second coming.

In contrast to these views, the authors of *Jesus and the Future* emphasize a double fulfillment of Jesus's prophetic teaching in the Olivet Discourse. Most of the discourse is said to speak of AD 70, but Matt 24:29–31 is about the return of Christ. The view of the authors can be challenged at several points. First, it requires that “this generation” in Matt 24:34 and in the rest of the Gospels is foremost a quantitative term that speaks of Jesus's contemporaries (p. 75). However, in the NT “this generation” speaks qualitatively of evil people who throughout the ages are united in their opposition to God's messengers and who will face eschatological judgment (the authors do agree that “this generation” always carries negative connotations [p. 100]). Only the wicked belong to this type of people (cf. Matt 23:36 where “this generation,” not all of Jesus's contemporaries, murdered Zechariah, and Matt 17:17 where Jesus asked this faithless and perverse generation how long he would be with them but later promised his disciples that he would always be with them [Matt 28:20]).

Also, “all these things” in Matt 24:34 straightforwardly includes the future abomination (24:15), the great tribulation (24:21–22), and the second coming itself (24:27–31). The “abomination of desolation” in Matt 24:15 is said by the authors to be the sign for which the disciples asked and the parallel passage in Luke is said to offer clear guidance on the meaning, namely, what transpired during the siege of Jerusalem by the Romans including the desecration of the temple by the Zealots. More likely, Luke's Gospel, which does not use the words “the abomination of desolation,” talks about the events of AD 70, and Matthew's Gospel, which mentions the fulfillment of Daniel, focuses on the end of the age (see Dan 9:27; 12:11–13). The “abomination” is a person standing according to Matt 24:15 and Mark 13:14. This verse in Mark uses the masculine participle *ἑστηκότα* to say that the abomination is a person standing where he should not be (cf. 2 Thess 2:3–4 where the antichrist in the temple displays himself as God).

The authors believe that the “great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no and never will be” is not talking about a final great tribulation at the end of human history but rather is still talking about AD 70 using hyperbolic language (p. 57). Yet it would seem that in context Jesus must be saying this tribulation is greater than the flood in the days of Noah (Matt 24:37–39). Also, the authors do not believe that the second coming language in Matt 24:29–31 is speaking of AD 70 using hyperbolic language. The description of cosmic upheaval and the coming of the Son of Man points forward to Jesus's second coming.

The chapter “Jesus and the Future in John's Gospel” features similar themes as in the Synoptic Gospels, such as future persecution and escalating conflict, Jesus as the Son of Man, future resurrection and final judgment. The allegation that John has little to say about “future eschatology” is demonstrably false, as they clearly prove. A major contribution of this chapter is the discussion of “new creation theology” in John's passion narrative and elsewhere in John (pp. 164–67).

In *Jesus and the Future*, the authors offer a well-argued and well-organized presentation of their understanding of eschatology found in the four Gospels. The

detailed exegetical work within a short scope is impressive. Highlighted sidebars such as “Messianic Pretenders: AD 30–70” (pp. 42–44) provide helpful supplementary information. The various conclusions and summaries at the end of chapters are helpful in reviewing the material covered. A subject index and a glossary of terms would be helpful additions to this study. The authors’ passion and instruction in applying Jesus’s teaching about the future are commendable.

Neil D. Nelson, Jr.  
Calvary University, Kansas City, MO

*Redescribing Jesus’ Divinity through a Social Science Theory: An Interdisciplinary Analysis of Forgiveness and Divine Identity in Ancient Judaism and Mark 2:1–12.* By Benjamin Pascut. WUNT 2/438. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017, xx + 254 pp., €79.00 paper.

In *Redescribing Jesus’ Divinity through a Social Science Theory*, Benjamin Pascut, Research Fellow at the McKeen Center at Bowdoin College in Brunswick, ME, offers a social-scientific explanation for the way to understand the claim that Jesus shares in the identity of the God of Israel. For this, he uses Hecht’s communication theory of identity, which allows him to argue that Mark’s Jesus is more than simply a divine figure; he participates in the divine identity. Pascut enters the ongoing debates between Bauckham, Dunn, Chester, Hurtado, and Hays concerning whether Jesus shares in the identity of Israel’s God and whether this is even a probative way of understanding the early church’s claim in this regard. His historically and theologically aware study guided by social theory offers much-needed nuance for a convincing affirmative answer to the identity question, at least in the way it is framed in Jesus’s forgiving of sins in Mark 2:1–12. Thus, Pascut shows one way that contemporary social theory can provide substantiation of traditional theological claims.

This revised Ph.D. thesis, researched under the supervision of Simon Gathercole at the University of Cambridge, begins with a history of interpretation of Jesus’s forgiveness of sins in Mark 2, an explanation of various theories of identity, and a preview of the book’s argument. Concerning existing approaches to Mark 2, Pascut discerns a degree of instability in the traditional formulation that Jesus is divine since only God can forgive sin. His solution is to offer a clearer understanding of divine forgiveness. His choice of identity theory answers the lack of sophistication among Markan scholars when it comes to identity discourse. With these problems identified, Pascut’s argument develops in three parts. Two chapters address divine identity concerns. Then three chapters highlight the interplay between forgiveness and divine identity in its Jewish context. The final four chapters narrow the focus to Mark 2 and the intersection between forgiveness and identity.

Michael Hecht’s communication theory of identity provides the framework for Pascut’s study. For Hecht, identity entails four layers or domains. The personal layer includes identity markers such as names and characteristics; the enactment domain highlights the performative or expressive aspects of identity; in the relational sphere, identity is construed through relationships; and the communal stratum brings to the fore the role of group memberships for identity. Pascut provides

examples from Greek literature as a way to substantiate these domains for studying a text such as Mark 2. Although Hecht's theory addresses a clear problem within scholarship relating to divine identity (and although it is only appropriate to assess what the author has chosen and not what a reviewer such as myself would have chosen), I am not convinced that Tajfel and Turner's social identity approaches are less "integrative" as a "comprehensive framework for assessing identities," as Pascut claims (p. 13). I would suggest, rather, that Tajfel and Turner are more useful and have a wider acceptance among theologians than Hecht's communication-based approach. For example, Philip Esler's *New Testament Theology: Communion and Community* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005) provides a previous model. However, this quibble aside, Pascut may offer a new way forward if Hecht can be integrated with Tajfel and Turner, especially if one allows for Trinitarian reflections to be part of the discussion. At this point, I am taking a cue from Wesley Hill's *Paul and the Trinity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), though one would need to move out from Mark 2 to, for example, Mark 3:29. Hopefully, theologically-oriented interpreters will catch a vision for the need for this type of interdisciplinary hermeneutical work in order to address the types of arguments put forth in our contemporary setting.

Chapters 1–2 establish a plausible basis for Pascut's claim that Mark's Jesus is divine. He argues that the four layers from Hecht's theory are evident in Judaism's understanding of YHWH. The name of YHWH aligns with the personal layer (Exod 15:3; Neh 9:6; Philo, *Mos.* 2:114); his acts of deliverance and judgment support the presence of the enactment layer (Exod 6:7; Isa 37:15–20; Josephus, *Ant.* 8:338–43); his involvement in creation and with Israel confirm the relational domain (Gen 1:1; Exod 15:18; Deut 32:6; Hos 1:2; Sir 24:8); and his identity as deity in the context of polytheism suggests the communal domain (1 Kgs 16:31–32; Isa 46:1; Ps 29:1; *Jub.* 15:31–32). Pascut then studies Mark's Gospel in order to show that these four layers are found there. The personal domain is evident in Jesus's description as *kyrios* and *ego eimi* (1:2–3; 6:45–52), the enactment layer in his healings and nature miracles (1:40–44; 6:45–52), the relational component in him being Lord of the Sabbath and gathering Israel to himself (2:28; 3:13–19), and the communal in the places where his humanity and his divinity are highlighted (2:15; 8:38). In these two chapters, Pascut convincingly argues that Mark's Jesus shares in the layers of YHWH's identity.

Chapters 3–5 establish a nexus between forgiving sins and divine identity crucial for his exegesis found in chapters 6–9. Chapter 3 reveals the necessary overlap between the offended and the third party. Pascut thus re-centers Jesus's agency in forgiving sins himself. Chapter 4 highlights Exod 34:6–7 as a focal point for the centrality of forgiveness and YHWH's identity in an ancient Near Eastern context interpreted through Hecht's layers. Chapter 5 addresses counterproposals related to the ability of other figures to enact forgiveness. Pascut concludes that YHWH does not share this authority with other beings. These chapters establish a basis for Pascut to argue that Jesus likely shares in YHWH's identity since in Mark he forgives the paralytic's sins, which will form the last part of the book.

Chapter 6 addresses the question: Does the divine passive in 2:5 indicate that God forgives the paralytic's sins instead of Jesus? Relying on Austin's speech act



theory, Pascut argues that the performative utterance is not constrained by the grammar and that the broader context is more determinative than the semantics. Thus, “your sins are forgiven” (2:5) functions similarly to the statement “I forgive your sins”; in that case “Jesus is the source of forgiveness” (p. 166). Chapter 7 reinforces this claim by showing that the Jewish scribes considered Jesus to be the one forgiving the sins rather than someone simply offering a declaration of God’s forgiveness of them (2:7). Pascut also addresses a potential weakness in his argument by explaining that the scribes’ objections relate to their desire to “protect monotheism” (p. 179).

Chapter 8 seeks to overcome a certain degree of instability in Pascut’s argument by addressing Jesus’s response in 2:8–12a. Jesus’s healing of the paralytic demonstrates, in Pascut’s view, that Jesus has also forgiven his sins. Here the communication theory of identity reveals its heuristic value. The personal layer (forgiveness), the relational layer (reconciliation), and the enactment layer (awe-inspiring events), combine to support the claim that Jesus “shares unique elements of YHWH’s identity,” since there must be “overlap between the third-party and the offended” (p. 191), a claim earlier substantiated in chapter 3 of Pascut’s book. Chapter 9 discusses the eyewitnesses’ response as a way to address further whether Jesus is the source of the paralytic’s forgiveness (2:12b). Pascut engages in a narrative-critical assessment to conclude that this group recognizes Jesus’s actions as those done by someone more than human, though they do not claim him as divine. Although 6:52 could work against Pascut’s claim, he is not deterred—“the praise of the eyewitnesses toward God” indicates that the group’s response should be interpreted positively, though there is not a full realization of Jesus’s identity in the narrative world (p. 199). The significance of this is that Mark ultimately expects his readers to identify Jesus as one sharing in the identity of the one God.

This book adds to a growing number of works seeking to explain the way in which the early church came to understand Jesus’s identity. It should be read by graduate researchers and upper-level undergraduates interested in Christology in contemporary contexts. Further, those interested contemporary debates concerning the use of social-scientific analysis may benefit from this work, since Pascut models the way theology and theory may be combined to reinforce the received tradition. Based on that commendable feature this book is well recommended.

J. Brian Tucker

Moody Theological Seminary, Plymouth, MI

*Mimesis in the Johannine Literature: A Study in Johannine Ethics.* By Cornelis Bennema. Library of NT Studies 498. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2017, xiv + 230 pp., \$114.00.

This monograph arose out of a deficiency in studies related to Johannine ethics, specifically in the area of mimesis or imitation. While much has been written on the Pauline understanding of mimesis, there is no full-length treatment of the Johannine contribution concerning the ethical significance of mimesis.

Chapter 1, “Introduction,” traces the history of studies in the area of mimesis. While there has been much attention given to Pauline ethics, including Paul’s emphasis on mimesis, very little attention has been given to Johannine ethics until recently, and even then, with little emphasis on mimesis. Bennema articulates a working definition of mimesis as “person B represents or emulates person A in activity or state X in order to become like person A” (p. 25). The aim of mimesis is to shape acceptable behavior corresponding to the norms of Christian behavior.

Bennema works to answer four questions: (1) What language does John use to convey the concept of mimesis (chap. 2)? (2) What is the scope, nature, and working of mimesis in the Johannine literature, including both the Gospel and the epistles (chaps. 3–4)? (3) What place does mimesis occupy in Johannine ethics (chap. 5)? (4) What or who empowers for mimesis (chap. 6)? For Bennema, mimesis is integral to Johannine ethics.

In chapter 2, “The Johannine Mimetic Language,” Bennema distinguishes mimesis from analogy and reciprocity in that mimesis is not simply correspondence nor simply a relationship between two people. Rather, mimesis involves exempling, resulting in changed lives. He identifies eight different linguistic expressions that indicate mimesis. Of the literal terms, only *μιμεῖσθαι* (to imitate) occurs in the Johannine literature. In contrast, *καθώς* (just as, even as) occurs frequently by itself or in combinations with *καί* (just as ... also), or *οὕτως* (just as ... so) to communicate mimesis. The adverbial *καί* (also) can communicate mimesis. In addition, the comparative conjunction *ὡσπερ* in combination with *οὕτως* (just as ... so also) can communicate mimesis, as can the adverb *ὁμοίως* (likewise) and the adjective *ὅμοιος* (similar). Finally, the concept of mimesis can be present even when no comparative term is used. With these combinations, Bennema identified 44 occurrences of mimetic language. The majority (84%) fall into either the “believer-Jesus/God” mimesis or the “Son-Father” mimesis. Most of the examples occur in the farewell discourse (John 13–17). Even if some of Bennema’s identifications might be contested, he has demonstrated that mimesis is an important, and overlooked, concept in Johannine theology.

Chapter 3 “Divine Mimesis,” finds mimesis occurring within the “divine family.” There is latent mimesis within the “Spirit-Jesus” relationship, specifically as it relates to being a *παράκλητος*. Within the “Son-Father” relationship, mimesis is much more extensive. The major categories of mimesis include Jesus’s activities of doing/working (*ποιεῖν, ἐργάζεσθαι*) and speaking/teaching (*λαλεῖν, διδάσκειν*). Jesus does what he sees the Father do and speaks what he hears the Father say. Additionally, the Son continuously observes what the Father does and says in heaven by means of the Spirit, and he imitates it on earth. Bennema argues that the Son’s mimesis is a creative, faithful retelling and re-enactment of the Father. These relationships are not exclusive. When people demonstrate faith, they participate in the mimesis found in the divine family. This participation includes attributes that characterize the “Father-Son” relationship, such as life, light, love, truth, and honor.

The mimetic chain of “Father-Son-believer” is the basis for extending the “Father-Son” relationship to believers. Therefore, mimesis is instrumental for the “God-human” relationship. Bennema further argues that mimesis takes place spe-

cifically for the sake of people. Through this mimesis people can experience the divine life and love. Hence, mimesis becomes a mediator. Because the Son is imitating the Father, he needs no apologetic for what he does and says—he simply is the visible and audible manifestation of the Father himself. In this way he unveils the invisible God on earth by means of mimesis.

Chapter 4, “The Believer-Jesus/God Mimesis,” finds both implicit and explicit mimesis in the “believer-Jesus/God” relationship. It primarily occurs in the context of discipleship within the divine family. The most explicit evidence for the “believer-Jesus” mimesis is found in the footwashing passage (John 13) and the love command (John 13, 15, and 1 John 3–4). Specifically, within the love command passages, the mimetic model includes showing-understanding-doing-being in that the disciples see and experience Jesus’s love, understand Jesus’s love as an act of limitless self-giving, perform a tangible mimetic act of love, and actualize Jesus’s love command through mimesis to ensure that they abide in Jesus’s love. Jesus’s love, therefore, becomes the basis that motivates and empowers them to imitate him and love one another. In each case, authentic mimesis mediates the original experience of Jesus to the beneficiary, who therefore can experience Jesus for themselves.

Chapter 5, “The Place of Mimesis in Johannine Ethics,” draws two primary conclusions. First, mimesis is central to Johannine ethics. Thus, Johannine ethics is mimetic ethics. The two most prominent forms of lifestyle ethics in John are service and love. Both are expressed by mimetic imperatives. Second, “if mimesis is the primary means by which John envisages the believers’ identity and behavior will be shaped, then *mimesis is instrumental to moral transformation*” (p. 169, italics his). Central to this is the idea that the Johannine concept of mimesis is fundamental to the dynamics of the divine family where Jesus imitates the Father and sets the example for believers to follow. Therefore, mimesis in John is intrinsically related to behavior and identity. Mimesis thus becomes a “dominant marker” of family identity and behavior.

Chapter 6, “Mimetic Empowerment,” argues that empowerment for imitating Jesus lies in three areas. First, relational empowerment comes from dependency on the one being imitated; showing is the basis for imitation. The branches-vine metaphor (John 15) and the footwashing passage (John 13) both reveal this pattern. Second, mnemonic empowerment is developed when one experiences, recalls, and reenacts the imitation. This is captured by *μνησθῆναι* (to remember; John 2:17, 22; 12:16), *μνημονεύειν* (to remember, recall; John 15:20; 16:4, 21), and *ὑπομιμνήσκειν* (to remind, call to mind; John 14:26; 3 John 10). Third, the Spirit is the moral agent who shapes the believer’s identity and behavior, the relational agent who mediates the “Father-Son-believer” relationship, and the teacher who teaches the believer all the things that Jesus taught. Therefore, the Spirit informs and enables the mimetic character and conduct of both the individual believers as well as the community.

Chapter 7, “Conclusion,” briefly discusses Johannine mimesis in Graeco-Roman antiquity, early Christianity, and Second Temple Judaism. Bennema rightly concludes that further research is necessary in these research areas. Regarding implications, his main thesis is that mimesis is integral to Johannine ethics and finds

expression within the “Father-Son-believer” relationship, and, thus, is integral to the transformative process of the believer. This results in a creative, faithful retelling and re-enactment of God to the world.

Bennema’s well-written and well-researched monograph is significant for several reasons. First, it is exceptionally readable for those interested in Johannine ethics. Second, its contribution to Johannine ethics, specifically with reference to the role of mimesis, addresses an area largely understudied. Third, it sets the stage for further research in the area of mimesis both in the church and in its historical context. The book is intended for all who are interested in Johannine ethics. It is recommended for scholars, pastors, students, and the untrained who are interested in this area and who desire a current scholarly, yet readable and understandable, approach that reveals the power of mimesis.

James M. Howard  
Dillon Community Church, Dillon, CO  
American Pathways University, Denver, CO

*Romans 7 and Christian Identity: A Study of the “I” in Its Literary Context.* By Will N. Timmins. Society for NT Studies Monograph Series 170. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017, xiii + 238 pp., \$99.99.

Whether Paul refers to the Christian or non/pre-Christian experience, whether he refers to himself or a generic, non-specific human, the identity of the speaker (the “I”) in Rom 7:7–25 is one of the most perplexing issues in NT studies. One’s view on the identity of the speaker not only affects how one understands certain exegetical issues but also has implications for Christian practice. In this study, a revised version of a Ph.D. thesis presented at the University of Cambridge, Will Timmins presents a sophisticated argument for identifying the speaker as a Christian. According to Timmins, what Paul describes here is a Christian experience defined not as “the experience of the Spirit, in Christ” (p. 205) but as the Christian’s continuing participation in “the radical weakness of Adamic humanity” (p. 155). The argument is detailed and complex, but fortunately the writing style is clear and precise throughout.

The brief introduction (chap. 1) sets out the current scholarly context, with a particular focus on the so-called fictive “I,” that is, the view that the speaker is tied to no person in particular, certainly not to Paul himself. Timmins’s study is largely a rejection of this view as he offers an interpretation that, he contends, explains all the features of the text. In particular, Timmins draws on the developing argument of Romans to explain the identity of the speaker of Romans 7.

Chapter 2 critiques the work of Stanley Stowers (*A Rereading of Romans* [New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994]), who advanced the idea that Paul employs *prosopopoeia* (“speech-in-character”). Stowers’s argument is the best current example of the fictive “I” interpretation and has been widely influential. Timmins contends that Stowers has misread the evidence from Quintilian and Origen, as well as misunderstood the connection between Romans 7 and 2. This chapter clears the

ground for a fresh attempt to understand the “I” as tied in some manner to Paul’s own experience.

In line with his contention that Romans 7 must be read in light of the rest of Romans, Timmins starts with Rom 3:7, the only other place in Romans where there is a concentration of first-person pronouns whose referent is unclear (chap. 3). Timmins argues that Paul presents the “I” as a representative figure of the human plight. This argument is grounded in the movement of pronouns in 3:3–7. The shifts in pronouns will also be a crucial feature in Timmins’s interpretation of Romans 7 when he comes to chapters 5 and 6 in his work. Additionally, the “I” of 3:7 is an “exclusive” figure who, embodying the attitude of the interlocutor in Romans 2, views himself as outside the human plight. In critiquing this perspective, Paul, Timmins claims, creates space for another view of a human who recognizes his place within the Adamic order. It is this outlook that is voiced in Romans 7.

Chapter 4 deals with Paul’s portrayal of Christian experience in Romans 6. While focusing particularly on 6:12, 19, Timmins argues that these verses must be read within the context of the Adam-Christ contrast (5:12–21), which describes two power spheres, and that, through his description of the body as mortal and fleshly, Paul locates believers as still participating in the Adamic world. It is this lingering participation in the Adamic world that provides the context for the speaker of Romans 7.

Chapters 5 and 6 deal with Rom 7:7–13 and 7:14–25, respectively. Occupying more than half the book, these two chapters are detailed and complex, often depending on subtle distinctions (e.g. the meaning of “fleshly” vs. “in the flesh” and of enslavement in 7:14). As in the discussion of 3:7, so here Timmins highlights the shifting personal pronouns across Romans 6–7 to show that the “I” of 7:7–13 is a representative figure of the “we” mentioned in the early sections. This claim allows the speaker to be linked with Paul, rather than a fictive being. Timmins also highlights the strong connections between 7:7–13 and the story of Adam. Coming to know sin through the law, the speaker of Romans 7 is, Timmins claims, the counterpart to the interlocutor of Romans 2. The latter does not see himself as a sinner (the exclusive “I”), whereas the speaker of Romans 7 understands his sinfulness.

Romans 7:14–25 takes up the final statement of 7:13 concerning the divine purpose that sin would be exposed in its extremeness through the law. This divine purpose is accomplished when the “fleshliness” of the speaker is revealed. Through the language of “fleshly” (recall 6:19) and the depiction of the body as mortal (recall 6:12), Paul describes a human who is tied to the Adamic condition. Romans 7:25a has been a thorn in the argument that Paul depicts here the unbeliever, and Timmins capitalizes on this, along with temporal markers in 7:14, to establish that the speaker, who although no longer “in the flesh” (7:5), is presently a “fleshly” being. The story of Romans 7 is also linked with Abraham, who hoped in spite of his situation of deadness (Romans 4), with the account of certain lament psalms that describe hopefulness over against shame, and with exilic Zion. These other stories reflect a powerlessness that corresponds with the situation of the speaker in Rom 7:14–25.

In the conclusion, Timmins traces briefly how his reading of Romans 7 as the Christian experience of Adamic humanity relates to the triad of faith, hope, and love. These reflections indicate the theological and pastoral implications of Timmins's reading.

Timmins's argument is strong at many points. His critique of the view that Romans 7 is an example of *prosopepoeia*, if correct, should put to rest this idea. His contention that the manner in which Paul employs the first-person singular pronoun elsewhere in the letter sets the context for determining the identity of "I" in Romans 7 brings to the forefront a significant new piece of evidence. The connections he draws with Abraham, the lament psalms, and exilic motifs, while building on others in some ways, are clear and insightful. While Timmins addresses the usual arguments for identifying the speaker as a Christian (such as the verbal tenses), he places these discussions in different contexts and reorders their importance, which advances scholarship. There are in each chapter numerous exegetical observations from which interpreters will benefit. There is much to be praised about this volume.

Given the volume of material addressing the identity of the "I" in Romans 7, it is unusual to find a study that makes a significant contribution to this discussion in such a unique, but not idiosyncratic, manner. Timmins, however, has managed to do this. There are, I would suggest, some aspects of the argument that are not fully convincing and some larger questions about how this reading fits into the whole of Romans and Paul's theological ideas, particularly his anthropology, that need to be addressed. Nevertheless, Timmins's study deserves to be widely read. His argument advances a new and refreshing attempt to identify the speaker of Romans 7 as a Christian. Indeed, among current scholarship it is the finest study available for this position. Future studies of Romans 7 will need to engage this important contribution.

Jason Maston  
Houston Baptist University, Houston, TX

*1 Corinthians*. By Paul Gardner. Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the NT. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018, 811 pp., \$49.99.

Paul Gardner has followed his love of 1 Corinthians through doctoral study, articles, and sermons, and now this massive commentary. This work reflects the fruit of his long reflection on Paul's letter in the various contexts in which he has studied and ministered. The work begins with 6 pages of "Series Introduction" and "Author's Preface," 4 pages of "Abbreviations," and then a 21-page "Introduction" that ends with a 2-page "Outline" of 1 Corinthians based upon Gardner's suggestion that boundary markers are the key organizing theme of this letter. The "Introduction" covers the typical introductory issues, but it is brief. This is not the work to turn to in order to see a detailed examination of every hypothesis about 1 Corinthians and its background. The "Introduction" does, however, include a section on rhetorical analysis, which is helpful. The 14-page bibliography that follows is useful

and selectively complete up through 2013, which is reasonable for a commentary being written by an active pastor.

The “meat” of the work is the commentary itself, some 718 pages long (the rest of the volume consists of 31 pages of indexes). The outline in the “Introduction” has divided the text into ten sections, and the commentary chapters follow these divisions. Within each chapter the commentary starts with the “Literary Context,” which concludes with a brief expanded section of the outline. Then comes the “Main Idea” of the text covered in that chapter, a deliberate attempt to reduce the argument of the text to two or three summary sentences. After the main idea comes a “Translation” in the form of a diagram, that is, an English grammatical outline (that presumably follows the Greek grammatical structure) with a sidebar identifying the nature or function of each element. There is a mixture here of grammatical terms (e.g. apposition), rhetorical terms (e.g. greeting) and functional terms (e.g. expansion). Next comes a discussion of the “Structure,” which summarizes the display seen in the translation. The structural discussion is followed by an “Exegetical Outline,” which repeats and, in some cases, significantly expands upon at least parts of the outline at the end of the “Literary Context” section. The core of the chapter is the “Explanation of the Text,” with each thought unit forming a heading with an ensuing discussion of its meaning. The Greek text is used in places in the explanation, but always in parentheses and always *after* the English meaning has been given. There are excurses labeled “In Depth,” which may be focused, for example, on a Greek term, such as in “Understanding the Word *Charisma*” (pp. 63–66) and “The Meaning of the Word *Koinōnia*” (pp. 67–72). These excurses form highlighted discussions of a somewhat more technical nature within the “Explanation of the Text” section. Finally, there is a “Theology in Application” section, divided into several headings, which gathers the main theological themes and applies them to the contemporary church.

It is clear that this work is aimed at church pastors or leaders (lay or ordained) who have had some Greek but who do not have advanced Greek skills, perhaps having let their language study slide. However, these church leaders want to understand 1 Corinthians and in particular how it might apply to the church situations in which they are presently serving. That is the context in which Paul Gardner worked both before and after his time as a lecturer at Oak Hill Theological College. The commentary seems to have a built-in filter that takes a much wider discussion of issues and filters them to find those aspects that would be most important in the church context. Since this agrees with the “Series Introduction,” it shows that the right author was chosen, and he has chosen the right level of writing. In other words, this work is not for academics or specialists in 1 Corinthians, for they will always be wanting more. It is also not for the lay reader who might wonder why Greek is mentioned at all, and, when it is mentioned, why it is not transliterated. This commentary aims at a balance, a “sweet spot” that I learned to find when teaching both current and future pastors in seminaries.

Given the church-oriented, pastoral tone of the commentary as a whole, one normally finds that same tone in the more controversial topics of 1 Corinthians. For example, when examining 1 Corinthians 12–14, Gardner focuses on the rhetor-

ical context, arguing that any “grace-gift,” whether teaching or tongues, should be “other focused,” that is, for the building up of the other rather than for indicating spiritual attainment. That use of rhetorical critical tools is helpful, since it cuts through a lot of issues and arrives at the core of what Paul is addressing. Later, in an “In Depth” excursus, “What Was Paul’s Attitude to ‘Speaking in a Tongue’ and What Is the Phenomenon?” Gardner lays out the options and comes to what is best called an irenic conclusion, although he is not being irenic without a good exegetical basis. When it comes to men and women in 1 Cor 14:33c–35, he both (1) concludes that it is a genuine expression of a Pauline attitude (in an “In Depth” excursus, pp. 630–34) and that its concern is with wives judging husbands’ prophecies in public (p. 643); and (2) allows for the cultural context to possibly create a different application in the contemporary church: “Whatever submission may look like between a husband and a wife today, Paul was concerned that breaching the cultural norms of his day in worship would lead to wrong conclusions” (p. 643). He then goes on to note that some of the issues that Paul addresses, such as head coverings, would not necessarily indicate today what Paul was concerned about then. These examples illustrate the tone of the work: it is cognizant of the general discussion about “hot topic” issues, it keeps in mind that the issue in Corinth is boundary markers and Paul’s response is community oriented, and, aware of Paul’s rhetoric, it draws pastoral conclusions that many evangelical pastors will find quite applicable in their situations.

The reference above to “evangelical pastors” is deliberate, for this work is not without its particular perspective, even if it is expressed within the British evangelical Anglican spectrum with the appropriate British reserve. First, the linguistic tools favored are older linguistic tools. One looks in vain for references to Stanley Porter (other than by the editor, Clinton Arnold, or to an article in a volume Porter edited) or, more particularly, to the *1 Corinthians* volume by Timothy Brookins and Bruce Longenecker in the Baylor Handbook on the Greek NT series (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2016). A. T. Robertson has numerous references, while the more contemporary Greek linguistic material is missing. Second, significant interaction with patristic interpretation or other interpretation between the early second century and the Reformation is also missing. Yes, Gerald Bray’s volume in the Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture is mentioned twice, and there are 22 direct references to patristic literature scattered over the course of the whole work, but patristic writers do refer, for example, to the various spiritual gifts (i.e. the “grace-gifts” in Gardner’s language) often enough, and they also refer to other issues covered in 1 Corinthians. The relative (e.g. in relationship to John Calvin who alone has 27 references) absence of this material (as well as the absence of official Catholic and Orthodox discussions of the relevant topics) gives this work a very Protestant perspective. Finally, there is a favoring of American Reformed evangelical writers, which, to be fair, is both the formation that Gardner had (Reformed Theological Seminary before returning to England for formation for ordination) and the final publicly-known stage of his pastoral career (Christ Church Presbyterian Church in Atlanta). Thus, we see many references to Wayne Grudem, D. A. Carson, and a number of others coming from a similar perspective and less empha-



sis on other perspectives. The Piper-Grudem work *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1991) is cited, but the Pierce-Groothuis work *Discovering Biblical Equality* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004) is not, despite relevant articles on topics Gardner discusses. Now this is only a relative emphasis, for Gordon Fee's and Anthony Thiselton's commentaries are cited numerous times (sometimes to take issue with Fee), and so are a number of other scholars who are quite outside the evangelical camp. This commentary is not one-sided, and it is aware of the breadth of scholarship on 1 Corinthians. At the same time, it does have a "tone" or a "perspective," one that locates it within a certain part of the evangelical world. That is fair enough; everyone has a perspective.

This is indeed a useful commentary on 1 Corinthians. It will be particularly helpful to those at whom the series is aimed. Yet all can learn from the pastoral tone, the broad reading, and the particular rhetorical viewpoint of this monumental work.

Peter H. Davids  
St. Clare Monastery, Houston, TX

*Persecution and Participation in Galatians.* By John Anthony Dunne. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2/454. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017, xii + 248 pp., €79.00 paper.

John Anthony Dunne wrote *Persecution and Participation in Galatians*, a revision of his doctoral thesis at the University of St. Andrews under N. T. Wright, to demonstrate the connection between persecution and Paul's participatory soteriology in Galatians. In arguing for this connection, Dunne seeks to address an area of Galatians scholarship that has not yet been developed fully (pp. 21–40). Dunne's thesis is as follows: "In Galatians, Paul is informed by the Christ-event and the full implications of participation with Christ in such a way that he sees suffering for the sake of the cross not as incidental, but as one of the alternative marks to circumcision, which demarcates the true people of God, and sets them apart for future blessing" (p. 4). Dunne further develops this thesis along four lines.

First, Dunne argues that suffering for the cross functioned as a subsequent commitment to faith and the work of the Spirit, and therefore had a significant role to play in the formation of Christian identity in Galatians (p. 5). Second, identity in Galatians is framed eschatologically. The suffering of Paul and the Galatians confirms their eschatological hopes and destiny in Christ (pp. 8–9). Eschatology in Galatians is not entirely realized because the future reality of the Galatians is put in jeopardy if they succumb to the temptation to flee suffering and persecution. It is important to note that Dunne's definition of suffering is broad and does not imply systemic persecution (p. 20). Third, the participatory soteriology of Galatians becomes the connecting point between the suffering of the Galatians and their eschatological destiny. Participation, for Dunne, "refers to the full matrix of concepts associated with the sharing in the experiences, status, privileges, and future of Christ by being incorporated into his death and resurrection through faith, baptism,

and the work of the Spirit” (p. 11). Fourth and finally, Paul’s reading of Isaiah is key for Dunne’s understanding of participation and suffering in Galatians (p. 17). In particular Dunne argues that Isaiah 49–54, not in the least because of Paul’s citation of Isa 54:1 in Gal 4:27, is the source for how Paul connects suffering and eschatological destiny together. In this way, Dunne’s squarely Isaianic reading of Galatians follows the work of Roy Ciampa (*The Presence and Function of Scripture in Galatians 1 and 2* [WUNT 2/102; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998]) and Matthew Harmon (*She Must and Shall Go Free: Paul’s Isaianic Gospel in Galatians* [BZNW 168; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010]), while seeking to break new ground in how Paul understands Jesus as the Isaianic servant *par excellence* in whom both Paul and the Galatians participate, not only in his suffering but also in his eschatological destiny.

Chapter 1 serves as an introduction to the thesis and scholarship on the questions of suffering and participation in Pauline scholarship more broadly as well as monographs and articles that touch on either theme in Galatians. Then, Dunne makes his argument in three chapters (chaps. 2–4). Chapter 5 is a short conclusion to his project. The main arguments of the chapters can be summarized as follows.

In chapter 2, “Suffering, Sonship, and the Spirit” (pp. 43–87), Dunne makes the case from Gal 4:29; 3:4; and 4:6–7 that Paul understands suffering and the reception of the Spirit as two identity marks of participating in Christ, which also indicate the future inheritance of the Galatians (p. 43). Dunne begins his investigation in Gal 4:28–5:1, a text that presents suffering, the reception of the Spirit, and identity in relation to Paul’s opponents. Dunne works from the pattern in Gal 4:29 to then read Gal 3:4, another text about suffering and the Spirit with no explicit mention of the opponents. Then Dunne concludes the chapter with a discussion of Gal 4:6–7, a text about the Abba cry of the Spirit of God’s Son, which implicitly mentions suffering in connection with the Spirit. In Gal 4:29, Dunne reads Paul as constructing a dichotomy between the fleshly and spiritual children of Abraham, which makes itself evident in what side of persecution a person is on. Thus, ironically, the agitators are children of Abraham, but in the capitulation to social pressures and in their compulsion to circumcise Gentiles (6:12–14), the agitators demonstrate they are not the legitimate children of the promise to Abraham (p. 61).

In light of this reading of the allegory and Paul’s statements about the agitators elsewhere (6:12–13), Dunne then turns to Paul’s use of *πάσχω* in Gal 3:4. Against those who would argue for *πάσχω* meaning “experience” here (see p. 70 n. 112), Dunne points to both the context of suffering in the cross (Gal 2:19–20; 3:1, 13–14) and the sequential logic of Paul’s questions in 3:2–5 to be determinative for the meaning in context. Finally, Dunne argues the “Abba cry” of the Spirit in Gal 4:6–7 refers to a cry in the midst of suffering and uncertainty. Key for Dunne’s reading here are the patterns of exodus and exile in the passage (pp. 82–86).

Chapter 3, “Judgment and the Marks of Jesus,” Dunne explores how Paul’s connection of crucifixion and suffering in Gal 6:11–17, like suffering and the Spirit, serves to demarcate the Galatians in distinction to the opponents (p. 93). In this way, Paul creates new insider and outsider language by making the cross and not circumcision a marker of identity, which demonstrates Paul’s vindication in the face of final judgments. First, Paul’s boast in the cross is understood as a boast in Paul’s

eschatological destiny in Christ and vindication for the suffering he has endured (6:12–14; cf. 5:11). Second, Dunne explores the significance of τὰ στίγματα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ in Gal 6:17 in relationship to the rest of Galatians 5–6. Paul's marks serve paradigmatically to remind the Galatians about those who will be vindicated eschatologically (p. 104); as such Paul's statements about co-crucifixion and bearing the marks of Jesus serve as proleptic markers of future vindication in the same way as his statements about justification (cf. 2:16–21). Dunne points out that the strongest section on justification in Galatians (Gal 2:15–21) is also in the context of co-crucifixion (pp. 107–10). In light of these arguments Dunne understands the Israel of God to be new creation people whose lives are marked by the Spirit and cross (p. 125).

Chapter 4, “The Servant and the Servants,” is the largest chapter in the monograph and explores the Isaianic themes of participation and suffering in Galatians 1–2, and 4. Dunne argues here that Paul sees Jesus as the suffering servant of Isaiah *par excellence* (cf. Gal 1:4; 2:20), but also understands himself to be fulfilling the role of the servant in his ministry (1:16; 2:2, 19–20) as an example to the Galatians as to what it means to imitate Jesus as the suffering servant (pp. 129–54). Dunne then turns to Gal 4:12–20 to show that Paul argues for this pattern of life modeled after Jesus in his call to the Galatians to imitate him (4:12) and in his concern for their formation in Christ (4:19–20). To support this reading Dunne points to the citation of LXX Isa 54:1 in Gal 4:27 as demonstrating that Paul had a broader reading of Isaiah in mind in Galatians. In particular Dunne argues that Paul read the Genesis narratives through the lens of Isaiah (pp. 183–91). This citation of Isaiah in the context of the Genesis allegory reinforces the two themes of persecution and eschatological identity and destiny, because, as the offspring of the Isaianic servant, they are the true offspring of Abraham (p. 185).

Dunne's argument is well researched and grounded within the text of Galatians. I only have one minor critique of the work. While Dunne directly engages with Hays's work on echoes and allusions, the inclusion of Hays's criteria and their usefulness in Dunne's project comes rather late in the monograph (pp. 133–34). This is in spite of the fact that Dunne refers to echoes and allusions earlier in the monograph (pp. 82–86). Regardless, *Persecution and Participation in Galatians* is a thoroughly argued work that can serve as a starting point for scholars interested in either persecution or participation in Paul's letter to the Galatians.

Trey Moss

The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY

*Jude*. By Herbert W. Bateman IV. Evangelical Exegetical Commentary. Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2017, xix + 486 pp., \$39.99.

Though often neglected by church and academy because of its size and seemingly negative message, Jude has enjoyed a kind of renaissance of late. Richard Bauckham's commentary on Jude and 2 Peter (WBC; Waco, TX: Word, 1983) was pivotal in Jude's resuscitation (at least in English-speaking scholarship) because it

argues for the positive theological contribution that Jude makes in its exhortation to contend for the “once-for-all delivered” faith. There have been many commentaries, monographs, and articles registering growing levels of appreciation for Jude since Bauckham’s commentary: for example, commentaries by Peter Davids, Jerome Neyrey, Gene Green, Thomas Schreiner, Ruth Anne Reese, and Jörg Frey and monographs by J. Daryl Charles and Tommy Wasserman, to name a few. It is within this context that Bateman’s commentary offers a syntactically and historically rich commentary on Jude’s letter. In a cultural moment when announcing judgment against wickedness and rebelliousness is itself condemned as utter intolerance, Jude stands as a crucial resource for rediscovering the (prophetic) voice calling for repentance and righteousness in the face of immorality and wickedness. Bateman’s commentary generally continues this positive trajectory.

Appearing in the *Evangelical Exegetical Commentary* series, Bateman’s commentary follows a typical structure for the genre: after an extended introduction (pp. 1–97), each section of the letter is examined in discrete units (each of which include the following sub-sections: a passage-level introduction, textual notes and translation, commentary, “Biblical Theology Comments,” “Application and Devotional Implications,” and select bibliography). Following the commentary on each unit in the letter is a very brief chapter entitled “Excursuses” (pp. 441–43), a bibliography, and an index of biblical verses. One of the strengths of Bateman’s commentary is the extensive discussion (97 pages) of the letter’s compositional context. Too often commentaries track over the same familiar ground, merely rearranging the known compositional information like so many chess pieces; however, Bateman offers a unique thesis regarding the historical occasion of the letter to which I will return below. Further strengths include the commentary’s thorough discussion of the textual support for Jude found in the manuscript evidence. This discussion is accompanied by a discussion of Bateman’s text-critical approach to understanding the significance of those manuscripts. Bateman’s work is also helpful in the level of textual analysis offered in each section of the commentary. A particular strength is seen in the commentary portion where each passage is analyzed at the phrase level accompanied by many notes regarding syntactical analysis and classification. Though quite technical, these comments are helpful and provide a deep engagement with the text itself.

Beyond providing a close commentary on the text, Bateman’s central contribution in this volume is his unique thesis regarding the letter’s historical context of composition. In the opening of the commentary he notes: “I will argue and eventually interpret Jude’s letter based on Jude’s historical, cultural, and literary context, which identifies the ‘godless’ spoken of vituperatively in Jude’s letter as Judean Zealots and other Judeans who have gotten caught up in an insurgence against Rome. ... At the same time, Jude admonishes Judean Jewish-Christian readers to extend mercy to Zealot revolutionaries and their seduced followers in order to win them over to Jesus” (pp. 2–3). Thus, rather than addressing false teaching (either gnostic or Christian) or libertine “intruders,” Bateman argues that Jude was written specifically to address “Jewish Zealots and all those who were coerced to join them” (p. 51). In an attempt to support this thesis, he offers a lengthy overview of

Judean rebels or Zealots and their struggle against Rome (pp. 51–80 of the introduction), describing the social and political discontent fomenting in Judea at the time. Toward the end of this historical discussion, Bateman asserts that “Jewish Christian leaders (e.g. Jude and others) were urging (perhaps even exhorting) Judean followers of Jesus not to join the Zealots” (p. 78). The “vituperative remarks” expressed by Jude “are directed specifically at the Zealots (Jude 5–16)” (p. 78).

In the same section, Bateman goes on to list what he thinks are eight connections between Jude and the Zealots: (1) Zealots believed in the sole rule of God, and Jude 4b describes Judeans who refuse to accept Jesus as Lord and Master; (2) Zealots rebelliously rejected Roman authority, and Jude speaks of past rebellions (Jude 5–7) and addresses current rebels (Jude 4a, 11, 14–15, though Jude does not address political rebellion); (3) Zealots circumvented the “God-ordained system of justice,” and Jude calls out those who circumvent God’s grace (Jude 4b) and disregard God’s law (Jude 8); (4) Zealots believed in their right to be free, and Jude describes the godless as rebellious dreamers (Jude 8, though “rebellious” is not in this text); (5) Zealots were discontent, divisive, and greedy people, and Jude addresses the greed (Jude 11–12), divisiveness (Jude 19a), and discontentment of the godless (Jude 16a, 18); (6) Zealots attempted to seduce people, and Jude warns of those who have slipped in unnoticed (Jude 3); (7) Zealots believed that they had “an eschatological possession of the Spirit,” and Jude distinguishes between those devoid of the spirit (Jude 19b) and those who pray in the Holy Spirit (Jude 20a); and (8) Zealots promoted an eschatological kingdom that was to come through military force, and Jude “exhorted Judean believers to remain in God’s love while anticipating the return of King Jesus (Jude 21b)” (p. 79). Many of these connections are either tenuous or so generic that they fail to convince.

In his discussion of when Jude was written, Bateman implicitly suggests that at least one other scholar sees a connection between Jude and the Judean Zealots. Bateman cites Ben Witherington’s dating of Jude: “Witherington suggests the late 50s and 60s based on ‘the wave of rising tension and rebellion leading to the Jewish war in the 60s’ (Witherington, 564)” (p. 38). However, Witherington’s dating of Jude is *not based on* “the wave of rising tension and rebellion leading to the Jewish war,” but rather on the fact that the letter does not mention the death of James and thus must be before 62, therefore, merely *during* this tumultuous time (see Ben Witherington III, *Letters and Homilies for Jewish Christians* [Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2007], 563–64). A few pages later, Bateman concludes: “Consequently, with Witherington, it seems reasonable to suggest the occasion for the writing of Jude surrounds the rising tension and rebellion of Zealots leading up to the Jewish war against Rome in AD 66” (p. 44). However, Witherington does not suggest that Jude wrote with the Judean Zealot rebellion in view; rather, he merely indicates that Jude is writing during the same time. Therefore, Bateman’s comments implicitly associating his view with Witherington’s are misleading.

Furthermore, Bateman’s overarching thesis surfaces several times throughout the commentary section of the volume. For example, commenting on Jude 3, rather than translate τῆς κοινῆς ... σωτηρίας as “common salvation,” Bateman opts to translate the phrase “shared safety.” He notes that “several commentators who

consider Jude to be addressing gnostic or Christian false teachers argue for a salvific understanding of the term and thereby suggest Jude wanted to write a positive letter affirming their common salvation” (p. 127). After surveying these other commentators, Bateman offers a diachronic study of the noun *σωτηρία* highlighting its use in the NT and Josephus particularly. He then concludes:

Essentially two scenarios exist: Jude either exhorts his readers to confront gnostic or Christian false teachers, or Jude encourages Judaeans followers of Jesus to defend their faith during the rising surges of Zealot rebellion against Rome. *Unfortunately, Jude does not explicitly identify the specifics of his historical situation.* On the one hand, appeal to their shared salvation fits almost any context. It most certainly fits a false teacher context. On the other hand, if Jude was written AD 62–66 ..., at least two historical events in Judaea may suggest *σωτηρίας* (*sōtērias*) is better rendered as “deliverance.” Perhaps James, the pillar of the Jerusalem church (Gal 2:1–10; cf. Acts 15), had recently been martyred (AD 62). If so, Jude wanted to write with eager anticipation to reassure the churches in Judaea because a leadership vacuum now existed. Hostility with Rome was gaining momentum, and the pressure to join the revolt, no doubt, was causing alarm among Judaeans followers of Jesus. (p. 129, emphasis added)

Bateman wisely notes that Jude does not explicitly identify the historical situation surrounding his letter; however, he goes on to speculate what particular social context(s) the author might have in mind. As interpreters we would very much like to know more of the social-historical context in order to understand Jude, but at the same time disciplined interpretation should refrain from speculative historical reconstruction. This example and others from the commentary section of Bateman’s volume strike me as moving beyond the text to a reconstructed history in order to interpret the text. Perhaps in this specific example his choice of translation is more influenced by his historical reconstruction than the structure of Jude or its particular use of vocabulary.

Bateman’s commentary is full of keen historical detail, especially focusing on the First Jewish Rebellion, and it offers the reader a reference library of detail at the phrase and lexical level of Jude’s letter. His unique thesis regarding Jude’s compositional context might be better presented in an academic monograph where the argument could be more carefully developed. As presented in the context of a commentary, Bateman’s thesis is not convincingly supported. For this reason, the pastor using this commentary might take care because the interpretation of the letter itself has been heavily influenced by this perhaps unlikely thesis.

Darian Lockett

Talbot School of Theology, Biola University, La Mirada, CA

*The Book of Revelation: The Rest of the Story.* By Martin M. Culy. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2017, viii + 281 pp., \$35.00 paper.

This book presents a unique structural approach to Revelation by centering its message on the seven letters of chapters 2–3 and then discussing how the rest of

Revelation applies. Martin M. Culy is Director of Cypress Hills Ministries and a former Professor of NT and Greek at Briercrest Seminary, Caronport, Saskatchewan. He is founding editor of the Baylor Handbook on the Greek NT series and author or coauthor of seven books, including works on the Gospel of John and 1–3 John. Culy's interest in Johannine literature continues with this offering on Revelation, a book he has taught in college and seminary contexts for twenty years.

After a brief introduction (pp. 1–5), Culy proceeds with eighteen chapters. Chapter 1 (pp. 6–23) not only interprets Revelation 1 but also lays the hermeneutical foundation for the rest of the book. Culy introduces key themes and provides reading instructions, especially on the need to determine what Revelation meant to first-century Asia Minor Christians. It must be read in light of its threefold genre (apocalypse, prophecy, and epistle) and its historical context. Revelation's use of symbolism and allusions to OT imagery must be recognized, as well as its intratextual connections. When these instructions are followed, several key themes become noticeable. Jesus is coming soon. Thus, Christians who are God's servants must imitate Jesus, the Faithful Witness. Since he is the "firstborn from the dead," death is not the end of the story. Jesus is the supreme ruler, not Caesar. The remainder of Revelation builds on, fleshes out, and drives home each of the seven messages to the churches. After examining the message to an individual church, Culy delivers a companion chapter on what Revelation 4–19 ("the rest of the story") would likely have meant to the believers of that particular church. Each church also hears the messages delivered to the other six. Finally, Culy surveys chapters 20–22 to see how these chapters would have spoken to all seven churches.

Chapters 2–3, therefore, begin with Ephesus (pp. 24–54). This prosperous city had a temple dedicated to Domitian. The church recognized false teaching, and they persevered. Nevertheless, their love for God as faithful witnesses had grown cold (2:1–7). Culy then moves from exegesis to plausible deduction. For example, in their call to be overt witnesses, perhaps the Ephesian church was sobered by the likelihood of suffering to be endured as related in the judgments of the seals, trumpets, and bowls. The beast requires dedication to itself; Jesus requires no less. Babylon dupes many to adapt to a prosperous culture, but Ephesian Christians must combat this temptation and continue to persevere to the end.

The letter to the church at Smyrna (2:8–11) is the subject of chapters 4–5 (pp. 55–84). The city's documented devotion to Rome undoubtedly pressured believers, and they were suffering, slandered, and poor. Yet Christ offers hope throughout a short, albeit intense, persecution. Smyrna Christians must remain faithful and endure. What does the rest of Revelation have to say to these believers? Culy suggests that the believers at Smyrna might envision that their own suffering and death is indeed on its way. Nevertheless, God will bring ultimate justice and reward them with the crown of eternal life.

Chapters 6–7 (pp. 85–113) take up Jesus's message to Pergamum (2:12–17). The city was a major cultural and political center devoted to Rome with the power to execute. The church held fast in light of that threat. Yet they are susceptible to accommodating to false teaching. The rest of Revelation echoes the challenge to this church. Culy proposes that those from Pergamum might be comforted by the

reminder that justice is coming. In a city where Satan's throne dwells, they might particularly be intrigued with the depiction of Satan's fall (Revelation 12). They must, however, not compromise their faith with Babylon (Revelation 17–18).

The letter to the church at Thyatira comprises chapters 8–9 (pp. 114–42). They were affirmed for their love and faith and perseverance, but the problem was their accommodation to pagan culture (2:18–27). Thus, Culy reasons, they must take heed not to fall for the Jezebel-like teachings inherent in Satan, the beast, and Babylon. On the positive side, believers must stand fast in their love, faith, and endurance in the One who is worthy of their devotion as exemplified in Revelation 4–5.

Sardis is the next church (3:1–6). Chapters 10–11 (pp. 143–73) summarize its historical backdrop, including the city's dedication to Rome and its emperors. The church is self-deceived, asleep at the spiritual wheel. It must be shaken from its slumber. Several warnings are peppered throughout the remainder of Revelation that should shake sleepy Sardis. Future judgments, for example, might work like the documentary "Scared Straight." Sardis is confronted with knowing that their works will follow them (14:13) and their works will be judged (20:12).

Chapters 12–13 (pp. 174–205) deal with Philadelphia's church (3:7–13). The city and the church were devastated by earthquakes literal and symbolic. They have "little power" and have been slandered and shut out, but Christ holds the key to the open door of heaven. Their perseverance will see them through (not from) the hour of trial that is coming. When these believers encounter the rest of Revelation, they see their limited power is not an excuse for any failure to keep Jesus's words. The two witnesses (Revelation 11) give a powerful word of encouragement to the powerless at Philadelphia.

Laodicea, the last church, is discussed in chapters 14–15 (pp. 206–28). The witness of this self-centered church provides neither heat like the healing hot springs of Hierapolis nor coolness like the fresh water of Colossae. Their lukewarmness is strongly condemned. Their trust in wealth, like the wealthy city they live in, is headed for judgment if repentance does not occur (3:14–22). When the Laodiceans read the other six letters, they will be shocked by comparison. The rest of Revelation is also a wake-up call. Their self-sufficiency matches Babylon the Great's. The rider on the white horse is coming in judgment, and their own fall is assured if they do not repent.

Chapter 16 addresses the millennium options (pp. 229–35). Culy critiques dispensational premillennialism, postmillennialism, and amillennialism and lands on historic premillennialism. The critiques are brief and typical and will not sway non-historic premillennialists. Chapter 17 (pp. 236–43) exegetes Revelation 20 from that perspective. Revelation 21–22 is the subject of Culy's last chapter (pp. 244–59). The vision of the new Jerusalem serves as a fitting fulfillment of the promises Christ made in Revelation 2–3, and Culy matches the material well. A four-page epilogue (pp. 260–63) offers teaching applications. The bibliography is slim, but significant works are noticeable. An author index and Scripture index complete the book.

Although this is not a commentary, Culy addresses almost all of Revelation. The strongest chapters are on the churches. The background, history, and charac-



teristics of the city and its church are followed by sound exegesis. Culy falls in line with the studies of William Ramsay, Colin Hemer, and Ronald Worth and indebts himself to their foundational groundwork. Missing, however, is Mark Wilson's *The Victor Sayings in the Book of Revelation* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2007). The companion chapters provide less exegesis and more supposition. Culy, however, does make many effective connections. Naturally, there is overlap and a division of exegesis. Decisions are made on which church receives the interpretation of difficult passages. Thus, Smyrna has 7:1–8 whereas Ephesus is given 7:9–17. Ephesus receives exegesis on the mark of the beast whereas Pergamum receives the number of the beast.

Culy's book is readable, and the book is free from typos and style problems. He occasionally interacts with the latest scholarship, offers sound pastoral insights, and adds potential illustrations. For example, he discusses Revelation as anti-assimilation literature and follows up with the Borg on *Star Trek*: "You will be assimilated. Resistance is futile" (pp. 14–15). He adds personal insights along the way as well. Culy's work on chapters 2–3 is worth the investment for the preacher and teacher of Revelation. It is doubtful that most evangelicals would disagree with his suppositions and applications in the "rest of the story." If they do, then Culy's insights serve as fodder for their own applications.

Michael Kuykendall  
Gateway Seminary, Ontario, CA

*Christ, Shepherd of the Nations: The Nations as Narrative Character and Audience in John's Apocalypse.* By Jon Morales. Library of NT Studies 577. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2018, xii + 181 pp., \$114.00.

One of the conundrums facing the interpreter of the book of Revelation is what to do with the nations. The reason for this is the apparently conflicting accounts of the fate of the nations. On the one hand, they seem to be subject to wide-scale judgment and destruction (19:11–21; 20:9). On the other hand, they end up in the New Jerusalem and participate in eschatological salvation (21:1–22:5). There have been a variety of proposals for handling this tension, usually with one or the other side of this tension, destruction or salvation, given prominence. In this engaging book, a revised Ph.D. dissertation at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Jon Morales tackles this issue by applying narrative analysis to the references to the nations throughout John's Apocalypse.

After surveying five different positions on the fate of the nations in Revelation (the church becomes the nations; thoroughgoing universalism; large-scale conversion of the nations; the text is inconsistent on the nations; the language about the nations is rhetorical), Morales proposes that we read the references to the nations in light of narrative analysis, where the nations are treated as a narrative character. First, Morales argues that the nations in Revelation are a typical figure or illustrative. Second, he asks the question: What is John's story of the nations (as a character) in Revelation? Part of this is tracing the narrative dynamics, or tensions,

in the narrative and how this shapes rhetorically the reader's response to the story of the nations in the text.

Morales then proceeds to work sequentially through the text of Revelation. The author begins with 2:27, for it is here that the nations as a character are introduced. Specifically, they are introduced through an allusion to Psalm 2. Morales makes the unsupported claim that this text (Psalm 2) is foregrounded in the letter to Thyatira. That is, the story begins with Christ as Shepherd being highlighted—a point that is important for his thesis. However, this needs linguistic substantiation, rather than a mere assertion. On what basis does he decide that this text is foregrounded in the narrative? Morales argues that the term “to shepherd” (*poimainō*) in Rev 2:27 should be understood not just in terms of smashing and breaking, but in terms of guiding and shepherding, along the lines of the love and rebuke for the churches (3:19), though the rest of the narrative will flesh out what this guiding and breaking (smashing) means precisely. Morales also notes that the nations receive their most positive portrayal in chapters 2–3, for Christ will shepherd them. In addition, as the letter to the church at Thyatira shows, the church has a role in shepherding the nations.

Morales then traces the narrative character of the nations through the other major sections of Revelation. In Revelation 5, 7, 10, and 11, John offers two perspectives on the nations. First, in chapters 5–10 they are acted upon by Jesus and the prophetic work of the church, all of which is characterized as benefit and promise. In 5:9 and 7:9, the nations benefit from Christ's death and receive salvation, and in 10:11 they benefit from John's prophetic activity. However, second, in chapter 11 the nations finally act, and they are hostile towards the people of God and rage (11:18). Rhetorically, this contrast presents the Gentile hearer with two options: repent and receive the benefits of Jesus's death or become recipients of God's wrath. It is here that John also begins to distinguish two groups: the nations and the earth dwellers. The “earth dwellers” (11:7, 10) are those who have aligned with the beast and are destroyed (11:18). A group from the nations associate themselves with the earth-dwellers and under the sway of the beast. Which group will the Gentile hearer identify with: the nations who receive the benefit of Christ's death (5:9; 7:9; 11:13) or the nations who align with the “earth dwellers” and the beast?

The scene now switches to one of cosmic conflict in Revelation 12–16 where Satan is introduced as the main antagonist of the book. In his analysis, Morales further traces the plot instabilities and tensions for the hearer in these chapters. In chapters 12–13, John creates further narrative distance between the nations and the “earth dwellers,” thus creating “narrative space to allow the gentile hearer to distance himself or herself from the beast” (p. 97). Morales finds the distinction between the nations and the earth dwellers in the rest of this section of Revelation. However, when the angel preaches an eternal gospel to the “inhabitants of the earth,” Morales's distinction between “those who dwell (*katoikountas*) on the earth” and “the inhabitants (*kathēmenous*) of the earth” (14:6) is overly subtle (p. 98), given the semantic relationship between *katoikeō* and *kathēmai*. The upshot of his argument to this point is that the nations are *never* portrayed as worshipping the beast,

as the earth dwellers are. Rather, the nations are in an embattled condition, under the beast's authority, and victims of Babylon's seduction (14:8). Yet Jesus is their shepherd. There stands the possibility of repentance and response to the eternal gospel, and 15:4 offers the hope that the nations might come to worship before Christ. The two options placed before the reader are not between the nations who are either destroyed or saved as some have argued, but between the two groups of the earth dwellers and the saints. It seems that Morales is saying that the nations sort of stand between the saints and the earth dwellers, the latter two groups presenting the options available to the nations.

Finally, in the concluding vision of the book (Revelation 17–22) the true relationship between the nations and Babylon is revealed (Revelation 17–18). The narrative continues to portray the nations as embattled and vulnerable. Babylon exerts control and dominion over the nations (17:15). Though both the kings of the earth and the nations are guilty of *porneia* with Babylon (18:3), Morales finds that unlike the kings of the earth, the nations do not actually lament the fall of Babylon. Further, nothing is said about the nations' judgment in chapter 18, only the judgment of Babylon. The fall of Babylon means the liberation of the nations from its tyranny. According to Morales, the main battle in 19:11–21 is between the Rider on the White Horse and the Beast, not the nations. He further concludes that the striking of the nations in 19:11–21 (with a further allusion to Psalm 2 in 19:15), refers not to the nations' destruction, but once again more positively to guiding and leading, since a "sword" does not always carry negative connotations, and the nations have not been portrayed as hostile or in a negative light since chapter 11. Yet the widespread destruction that does take place includes a series of merisms with slaves and free, small and great (19:18), which would seem to be fairly all-encompassing, though Morales does not identify these groups (presumably he would say they are not to be identified as the nations). The only two texts according to Morales that feature the destruction of the nations—16:19; 20:9—align them with Babylon or Satan. Again, the author is placing before the nations a choice: alignment with Satan or with the Lamb. Morales probably downplays too much the nations' hostility to the people of God in chapters 11 and 20 and their judgment in 16:19 and 20:9. At least the last impression the reader receives before their appearance in the New Jerusalem is that the nations have been destroyed, even if only in association with Satan. In the final vision, the nations land in the New Jerusalem. Now that their oppressors have been removed (the beast and Satan), they can enter the New Jerusalem under the influence of God and the Lamb who shepherds them. However, Morales fails to mention the fact that the kings of the earth, who were portrayed in decidedly negative terms in John's story, also end up in the New Jerusalem (21:24b). Therefore, it is still difficult to escape completely the tension between the negative (even if Morales has shown that it is not as negative as we have previously thought) and positive portrayals of the nations (and the kings of the earth), which also provide alternative options to the nations.

In conclusion, notwithstanding some minor criticisms that could be raised about this work, Morales has certainly offered a creative way of wrestling with the issue of the presence of the nations in Revelation and has paid close attention to

the text itself, challenging assumptions about how we read the portrayal of the nations in Revelation. Morales has correctly seen that the narrative presents opposite options for the nations to follow. In the end, his approach is similar to approaches that find a rhetorical function for the nations in Revelation, offering contrasting options of following Christ or Satan and the beast, though he arrives there from a different path, one that paints the nations in more positive terms than has previously been done. This work makes a helpful and distinct contribution to a difficult but crucial issue in the interpretation of John's Apocalypse.

David Mathewson  
Denver Seminary, Littleton, CO

*Outsider Designations and Boundary Construction in the New Testament: Early Christian Communities and the Formation of Group Identity.* By Paul Trebilco. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017, xi + 358 pp., \$99.99.

Trebilco's *Outsider Designations* presents a study of early Christian identity by considering the language that NT authors used to refer to those they deemed to be outside the faith community (pp. 5–6). The purpose of the work is (1) to detail the various expressions NT authors utilize in order to identify outsiders; (2) to consider how such expressions create boundaries between ingroups and outgroups; and (3) to discern what that reveals about how early Christian communities viewed themselves and constructed their social identity (p. 2). The monograph stands as a sequel of sorts to Trebilco's *Self-Designations and Group Identity in the New Testament* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

Trebilco suggests in his introduction that outsider designations fall under three categories each with varying nuances. First, the most basic category is that which refers to those who simply do not belong to the Christian faith community. For this category, designations include those such as "Gentiles" or "the unrighteous" among numerous others (p. 3). Second, outsider designations may also be used to speak of the pre-conversion life of Christian readers (p. 4). Finally, outsider designations may be used to speak of those who regard themselves as followers of Jesus but have since moved on in life and/or doctrine such that they are considered by a given author to be heterodox (e.g. "false teachers"; p. 4). Importantly, Trebilco acknowledges that he does not intend to be comprehensive in his selection of outsider designations, since such a work would be beyond the scope of his thesis. Rather, he is concerned to highlight the designations that "shed the most light on early Christian identity" (p. 7). Such designations are determined by simply substituting a particular term (e.g. "Gentiles" in Rom 11:13b or "the unrighteous" in 1 Cor 6:1) with the word "outsider" (p. 3). If such a substitution works within a given context, one has successfully identified an outsider designation. It is a simple but effective approach that allows Trebilco adequate room to articulate his case.

Methodologically, Trebilco draws deeply from the wells of social identity theory, sociolinguistics, and the sociology of deviance (outlined in chap. 2) in order to bolster his argument, before considering a range of terms that constitute "outsid-

ers” within the LXX and other Jewish literature (chap. 3). Social identity theory proves important for demonstrating that an ingroup/outgroup distinction is fundamental to the formation of a group’s social identity (p. 9); similarly, sociolinguistics highlights the importance of a “shared repertoire” of language to build communal identity (pp. 14–15); and sociology of deviance shows how labeling a given group or person as “deviant” may impact how the ingroup relates to so-called deviants who exist beyond the boundaries of the group (pp. 17–18). Moreover, “through discerning deviant behaviour [and labeling it as such] a group comes to define conformity and to delineate its boundaries” (p. 21). The cumulative effect of utilizing such methodologies allows the reader to see the complexity of ways by which group identity is constructed, affirmed, and maintained in relation to insiders and outsiders alike. Such an approach provides a valuable corrective against the particularly Western tendency to approach texts from a more individualist perspective.

Chapters 4–8 bring the reader to the heart of Trebilco’s work, wherein he evaluates various outsider designations and how they function throughout the NT. So, for example, chapter 4 evaluates the term “unbelievers” (οἱ ἄπιστοι) as used in the Pauline epistles, the Synoptic Gospels, the Johannine literature, 1 Peter, Jude, Revelation, and the apostolic fathers. Each subsequent chapter follows a broadly similar pattern with chapter 5 considering “outsiders”; chapter 6 “sinners”; chapter 7 “Gentiles”; and chapter 8 “Jews.” Chapters 9–10 each consider the cumulative impact of such designations in specific letters: chapter 9 with a focus on Paul’s letters, specifically 1 Corinthians, Romans, and 1 Thessalonians; while chapter 10 weighs such designations within the Pastoral Epistles and 1 Peter. The strength of this approach is that it allows Trebilco to consider the individual terms as they are used throughout the NT (chaps. 4–8), while also allowing him to look at how those same terms are used *collectively* within a given letter and what purpose they serve for the author in question (chaps. 9–10). Space limitations prevent me from offering a thorough overview of each chapter, but chapters 4 and 10 provide the reader with sound examples of Trebilco’s methodological approach and argument and will be outlined below.

Chapter 4 begins by briefly sketching the ways ἄπιστος was used in Greco-Roman and Septuagintal literature (pp. 44–46) and then proceeds to show how Paul’s usage was both unique and highly nuanced. Trebilco starts by considering the origin of ἄπιστος in Pauline usage, arguing that it developed as a natural antonym to οἱ πιστεύοντες. Such a scenario is suggested by the contrasting of “brothers”/“believers” with “unbelievers” (see, e.g., 1 Cor 14:22–24; cf. 1 Cor 6:6; 7:12–15), along with the absence of the expression οἱ ἄπιστοι as an outsider designation in any earlier literature (p. 48). In Trebilco’s view, this may have been Paul’s unique expression (or else that of someone from within his circle), and its lack of prior usage suggests further that such linguistic innovation resulted from theological reflection surrounding the πιστ- word group (p. 49).

Describing outsiders as such has a surprisingly paradoxical effect, according to Trebilco. On the one hand, the use of οἱ ἄπιστοι clearly raises the bar in terms of who is “in” and who is “out” in relation to the Corinthian congregation, thus ad-

addressing the problem of “weak social and ideological boundaries” (p. 51, quoting E. Adams [n. 37]). Nevertheless, despite this heightened boundary, the Corinthians are to remain open and engaged with their city as evidenced by Paul’s exhortations throughout the rest of the letter (e.g. 1 Cor 5:9–11; 7:12–16; 10:27–29; 14:22–25; pp. 52–58). In sum, what Paul achieves with the use of οἱ ἄπιστοι, according to Trebilco, is a raising of boundaries and increased differentiation to build up the ingroup, but without the often-associated social estrangement or slander that can easily accompany the development of social identity (p. 85). Be that as it may, οἱ ἄπιστοι still stands as “insider language for outsiders, and insiders know what is meant by [it] ... outsiders do not have faith or belief as insiders understand it, or do not share the insiders’ faith” (p. 86).

In chapters 9–10, Trebilco considers the cumulative use of outsider designations in three Pauline letters (chap. 9), as well as the Pastoral Epistles and 1 Peter (chap. 10). His concern is to delineate the social circumstances of the respective readers alongside how outsider designations are used and function to create boundaries between the Christian community and the wider world (p. 243). Here I allow myself to outline only briefly Trebilco’s assessment of 1 Peter. Initially, Trebilco dates 1 Peter to roughly the same period as the Pastoral Epistles (c. 70–95 CE; p. 261). He takes 1 Peter’s language of exiles, resident aliens, etc., to be metaphorical and, following the likes of Volf and Horrell, attributes the Christian community’s marginalization from the world and consequent suffering to the fact of their conversion to the Christian faith (pp. 262–63). First Peter’s strategic response to such a tension, as Trebilco understands it, is to embrace a sense of resident-alien-ness, that simultaneously conforms to certain values of a culture, while resisting it when those values contradict the Christian gospel (p. 268, again following Horrell).

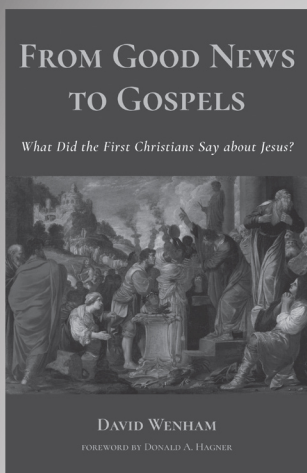
Having provided a social context, Trebilco then examines the numerous outsider designations in 1 Peter including negative epithets such as “Gentiles,” “disobedient ones,” “unbelievers,” and “the ungodly,” among others, and along with some more neutral designations such as “everyone,” or the more indirect “repaying evil with blessing,” which assumes perpetrators of evil against the church (pp. 268–78). As observed concerning Paul in 1 Corinthians above, Trebilco argues that the Petrine author likewise uses “high boundary’ terms,” in part, as a form of “resistance to the world.” Yet these are tempered by the more neutral designations or “low boundary terms” that suggest a genuine openness to outsiders/opponents, even to the point of pursuing their blessing (p. 279).

All of that said, perhaps one oversight that I would have liked to have seen addressed, if only briefly for its irony, is how the disunity present among the Corinthian congregation was, in part, the result of their willingness to use outsider designations *against one another* and consequently build high boundaries *within* the faith community (e.g. “I follow Paul” or “I follow Apollos,” etc., and the corollary that “you follow someone else” [1 Cor 1:10–17]), even as boundaries with the world were radically lowered (both situations that Paul sought to rectify in his writings). Some readers may also be inclined to take issue with Trebilco’s views concerning the dating and authorship of particular letters (notably the Pastoral Epistles and 1 Peter, both considered to be written after Paul and Peter’s deaths, respectively). Yet

none of this detracts from the overall quality of work present here. Scholars, pastors, and students interested in the social context and identity formation of the early church will certainly benefit from Trebilco's labors.

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Perth Bible College, Karrinyup, Western Australia

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