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BOOK REVIEWS

The Finger of the Scribe: How Scribes Learned to Write the Bible. By William M. Schniedewind. New York: Oxford University Press, 2019, x + 236 pp., $34.95.

The Finger of the Scribe: How Scribes Learned to Write the Bible examines the training of the scribes who wrote the Bible. William M. Schniedewind's thesis is that Levantine scribes learned their craft using cuneiform teaching methods from Mesopotamia. The book is organized into seven chapters.

Chapter 1 summarizes the Akkadian system of pedagogy and suggests this was the template for teaching scribal practices across the ANE. Schniedewind focuses upon the writing exercises used to teach cuneiform and asserts these traditions were "operating in Canaan until the end of the second millennium BCE" (p. 20).

Chapter 2 uses the Kuntillet 'Ajrud inscriptions as a rubric for explaining the process of scribal education in Canaan. Schniedewind suggests that *Pithos A*, the famous "Yahweh and Asherah inscription," was not a religious inscription but a writing exercise practicing a formal letter opening (p. 37).

Chapter 3 outlines the development of the alphabet and moves into the mnemonic writing exercises used by Egyptian scribes to teach the ***halaḥam*** alphabet (p. 53). Schniedewind discusses the role abecedaries played in acrostic poetry. Several biblical texts are investigated as possible scribal exercises that reinforced "alphabetic thinking" (p.66).

Chapter 4 looks at copying lists as a means to train scribes to think in common categories (pp.70–71). The author delves into the Gezer calendar (pp. 79–82) and Khirbet Qeiyafa ostracon (pp. 85–87), treating them as school exercises, and discusses biblical lists as extending scribal exercise (pp. 88–94).

Chapter 5 focuses on the next tier in scribal education, the model letter, and particularly the letters found at Ugarit (pp. 98–104). Schniedewind ends the chapter by suggesting prophetic discourse adapted the letter genre (p. 116).

Chapter 6 describes the importance of proverbs to scribal practice and diplomatic correspondence (p.120). The author takes *Papyrus Amherst 63,* which adapts Psalm 20, and concludes these parallels came from scribal curriculum (p. 126). Then he analyzes *The Instruction of Amenemope* with Proverbs 22; he states the two are textually unconnected, but that Egyptian sayings were transmitted orally into the culture, adopted into scribal curriculum, and "integrated into the literary framework of the Book of Proverbs" (p. 129).

The final chapter discusses advanced training including memorization and the creation of "library copies" of *Gilgamesh* (pp. 143–44). Schniedewind states that "the organization and themes" of *Gilgamesh* OB version 3, 6–14 and Ecclesiastes 9:7–9 "are strikingly similar," which he owes to an "oral tradition within scribal schooling" (p. 146). Finally, he explores the role of legal codes in scribal education (p. 156).

The strengths of the book include a diverse set of text sources, frequently referring to Ugaritic texts for support. The author's reconstruction of scribal texts at Kuntillet 'Ajrud is compelling. The book chapters are well organized and presented logically, and the sixty-six pages of endnotes, bibliography, and indices make the content easy to access.

However, the author has a flawed view of Egyptian source material. He repeats an anachronistic notion that the Egyptians did not teach foreigners hieroglyphs because the language was considered sacred (pp. 6, 76, 77). While that may have been true during the ethnic tensions of the Ptolemaic period, foreigners in Egypt in earlier periods could be taught to read hieroglyphic and hieratic (cursive hieroglyphic script), become scribes, and ascend the highest ranks of society, e.g., the vizier Bay. This view colors Schniedewind's interpretation of the source material. e.g., Amarna Letter EA 368, where he says, "Apparently the scribe was learning to write Egyptian words for diplomatic purposes but was not being taught to write using hieroglyphs. This underscores that Egyptian scribes used hieroglyphic writing only for local Egyptian purposes. Their script and writing was not taught to foreigners" (p. 76).

Schniedewind assumes EA 368 was a glossary for a Babylonian scribe who was learning Egyptian words, unfortunately getting the context backwards. The Amarna Letters were from a royal scriptorium for diplomatic correspondence received from foreign lands. EA 368 was not a scribal exercise used to teach a foreigner how to read Egyptian, but a glossary received from abroad to teach an Egyptian scribe terms in Akkadian.

Furthermore, parallels between Egyptian and Israelite sources are said to result from "orality" but have no textual connection (p. 128). Oral transmission without sufficient nuance does not explain the parallels, but Schniedewind cynically wields this explanation like a pulp novelist's alligator falling from the transom.

Dismissing the idea that the Egyptians influenced Canaanite scribal practices becomes problematic for some analyses. Schniedewind states that the *Onomasticon of Amenope* had no influence upon Canaanite scribes, and that "there is no concrete evidence of direct knowledge of Egyptian onomastic lists among Canaanite scribes" (pp. 76–77). Then, the author claims Solomon's knowledge of trees and animals "seems to draw on traditional cuneiform lexical curricula to represent Solomon's encyclopedic knowledge." (p. 89). The author never engages the *Onomasticon of Amenope*, but instead only cites secondary publications. However, the onomasticon contains a range of lists from heavenly bodies to agricultural products and kinds of meat. A fragment from the onomasticon (*British Museum EA 10795*) includes a list of plants and trees. For a thesis dependent upon lists of scribal knowledge, Schniedewind's treatment of Egyptian sources is strange given that Egypt dominated the Levant for nearly a thousand years.

Those interested in scribal training or West Semitic inscriptions will find this book satisfying; yet the casual reader should be aware that this is a scholarly work. Oxford University Press published the book with an easy-to-read font, but some illustrations are difficult to read and show poor contrast.

The Finger of the Scribe is a book of weaknesses and strengths. Where the book is weak (e.g. the Egyptian sources), the book has shortcomings; where the author is strong (e.g. the Western Semitic material), the book has valuable insights.

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Hebrew for Life: Strategies for Learning, Retaining, and Reviving Biblical Hebrew. By Adam J. Howell, Benjamin L. Merkle, and Robert L. Plummer. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020, xiv + 224 pp., $22.99 paper.

Many *JETS* readers have studied and even taught one or more of the biblical languages. Those of us in the latter category know that too many of our students lay aside their knowledge of Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek as they get farther into their ministries. Sometimes the laying aside is an intentional choice; other times, the demands on the pastor or professor mean something has to give, and the biblical languages become the casualty of a packed schedule. *Hebrew for Life: Strategies for Learning, Retaining, and Reviving Biblical Hebrew* offers practical advice for overcoming this too-common occurrence. As the title implies, the focus is on Biblical Hebrew, though the strategies described apply as well to Biblical Aramaic (see chap. 8) and Koine Greek.

The authors state in the preface, "We want you to love the God of the Hebrew Bible. Therefore, we want you to read, study, and enjoy the Hebrew Bible for the duration of your ministry" (p. ix). The ultimate goal, therefore, of Hebrew study, is "to know and love the Triune God and to love people who are made in his image" (p. xi). That is, Hebrew is a means to an end rather than merely an end in itself.

Hebrew for Life targets four main audiences (pp. ix–x). First, the authors encourage current Hebrew students by providing devotionals based on the Hebrew and suggestions for making Hebrew reading a regular part of life. Second, the authors provide Hebrew teachers ideas to incorporate into their classes. Third, Howell, Merkle, and Plummer attempt to motivate pastors and other Christian leaders who are using Hebrew in ministry to stay the course and grow in their use of Hebrew. Finally, the authors reach out to a group they call "Hebrew exiles"—those who have lost much of their Hebrew knowledge and want to return to using it again.

Hebrew for Life contains nine chapters. Each chapter ends with a section titled "Chapter Reflections" that encourages readers to ponder the implications of the material in that chapter. These reflections serve as gentle prods to action rather as mere summary questions. A brief devotional also accompanies the end of each chapter; these highlight various nuances of the biblical Bible text and demonstrate how knowing Hebrew clarifies the text's meaning.

The first three chapters provide a foundation for successful Hebrew study. Chapter 1, "The Goal of the Harvest," provides a "Hebrew apologetic" of sorts, showing students why Hebrew matters in a leader's life and ministry. The authors extol the benefits of Hebrew and gently challenge the objections some give against

Hebrew study. Chapter 2, "Weighed in the Balances and Found Wanting," attempts to ground the beginning student in good Hebrew study habits that include making a focused plan (p. 26) and using shorter, more frequent chunks of time (p. 34). The authors also suggest a "cross training" approach that varies the student's work in the Hebrew text (pp. 35–36). Chapter 3, "Review the Fundamentals Often," stresses the importance of vocabulary and paradigms. The authors offer strategies for learning and retaining these key elements of Hebrew (pp. 49–56). Indeed, forgetting vocabulary and paradigms often leads to students laying aside their Hebrew because they know how long it will take them to look up many words and forms. A multi-sensory approach that includes use of as many senses as possible to learn Hebrew, including reading, writing, listening to, and even singing Hebrew, is encouraged (pp. 56–63).

Chapters 4–6 encourage students to take their Hebrew study to the next level, to build on the foundation they have laid by applying principles from chapters 1–3. Chapter 4, "Develop a Next-Level Memory," encourages the use of mnemonic devices—funny stories, acronyms, whatever works (pp. 71–82). As I read chapter 4, I recalled my own seminary days as a Hebrew student when I unwittingly tried some of these strategies and found them helpful. Chapter 5, "Strategically Leverage Your Breaks," discusses the benefit of regular study of Hebrew rather than one multi-hour period during the week or a "cramming" approach the night before an exam. The authors also encourage students to make good use of academic breaks (e.g. Christmas, summer) to translate selected biblical books and perhaps other exercises to maintain their Hebrew and avoid "dry spells." Chapter 6, "Read, Read, Read," focuses on exactly what one would think it does. Howell, Merkle, and Plummer encourage students to immerse themselves in the language however they can, including using Hebrew in personal devotions (again, the goal of Hebrew study is not merely to learn Hebrew, but to know God and his word better) and seeking to memorize Hebrew Scripture verses.

Chapter 7, "The Wisdom of Resources," surveys available resources (hard copy and electronic) that can supplement one's use of the basic tools. The authors stress the importance of students using their Hebrew text and lexicon without immediately consulting reference works, lest the latter become needless crutches and actually inhibit learning (p. 143). At the same time, the many quality resources available certainly can help students dive deeper into the language and consequently into the biblical text. Most of us who teach the languages have our favorite grammars and reference works, so I will leave it to others to quibble over which other works the authors should have included.

I was intrigued by Chapter 8, "Hebrew's Close Cousin—Aramaic," in which the authors give a brief overview of some of the similarities and differences between Hebrew and Aramaic and encourage readers to consider learning Aramaic, too. After all, the authors say, the Aramaic portions of the OT correspond in length to the NT books of 1–2 Timothy, Titus, and Philemon (p. 166); how different the Bible would be without these books! Chapter 9, "Getting Back in Shape," closes the book and offers practical ways to dust off the cobwebs and clear away

the rust from one's Hebrew study. The book includes a testimonial of a "Hebrew exile" who "returned home" by making a plan and sticking with it (p. 193).

To be sure, the book provides no guarantee that all who read it will learn, retain, and/or revive their facility in Biblical Hebrew, nor does it provide shortcuts or easy fixes. Rather, it provides a foundation and framework for those who desire to go deeper into the Scriptures. Their strategies and suggestions may indeed lead to success, but success ultimately lies in the determination of those who will put into practice those strategies and suggestions. It's all in the execution!

Hebrew for Life offers solid, practical advice for learning, retaining, and reviving one's biblical Hebrew. I also can see it fitting well as a supplemental text for beginning or intermediate Hebrew courses.

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Figural Reading and the Old Testament: Theology and Practice. By Don C. Collett. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020, 208 pp., $22.99, paper.

Don Collett has written an instructive book on "figural reading." Collett argues for a grounded allegorical exegesis based on the understanding that the OT itself gives a distinct witness to Christ through providence and creation. This enables the OT to be read as it was meant to be read, as opposed to being incorrectly influenced by a narrow historicism, psychology, or modernity. Collett also seeks to correct those who would reject divine providence from biblical interpretation.

One would greatly benefit from first reading the Introduction and the Epilogue of *Figural Reading*, in order to get a general understanding of Collett's arguments. In the introduction, "A World Well Lost: The Eclipse of Old Testament Consciousness," Collett presents his operating premise that the church finds its theological grammar for its major doctrines in the OT. Consequently, the contribution of the OT to doctrines should come to us by its own language and terms. He sees much of OT theology as being overshadowed by NT theology.

In the epilogue, Collett seeks to ground his arguments in the church's creeds and confessions. In particular he points to Nicea. Nicene reason offered its own set of objective controls on biblical meaning to critically assess biblical interpretation and provide objective norms or controls upon biblical meaning (p. 162). Therefore, the community of faith submitted its thoughts to Israel's God, who has revealed himself as triune throughout Scripture. In this way, the biblical interpreter is thinking God's thoughts after him, i.e. *post verbum Dei*. Human reason then is rightly relegated to a *post hoc* role in relationship to faith. Nicene reason is concerned with preserving figural exegesis as a valid mode of biblical interpretation.

The book is organized into three sections. In the first section, "Frameworks," Collett discusses Genesis 1 and 2. His analysis is not about the reality of the events, but concerning how one reads these texts. For Collett, the failure to understand the figural reading of the two creation accounts ignores a rule, seen in patristic tradition, that differentiates the account of scriptural days from human days. The creation

days serve as archetypes that illumine and govern the original order of creation. Along with *toledot* (generational formula) in Gen 2:4, they serve as a hermeneutical guideline providentially placed in Genesis for future readers of the Torah.

I would be negligent if I did not point out Collett's footnotes, which are extensive. This tendency for significant referencing is seen in Collett's discussion "The Literal Sense and the Early Church" (pp. 28ff.). His discussion is undergirded with references from Athanasius, Aquinas, Gregory the Great, Calvin, Luther, and others. The book also has a valuable bibliography that contains 271 references.

In Part 2, "Exegesis, Figural Reading, Metaphor, and Theological Exegesis," Collett goes to Scripture. Many exegetes are uncomfortable with poetry, metaphor, and allegory because of the interpretive challenges. Collett observes that Israel's Psalter and the witness of her prophets are filled with literary devices such as poetry, metaphors, and more. If these literary devices are verbal decorations rather than reality, OT poetry has little theological significance. To prove his point, Collett wades deeply through Job 28, Proverbs 8:30, and Exodus 3, addressing the figural language in each.

In Part 3, "Assessment," Collett responds to a variety of views that diminish or disregard figural reading. He looks at the Reformation and points out why Luther's and Calvin's reforms did not seek to replace Scripture's allegorical or figural senses. He cautions about historical exegesis that can become a type of two-author or Pelagian model of biblical senses-making. In looking at Schleiermacher's hermeneutics of "conscious theology," Collett shows the problems of looking behind the text to find the thoughts of the human author rather than looking at the text to find what God is saying to the reader. *Sensus plenior*, Christotelism, and *Wirkungsgeschichte* are discussed as having deficiencies that keep the OT from speaking authoritatively with its own voice.

In an interesting section, Collett addresses the exegetical claim of "Bible without dogma," which is called scientific exegesis (pp. 132–37). Exegesis without dogma depends on the assumption that there is no need for a theological frame of reference. The problem is that everyone has a theological frame of reference, even if it is *sola Scriptura*. Collett points to the historical-critical method as having its own set of presuppositions, even though it is committed to honoring biblical authority.

Figural Reading is a welcome addition to OT exegesis and understanding. It calls the reader to allow the OT to speak for itself and to apply today the truths God providentially provided in the past.

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Intermediate Biblical Hebrew: An Illustrated Grammar. By John A. Cook and Robert D. Holmstedt. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020, 208 pp., $35, paper.

Just like the previous *Beginning Biblical Hebrew: A Grammar and Illustrated Reader* (hereafter *BBH*), *Intermediate Biblical Hebrew: An Illustrated Grammar* (hereafter *IBH*) was born out of the authors' dissatisfaction with current intermediate Biblical He-

brew textbooks. One of the features of the available volumes is "passive language learning," applying methods such as "paradigm learning, verb parsing" (p. 6). The most important principle of *IBH* is that a language is best learned when students can "both hear and speak the language" (p. 6). Applying this principle, the book pursues a more immersive, dynamic, and communicative learning experience rather than the mere grammar-translation practice or memorizing the lists of paradigms. Citing biblical references using the Hebrew book names and the Hebrew numbering system is one of the ways to immerse the students. The significant difference from the traditional intermediate textbooks is this book uses a more "inductive approach," which results in "grammatical concepts being scattered throughout the textbook rather than appearing in a sequence" (p. 9). The authors do not pursue merely providing a reference grammar, but helping students acquire authentic reading skills.

Each chapter consists of six parts. First, the biblical passage within the illustrations makes learning fun and enjoyable. The colorful illustration of the Elijah narrative will improve the learner's reading proficiency. Second, *IBH* shows a list of vocabulary words ("Words to Learn" section), which include all words that occur less than 200 times in the Hebrew Bible. Third, *IBH* explains new grammatical topics (e.g. the "Going Deeper with Grammar" section). The explanation in this section is more in detail than *BBH,* which aims to provide a minimal amount of grammar to acquire the language itself rather than simply learn its grammar. Thus, the more abbreviated grammar part in *BBH* is supplemented by this section in *IBH*. For example, a free form and a bound form are explained more in detail in *IBH* than in *BBH*. While *BBH* explains very briefly the relationship between the bound and the following non-bound form, *IBH* comments that a bound form often has a different ending and vowel pattern than a non-bound form. It suggests the vowel changes occur due to the phonological binding of the bound noun to the following non-bound noun. Furthermore, *IBH* suggests several functions of the host noun: "the agent/possessor, the complement of implied action, or a quality of the bound noun" (p. 17). In this way, *IBH* strengthens and deepens the grammar part. Fourth, *IBH* treats some difficult issues ("Challenge"), such as Qere-Ketiv (p. 33). Fifth, *IBH* provides aids for reading the passage ("Reading Insights"). It helps us interpret the text accurately. Lastly, *IBH* asks questions for review ("Review").

Appendix A highlights the Aleppo Codex, which gives the opportunity to encounter an actual handwritten manuscript. Appendix B has "Weak Verb Paradigms" that were already included in the Appendix of *BBH*. Appendix C introduces "Masoretic Accents" briefly. *IBH* also provides a short list of linguistic terms used in this book ("Linguistic Glossary"). The book concludes with "Hebrew-English Glossary." Additional resources for professors and students are available online. The student resources contain vocabulary flashcards and audio files. Professors can request sample quizzes, lesson plans, and an instructor's manual with answer keys.

In my opinion, the most unique contribution of *IBH* among other intermediate grammar books is an application of the modern linguistic research of the language. The book has several linguistic terms such as anaphora, focus, topic, and null. Topic and focus were already introduced in *BBH*, the authors' first grammar

book. The "null" constituent is first discussed the very first chapter (p. 19); that concept is hardly mentioned in the beginning grammar. As it is explained in the linguistic glossary, generative grammar uses this term for "empty" or "zero" to indicate a constituent that is not phonologically overt but that has a syntactic reality. Linguistics describes this phenomenon as zero anaphora, which are morphologically encoded subjects on verbs and null references to non-subjects. Cook and Holmstedt explain that "null constituents are allowed within a discourse because their reference is easily recoverable" (p. 19). The linguistic term "discourse" indicates a bigger unit beyond one clause, "chunks" of text. Discourse analysis pays attention to the notion of "context"—context in the sense of the interrelation of words or context in the sense of space and time. Overall, discourse analysis is the interaction of syntax, semantics, and pragmatics.

IBH uses the terms "word order," "topic," and "focus" frequently. First, in *IBH's* section entitled "Basic and Derived Word Order," it discusses the pragmatic operation "focus" with verb-subject inversion (p. 40). Second, topic and focus reappear when *IBH* talks about dislocations (left and right). Third, "focus isolates an item in the discourse from a set of items to which it belongs" (p. 91). Fourth, *IBH* offers a visual summary of the Hebrew clause (focus, extraposition, dislocation). One of the very helpful discussions in the "Going Deeper with Grammar" section is "foreground and background." The past narrative is the preferred form to express foregrounded events, while background events are various supporting events such as scene-setting situations, non-sequential events, and subordinate events.

In this way, *IBH* employs modern linguistic approaches to the Hebrew language. Its linguistic sensitivity is very helpful to understand what is really going on in the text, how the parts in the texts are combined, and how they contribute to the making of the meaning. However, if readers are not familiar with the modern linguistic theories, it might be difficult for them to enjoy the beauty of the book. One might want to study first important linguistic terms such as preposing, topic, focus, discourse, pragmatics, and information structure. The lack of explanation of these terms may be confusing, although the "Linguistic Glossary" section includes definitions of linguistic terms.

Cook and Holmstedt make a significant contribution to the field of the current intermediate Biblical Hebrew textbooks. It is innovative in terms of the structure; it is not just a reference grammar, but a combination of readings and grammatical discussions. It is comprehensive and holistic in terms of its scope; it includes syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. It is fun in terms of learning experiences; it is not learning and memorizing forms and paradigms, but engaging with immersive, dynamic, and communicative learning experiences. The book will lead students to read, write, hear, and speak the language; they will experience the ancient Hebrew language with great pleasure. Certainly, it is an innovative guide to the acquisition of Biblical Hebrew.

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A New Look at Atonement in Leviticus: The Meaning and Purpose of Kipper *Revisited.* By James A. Greenberg. Bulletin for Biblical Research Supplement 23. University Park, PA: Eisenbrauns, 2019, xii + 211 pp., $99.95.

A New Look at Atonement in Leviticus: The Meaning and Purpose of Kipper *Revisited* is a revision of James A. Greenberg's Ph.D. dissertation, completed in 2017 at Trinity College, Bristol under the supervision of Gordon Wenham (Trinity College, Bristol) and Richard Hess (Denver Seminary). In this book, Greenberg reevaluates various notions of atonement, expressed in Biblical Hebrew by the Piel of כפר, that is, כִּפֶּר (*kipper*). He focuses especially on Jacob Milgrom's theory that *kipper* purges sin and impurity from the sancta, rather than from members of the Israelite community, in order to preserve God's ongoing presence in the sanctuary.

In contrast with Milgrom's "pollution-and-purge" view, which has been very influential in recent scholarship, Greenberg argues for what he calls a "relationship" view of *kipper*. According to Greenberg, both unintentional sin and cultic impurity disrupt one's relationship with YHWH, and that disruption must be dealt with by means of sacrificial ritual. Greenberg's understanding of *kipper* therefore aligns more closely with the perspective of nineteenth century scholarship, especially the work of Johann Heinrich Kurtz (*Alttestamentliche Opfercultus nach seiner gesetzlichen Begründung und Anwendung* [Mitau: Neumann, 1862]).

To arrive at this perspective, Greenberg employs "a text-immanent strategy" (p. 8) based on sacrificial texts from the Priestly Torah and the Holiness School. He attempts to let these texts speak for themselves "rather than declaring upfront the purpose of the sanctuary and the meaning of *kipper*" (p. 9). By focusing on the biblical text in this way, and by highlighting what sacrifice does, he aims to avoid two pitfalls that he identifies in previous scholarship on *kipper*: first, allowing ANE comparative study to drive conclusions, and second, focusing on the meaning of ritual action rather than on what ritual is said to accomplish.

Greenberg's study begins with Exod 30:11–16, which he uses to argue that *kipper* does not represent a ransom. Rather, because this passage commands *kipper* without any preexistent offense, Greenberg says that *kipper* establishes a protective relationship between YHWH and the offerer. He supports this interpretation from the חַטָּאת- and אָשָׁם-offerings as prescribed in Lev 4:1–5:26 [Eng 4:1–6:7], which according to Greenberg show that unintentional sin is not punished unless the offender refuses to offer the appropriate sacrifice. When the person bringing the offering brings a sacrifice, he demonstrates repentance, and *kipper* brings about reconciliation by creating a protective connection between YHWH and the person bringing the offering.

Next Greenberg turns to the relationship between cultic impurity and the sanctuary. He contends that in the Priestly Torah, impurity is always found on an object or person, not the sanctuary, and that the impurities listed in Leviticus 12–15 (i.e. bleeding as a result of childbirth, leprosy, and bodily discharges) therefore disrupt one's relationship with YHWH rather than YHWH's presence in the sanctuary. He admits that impurity is associated with the sanctuary outside the Priestly Torah, but he argues that טמא in these instances carries a different meaning: it instead

functions as a synonym of חלל "to profane" and has the sense of dishonoring or offending, with the result of a disrupted relationship with YHWH.

Throughout his analysis of the above, Greenberg presents *kipper* as a two-step process: blood manipulation and burning of the sacrificial animal's flesh. Based on his contention that the Piel of חטא means "to bind" rather than "to purge," Greenberg contends that the sacrificial blood serves as an indexing—rather than purgative—agent that binds one object or person to another. Applying blood to the altar binds the person bringing the offering to YHWH because the altar metonymically represents YHWH. Then, the burning of the animal's flesh removes the effects of sin or impurity, resulting in forgiveness or cleansing and a restored relationship with YHWH. Thus, according to Greenberg, the חַטָּאת-offering functions the same basic way in cases of both sin and impurity.

Finally, Greenberg explores the relationship between YHWH and the sanctuary in more detail. To do so he examines Leviticus 8–10, which recount the priesthood's initiation and the deaths of Nadab and Abihu, and Leviticus 16, which prescribes the Day of Atonement ritual. Greenberg sees Leviticus 8–9 as establishing homeostasis, or the relational connection of YHWH, the people, and the priests through the sanctuary. However, this homeostasis is disrupted when Nadab and Abihu offer "strange fire" in the sanctuary (Lev 10), an act that Greenberg takes as rebellion against Moses's and Aaron's authority. The Day of Atonement ritual in Leviticus 16 is subsequently prescribed to deal with Nadab's and Abihu's rebellion as well as the sins and impurities caused by others who rebel (i.e. commit intentional sins). This ritual is necessary because rebellion—which Greenberg argues is attached to individuals rather than the sancta—disrupts YHWH's connection with the sanctuary and the rest of his people who are non-rebellious.

As noted above, *A New Look at Atonement in Leviticus* largely follows the relationship view of *kipper* characteristic of earlier scholarship. It therefore serves as a thought-provoking challenge to recent scholarship on Leviticus, particularly the work of Jacob Milgrom. Future studies of *kipper* will need to interact with Greenberg's critique of the pollution-and-purge view, and we can be grateful to Greenberg for bringing to our attention possible problems with this perspective. Greenberg is also to be commended for highlighting the relational (i.e. covenantal) framework within which *kipper* operates.

That said, the book is not without its flaws. In terms of method, Greenberg offers little explanation of what he means by a "text-immanent" approach, and the reader must wait until the book's conclusion to find the closest thing to a sufficient definition of this approach. It would have been helpful for Greenberg to lay out his methodological approach more explicitly, especially in the introduction, because he says that the text-immanent approach distinguishes his study of *kipper* from others.

Furthermore, in terms of content, Greenberg's argumentation is not always compelling. His contention that the Piel of חטא means "to bind"—an assertion that underlies much of his understanding of *kipper*—is questionable. He assumes, more than he proves, that this term means "to bind" because he thinks blood has an indexing function, and his application of the meaning "to bind" to instances of the Piel and Hithpael of חטא in non-sacrificial contexts seems forced. Another

debatable point is Greenberg's claim that the Day of Atonement ritual addresses rebellious offenses but not non-rebellious ones. Such a conclusion appears to be at odds with the totality of expiation indicated by כֹּל and, notwithstanding Greenberg's attempts to show otherwise, the use of several different terms for offenses, including פֶּשַׁע, עָוֹן, and חַטָּאת (Lev 16:16, 21, 30).

To sum up, Greenberg's *A New Look at Atonement in Leviticus* makes a noteworthy contribution to the study of atonement in the Hebrew Bible. Not everyone will agree with his conclusions, and at times his argumentation seems to overstep the data, but Greenberg has rightly drawn attention to important relational aspects of atonement and potential problems with the pollution-and-purge view.

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1 Kings 12–22. By Walter A. Maier III. Concordia Commentary. St. Louis: Concordia, 2019, 752 pp., $59.99.

This second volume on 1 Kings in the Concordia Commentary Series is an excellent addition to the Concordia Series that aims "to assist pastors, missionaries, and teachers of the Scriptures to convey God's Word with greater clarity, understanding, and faithfulness" (p. xv). Knowing the series' aims is important for the reader because it greatly impacts the product of this commentary.

This is the second volume on 1 Kings. As such, it lacks any introduction, instead referring readers to the lengthy introduction to the volume in *1 Kings 1–11* by the same author. Thus, readers who want information on authorship, composition, chronology, sources, structure, ethics, text, or theology must consult the first volume. This means a reader only really gets the full value of this commentary with both volumes; the present volume does not quite stand on its own.

What is present in this volume is a substantial textual, grammatical, and theological commentary on 1 Kings 12–22. Each section of text includes the author's translation, a substantial section that discusses textual issues, and a section that offers commentary on the text. Like other volumes in the Concordia Commentary series, it also includes icons that appear throughout the volume to highlight themes such as the Trinity, temple, incarnation, Christology, sin, justification, and more.

The section titled "Textual Notes" includes detailed engagement with text-critical issues as well as issues of Hebrew grammar. This section is frequently very detailed and helpful. For example, the section that comments on 1 Kings 12 contains a lengthy discussion of the alternative LXX account of the Jeroboam narrative in 1 Kgs 12:24a–z (pp. 1038–40). Smaller textual issues are also regularly discussed, for example, places where the author prefers a Qere reading over a Kethib or places where synoptic texts in Chronicles differ from the text in Kings. In addition to text-critical issues, the "Textual Notes" section of the commentary also frequently includes regular discussion of issues of Hebrew language and grammar. This includes both significant discussions of semantics of key words and grammatical

forms. In general, the detailed discussions in the "Textual Notes" section of this commentary are a great strength.

The general commentary section is marked by detailed literary and theological commentary. It is surprisingly accessible for the level of detail of the discussion. It is clear that this volume intends to be a commentary which preachers and teachers can find useful. Its interest is not only in difficult aspects of the text, but in bringing out the significance of the text both literarily and theologically. Pastors and teachers who want to engage with the text in detail as Christian Scripture will find this section of the commentary very helpful.

The commentary is at its strongest when it is discussing textual issues in relation to significant literary commentary or when it is pointing to theological implications of key texts. An example of the former is the discussion of whether or not one should emend the MT of 1 Kgs 12:9, which reads "that *we* might return" (*nāšîḇ*), to instead read "that *I* might return" (*'āšîḇ*) as some commentators prefer. Here, Maier discusses that possibility but argues that there is good narrative reason for Rehoboam to use the plural here since he is including his friends as co-responders, clearly showing where he stands (pp. 1043, 1058). An example of the latter are the numerous places the author emphasizes the foreshadowing of Christ in certain texts. For example, the author highlights Elijah's miraculous interactions with the widow of Zarephath and her son (1 Kgs 17:8–24) as a type that points toward Jesus's mighty-deed ministry (see p. 1335).

Places where an icon is used to highlight a particular theological theme are often places where helpful theological reflection occur. However, there are a number of places where it appears that theological categories may be interfering with the commentary on the text. For example, the discussion of the man of God and the old prophet from Bethel in the strange episode of 1 Kings 13 occurs next to the icon for Death/Resurrection/Theology of the Cross. The discussion of this understandably strange episode is overshadowed by a discussion of fallenness and salvation. In response to the possible argument that God is unfair in slaying the man of God for a seeming minor infraction, the commentary discusses the fact that he, like all, deserves death and separation from God, but instead, because of Christ's work, is given grace. While this is true enough from a Christian perspective, it is somewhat limiting to what could have been a very helpful discussion of this strange and difficult text. Another example involves the discussions that occur where Kings refers to God's opinion of David as doing right and keeping God's commands (1 Kgs 14:8; 15:5). These discussions occur in the context of an icon emphasizing the theme of justification. The thesis of the commentary is that it was David's saving faith in God and God's grace that allows him to "be described as 'doing only what was upright in Yahweh's eyes' (1 Ki 14:8)" (p. 1154, also p. 1205 on 15:5). While David certainly lives by God's grace, it is unclear to me that appealing to God's grace makes the best sense of the apparent tension between the statements in 14:8 and 15:5 and the difficult portrayal of David in the book of Samuel. Occasionally, therefore, reference to theological themes and truths limits the discussion of a specific text.

It is entirely appropriate to let one's theological convictions function as the grammar or lens through which one engages the biblical text. However, the risk with this kind of theological interpretation is that one always should allow the biblical text itself to push against one's theological convictions. After all, it is the biblical text that is the inspired word of God. Thus, the goal of theological interpretation is to allow one's theological convictions to help unlock the meaning of the biblical text. The risk of theological interpretation is that one's theological convictions may detract from the meaning of the biblical text—something all of us who seek to engage theologically with the text are guilty of at times. At its best, this commentary is frequently in the former category; however, it appears to slip occasionally into the latter.

The commentary also includes numerous excursuses on topics such as Asherah, Baal and Canaanite Religion, the Holy Spirit in the OT, topics relating the book of Kings to the NT, and discussions of Luther's engagement with texts or themes in the book of Kings. These are helpful further discussions of relevant topics.

Beyond any criticism present in this review, this commentary is intending to be an academic commentary within an evangelical Lutheran confessional context that is an aid to students, teachers, and pastors to engage with the biblical text at a high level. That goal is very well attained here. This commentary is an exceptionally helpful work, especially at a detailed textual level. Few biblical commentaries succeed at being as accessible as this one is while also going into this level of academic detail. This commentary would be a valuable resource in the library of anyone who wants detailed and theological engagement with 1 Kings 12–22.

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An Obituary for "Wisdom Literature": The Birth, Death, and Intertextual Reintegration of a Biblical Corpus. By Will Kynes. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019, 352 pp., $80.

In his book *Obituary for "Wisdom Literature,"* Will Kynes makes a provocative and persuasive case for abandoning the concept of a distinct canonical corpus centered on Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Job. His title, dramatic though it sounds, is no clickbait. Using sound historical detective work, modern genre theory, and a compelling intertextual reading of the standard Wisdom texts, Kynes gives good reasons for concluding that the modern genre designation of "Wisdom Literature" is limiting or even distorting our reading of the Bible. Finding wisdom themes throughout the canon is not the problem; it is the rigid categorization of certain texts as one thing—wisdom literature—that flattens texts, slices up the canon, and cordons off scholarly sub-specialties. The author suggests that while rigidly applied, the taxonomy is also ironically impossible to define, exacerbating the problem: "Reliance on a vague, abstract, ill-defined, circularly justified, modernly developed, and extrinsically imposed definition of the category has enabled scholars to extend the boundaries of wisdom literature infinitely, leading to a pan-sapiential epidemic in

biblical scholarship" (p. 1) Wisdom literature, it seems, has gone viral—and not in a good way. It is a poignant image for a book published on the eve of a global pandemic.

Part I provides a "patient history" for the deceased, tracing the development of the wisdom literature category from its conception in mid-nineteenth-century German post-Enlightenment philosophy to its dominance today. Chapter 1 surveys the current state of the wisdom sub-specialty, showing how intrinsic definitional problems have created its virulent tendency. We can avoid calling everything wisdom only by appealing to our own critical consensus. Chapter 2 seeks in vain to find any evidence of the category in ancient interpretation of the Hebrew Bible. Chapter 3, then, is a historical whodunnit, ultimately naming Johann Bruch and his 1851 *Weisheits-Lehre der Hebräer* as the "Wellhausen of Wisdom"—patient zero of the pandemic. This late date for the emergence of the category, and the "suspicious correspondence … between the post-Enlightenment ideals of his time and the traits Bruch associates with Wisdom Literature" (p. 5), are both striking, and the case is methodical. The diagnosis of "sapiential appendicitis," and the prognosis that the term "wisdom literature" has outlived its usefulness as a tool of modern scholarship, begins to sink in.

Yet how did this troublesome category become so successful, so quickly? Part 2 provides an answer in the form of a welcome exploration of modern genre theory, showing how widely held and inadequate conceptions of genre have plagued biblical studies since Gunkel, advancing the unstoppable careers of untenable taxonomies. Chapter 4 enlists modern genre theory to free us from the tyranny of taxonomy, revealing how a single text can relate to multiple genres at once. Wisdom is a connection between texts, but seldom the only one.

What is unique to Kynes's approach is the way in which he customizes his version of modern genre theory with other tools of the modern theory trade: networks, emergence, and conceptual blending. The metaphor of a constellation of stars helps explain the selective, self-reflective, and subjective nature of genre identifications: the stars (texts) are really there, but different observers will connect the dots to form different and even overlapping constellations (genre identifications). This makes genres "inevitably selective, self-reflective, and subjective phenomena" (p. 12). Wisdom literature, mourned as a dead taxonomic category, is resurrected as a genre, with all the flexibility and subjectivity modern genre theory offers: "The death of Wisdom Literature will be new life for wisdom" (p. 18). This deals a fatal blow to much of form criticism's project, particularly attempts to reconstruct with confidence the sagely schools behind the production of so-called wisdom literature.

Biblical genre theory is notoriously underdeveloped, so this chapter is one of the book's most exciting and unique contributions. Naturally, then, it raises some unresolved questions. Does seeing genre as "the formalization of intertextual comparisons made by a group of readers" (p. 57) collapse genre into *any* intertextual link in the reader's mind, or is genre more than mere intertextuality? Are genre groupings as subjective as the constellation metaphor might imply, or (with Ricoeur, Jauss, Fowler, and Gerhart) can we see genre as a relatively stable bridge between the intention and reception of a work?

Part 3 provides a glimpse into wisdom's possible afterlife. So far, Kynes's argument has assumed that pointing out the circularity of the wisdom literature category is itself a damning indictment (pp. 3, 26, 142, 151, 204, 253, etc.). However, we know from Gadamer (who supplies chapter 1's epigraph) that circularity in hermeneutics is unavoidable and sometimes constructive. To ditch a hermeneutical category like "wisdom literature" we should be convinced that it is not only circular but also gets in the way of reading. This is why Part 3 is crucial to Kynes's argument: it demonstrates beautifully the payoffs for reading the wisdom texts in relation to a broader range of biblical texts than the traditional taxonomy allows. This continues Kynes's work since at least 2012, which has consistently argued that the wisdom literature category obscures as much as it reveals.

If wisdom is *a* possible conceptual relation between texts, rather than *the* taxonomy for a certain group of texts, then why not look for connections between Job and historical texts, or Ecclesiastes and legal texts, or Proverbs and Psalms? Chapters 5, 6, and 7 explore Job, Ecclesiastes, and Proverbs respectively in relation to the new intertextual possibilities opened up by Kynes's "network" approach. The result each time is a richer reading of the text, with greater integration into the canon. The depths of Job's complex negotiations with legal, covenantal, prophetic, praise and lament traditions are sounded. Qoheleth's carefully woven fabric is preserved, the generic and thematic strands un-frayed. Proverbs returns from international exile to resume its theological conversation with the canon's broader theological conversation.

In contrast, the distorting effects of the conventional category are shown starkly: canonical resonances unheard, theological notes soft-pedalled, scholarly circles arbitrarily closed. A memorable example is in chapter 5, where Kynes examines how commentators from Chrysostom to Wilson have dealt with the parallel verses in Ps 107:40 and Job 12:21, 24. Alarmingly, it turns out that since Gunkel, the Psalms and Job sub-specialties have barely been talking to each other, despite the obvious commonality.

If Kynes is right, then there is a word of wisdom here for all biblical scholars, not merely wisdom literature specialists. How is it that supposedly "critical" scholarship could have rested so uncritically, for so long, on the unexamined presuppositions of a German scholar from generations ago? Critical thinking surely begins by being *self*-critical, and so Kynes has done the field of biblical studies an enormous service by raising these questions.

It remains to be seen whether wisdom program units and seminary courses will dutifully dissolve themselves of reading their obituary. I note that Kynes himself, practicing what he preaches, has renamed his "Wisdom Literature" course at Samford to "Wisdom in the Bible and Beyond." Whether others follow suit or not, it will be hard to write or teach on wisdom literature now without engaging with Kynes's forceful argument.

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Wisdom is a Woman: The Canonical Metaphor of Lady Wisdom of Proverbs 1–9 Understood in Light of Theological Aesthetics. By Lance Rundus. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2019, xiii + 250 pp., $36.00 paper.

A 2018 Ph.D. graduate of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Lance Rundus has served both as a missionary/teacher and pastor. This volume is a reworking of his Ph.D. dissertation. The book includes an 11-page bibliography, a two-page author index, an 18-page Scripture index, a series of five appendices, and two images of paintings by seventeenth-century artist Diego Velázquez.

Writing "not only for the academic, but also for Christians on several continents" (p. x), Rundus offers his readers a rigorous, thought-provoking study in how biblical metaphor functions. Specific attention is focused on "Lady Wisdom" in Proverbs 1–9.

In preparation for his exegetical work, Rundus discusses three "ingredients" he understands as essential to an appropriate treatment of metaphor in general and the "Lady Wisdom" metaphor in particular. First, the writer synthesizes the research of psychiatrist Iain McGilchrist (*The Master and His Emissary: The Divided Brain and the Making of the Western World* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009]), reassessing the functions of the left and right hemispheres (LH/RH) of the human brain and the role each plays in processing both poetry and metaphor. What is perceived as the inadequacy of a traditional approach to metaphor and poetry, Rundus attributes to Aristotelian thinking. A second ingredient is the theological contribution of Hans Urs von Balthasar, the twentieth-century Swiss theologian (1905–1988), who eloquently advocated for theological aesthetics. Indeed, Balthasar's influence is in evidence throughout the exegesis of Proverbs 1–9. The third ingredient is the relatively recent discussion of cognitive metaphor theory (CMT) advanced by such scholars as George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (*Metaphors We Live By* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980]). This is a tool OT exegetes have employed for several years (see W. P. Brown, *Seeing the Psalms: A Theology of Metaphor* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002]). It is to be noted, however, that Rundus qualifies his commitment to CMT: "not … as a theory of cognition, but rather as a definition and methodology for poetic metaphor" (p. 244).

The writer explains the role of these three dynamics in his work as follows. Theological aesthetics and LH/RH function together to encourage "greater engagement between *Lady Wisdom* and the absolute beauty of the Trinity" (p. 82). CMT offers "acceptable terminology and methodological framework for appraising the content, function and interrelation of metaphors that make up *Lady Wisdom*" (p. 82). Readers unfamiliar with any or all of these three research domains might want to do some background reading either before or after reading the present volume.

In Chapter 3 ("Hemispheric Balance and Methodological Stability"), Rundus carefully distinguishes between the "source category" and "target category" of metaphor and the "mapping" of the former on the latter, e.g. wisdom/*ḥokmah* (target) is a woman (source).

Also crucial to his approach to metaphor is "conceptual blending," which theoretically enables the reader to enlarge the context for understanding the basic

metaphor. This provides a basis for the writer's canonical pursuit of the metaphor into the Prophets, other parts of the OT, and the NT.

Chapters 4–7 ("The Diversity and Paradox of Lady Wisdom in Proverbs 1–2 and the Diversity and Paradox of the Triune God," "Women and the Divine," "Wise or Strange?," and "Faithful Desire," respectively) contain the exegesis of the Proverbs texts Rundus engages. Each chapter is organized in a 2-stage format, best explained by the author: "Stage one perception helps us to apprehend the beauty of the text. Stage two guides us to apprehend the beauty of God and accords with ultimate expression in Jesus" (p. 22). This signals both the approach and direction of the author's exegetical enterprise. He offers his own translation of each of those texts, as well as other OT texts that are a part of his discussion. His translation is based on the Masoretic Text ("because it is beautiful," p. x). These translations are accompanied by extensive explanatory and research-oriented notes that engage a wide range of Proverbs/Wisdom scholars. The notes, however, essentially require a separate reading.

With innovation, Rundus's exegetical work in Chapters 4–7 deftly develops Balthasar's approach to theological aesthetics and aptly applies CMT in dealing with the many nuances of the "Lady Wisdom" metaphor. Employing "conceptual blending," the author's commitment to canonical theology is particularly prominent in demonstrating exegetical links between specific "Lady Wisdom" metaphors in Proverbs and related metaphors encountered elsewhere in the OT and NT.

At the Stage 1 level in Chapter 4, Rundus proposes that "Lady Wisdom" is to be seen as a "conceptual blend of woman, prophet, and YHWH" (p. 94). The writer leads the reader through a number of textual dynamics (e.g. rhetoric, syntax, lexemes) in Proverbs 1 that encourage one to examine a range of prophetic texts where the same dynamics are found. The argument is further developed by pointing the reader's attention to Wisdom's "pouring out her spirit" (Prov 1:23) in relation to YHWH's "pouring out His spirit" as seen in such texts as Isa 44:3, Ezek 39:29, and Joel 3:1–2. In the follow-up Stage 2 level of his discussion, Rundus concludes that "the prophetic and mediatorial strands of *Lady Wisdom* are substantiated in the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Christ" (p. 113). Chapters 5 and 6, pursuing additional nuances of the Lady Wisdom metaphor, are developed in a similar manner and lead the reader to similar Christological conclusions.

This volume by Lance Rundus is a very engaging, stimulating study, yet one that requires the fixed attention and critical analysis of the reader. My fundamental concern—nowhere addressed by the author—is how his approach to the text comports with authorial intent. What did the poet/s of the "Lady Wisdom" poems of Proverbs 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 intend to communicate? What did the original hearers/readers of these poems understand them to communicate? Does this once-basic hermeneutical principle any longer matter in the current context of OT exegesis?

An unusual number of typos throughout the book tend to be somewhat distracting (see, e.g., pp. 2, 96, 99, 105, 106, 118, 119, 140, 141, 144, 146, 147, 148). This, of course, is a publication matter.

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How to Read Daniel. By Tremper Longman III. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2020, ix + 189 pp., $20.00 paper.

What does the book of Daniel have to do with abortion and same-sex marriage (p. 148); violence (p. 156); conflicts with China, Iran, and North Korea (p. 165); the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the stock market collapse of 2008, and illegal immigration (p. 167); sexual abuse, racism, poverty, Black Lives Matter (BLM), and Antifa (pp. 170–71)?

Addressing such questions, Tremper Longman, Distinguished Professor Emeritus at Westmont College in Santa Barbara, CA, queries the original audience's understanding of the book of Daniel and its relevant application for today, which encouraged him to write the book. In short, twenty-first-century American culture parallels the "toxic, hostile, and dangerous culture" in which Daniel lived, yet "God is in control and he will have the final victory!" (pp. 1–3).

The author targets laypeople, pastors, and seminary students, not biblical scholars (p. ix). Like the earlier volumes in the How to Read series, *How to Read Daniel* "is not a commentary" (p. 3), although it has one (pp. 47–138). It comprises three parts that encompass sixteen chapters, each of which ends with discussion questions useful for classroom interaction at the undergraduate level or in a Sunday school class or small group.

Part 1, "Reading Daniel in its Original Setting" (pp. 3–46), covers three chapters. Chapter 1, "Stories and Visions in the Midst of Oppression," explains the genre, language, and structure of the book. Chapter 2, "Babylonian Exile and Persian (and Greek) Domination," describes the historical setting, backgrounds, and discusses the debated date of Daniel. Longman does not believe Daniel is "prophecy after the fact" and takes the conservative view of the early date of composition (pp. 30–35). Chapter 3, "Comfort in the Midst of Oppression," explicates the major theological message of Daniel that despite the difficult circumstances, God is still in control and will have the final victory (pp. 37–44). Moreover, God's people "can survive and even thrive" in spite of living in a hostile and "toxic" culture (pp. 44–46).

Part 2, "Reading Daniel as Six Stories and Four Visions" (pp. 47–138), consists of eleven chapters that furnish the main commentary, which one will find comparable to the standard conservative interpretation of the book. The author analyzes the six stories (Daniel 1–6) and four visions (Daniel 7–12) but does not offer new earthshattering information. The reader will notice that the author stresses the above major theological theme after each chapter.

Part 3, "Reading Daniel as a Twenty-First-Century Christian" (pp. 139–74), signifies its relevance for today and informs the reader how to read and benefit from the book of Daniel. Longman censures some Christian authors who attempt-

ed to predict and set dates for the coming of Christ in the 1970s and later (pp. 139–42). Chapter 15 draws lessons learned (Daniel 1–6) as to how to live and "thrive" in today's toxic culture (pp. 143–52). Chapter 16 (Daniel 7–12) comforts the reader that God and his people will eventually have the victory (pp. 153–74).

I see four main strengths of Longman's work. First, Parts 1 and 3 are the most valuable; the latter exemplifies its grand finale, due to its practical applications and its call to employ the Bible as a guide for public policy (p. 183 n. 5). Part 2, however, is still informative for laity and the non-specialist. Second, the endnotes (pp. 177–83) endorse resources for further study and technical information. Third, the NT Jewish authors were members of the original community that understood Daniel's apocalypse and reflected their understanding in their writings (pp. 2, 12, 17, 159–65). Fourth, exposing the "frequent misuse" of apocalyptic prophecy by prominent evangelical leaders is another point of strength (pp. 140–41, 161).

I do believe the book has some weaknesses as well. First, I find it difficult to justify basing certain 21st-century public policy issues, e.g. the terrorist attacks of September 11, the stock market crash of 2008, illegal immigration (p. 167), racism, Black Lives Matter (BLM), and Antifa (pp. 170–71) on the book of Daniel. Second, the author correctly asserts that Israel "was an aniconic religion" (p. 52) but may have also mentioned that it was not 100% aniconic since the tabernacle and temple had cherubs and oxen icons. Third, in his discussion of Daniel 2, Longman indicates God revealed Nebuchadnezzar's dream and its interpretation to Daniel and his three friends instead of to Daniel alone (pp. 65, 70). Perhaps he concluded this because the three friends were part of the "prayer meeting" in Dan 2:18, though the text does not specifically say such. Fourth, his reasoning for interpreting Deut 32:7–9 as referring to Michael the archangel, who is not mentioned at all in the text, is puzzling. The text appears to evidence Israelite henotheism, and speaks of Israel as YHWH's portion, not Michael's. Fifth, the author states, culture in the U.S. is "not Christian nor religious" and disputes the notion that America has "Christian roots" without providing an explanation (p. 147), which some may find untenable and/or debatable. Sixth, the author constantly refers to NIV alternate readings; perhaps it would have been more appropriate to provide his own translation.

At any rate, despite these deficiencies, I highly recommend this book along with other commentaries, depending on the purpose of the class.

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A Discourse Analysis of Habakkuk. By David J. Fuller. Studia Semitica Neerlandica 72. Leiden: Brill, 2019, pp., $153.00.

Discourse analysis on biblical texts is not new; yet David Fuller makes a fresh contribution with his comprehensive, systematic, and innovative study of Habakkuk. In his book, Fuller employs Systemic Functional Linguistics [SFL]. This linguistic framework construes language as "networks in which the language user enters from" the decision of polarity (positive/negative) and then continues with

"further sets of choice" (p. 22). Three specific categories appear therein: field, tenor, and mode (p. 29).

First, the field analysis centers on elements within a clause. Verbs, subjects, and direct objects are particularly relevant here (pp. 34–36). Concerning verbs, Fuller concentrates on the categories of material (X *takes a walk*), mental (X *considers* Y), and relational (X *is* a scout leader). Reflection on transitivity is particularly important.

Outside of observing the participants within a clause, the field category consists of clausal relations and the verbal system. A clause may be parallel or subordinate to another clause (p. 37); the role of syntax in Biblical Hebrew is key (e.g. hypotaxis). Attempting to eschew the complexities and well-known debates of the Hebrew verbal system, Fuller claims to employ "a descriptive, data-driven approach to hopefully derive the significance of the usage of different verbal forms by looking at large scale patterns of usage" (p. 38).

Tenor is the second category for SFL. This primarily consists of the roles of participants within a speech event. A speaker, for example, may give or demand information (or goods/service) from someone (pp. 38–39). The manner in which a speaker gives or demands has to do with mood. For Fuller's study, mood speaks specifically of polarity (e.g. negation) and modality.

Mode is the final major category Fuller uses to re-construct the social environment of Habakkuk. This category has to do with the cohesion of a text; pronouns, pronominal suffixes, synonyms, and antonyms are germane for the classification of mode, particularly in chains of "similarity" that demonstrate that a text is cohesive. With all these tools at his disposal, Fuller claims that his discourse analysis "should facilitate a better understanding of not only the meaning of individual sections, but also the meaning the book as a whole that emerges from their interplay" (p. 42).

No method, according to Fuller, has been applied to Habakkuk with such exhaustive and rigorous investigation of categories (p. 298). Moreover, he understands his choice of SFL as advantageous because it deals with what can be "objectively excavated from the text" (p. 298). Such statements are corroborated by the detailed study of Habakkuk in chapters 2–8 (pp. 43–297).

It is evident that *Discourse Analysis* does what it says it will. Every paragraph within Habakkuk is mined according to its subjects, object, transitivity, speech roles, and clausal relations. The reader is continually met with statistical tallies, noting, for example, the frequency of a subject. Fuller compares the field, tenor, and mode of each paragraph and also observes any parallels between paragraphs. Doing so allows him to see that "evil things" and YHWH are categorically on equal footing in Habakkuk 1, but by Habakkuk 3 YHWH "is the most significant entity" (p. 305).

The author is to be commended for applying a linguistic methodology carefully and thoroughly to the biblical text. His work gives readers the opportunity to see details clearly in Habakkuk that would otherwise be opaque. What is more, *Discourse Analysis* provides occasion to evaluate the contribution of SFL to an ancient corpus.

In what follows, I make only a few evaluative comments on the application of SFL to Habakkuk. To begin with, transitivity is vital for Fuller's program. By it he hopes to outline the "power relations" in Habakkuk by concentrating on verbal predication. This is well-intentioned, but the implementation of categories is somewhat deficient. The abstraction of "passivity" and the "power" of transitive action (p. 98), for example, are more colloquial than linguistic. In 1:13, for instance, YHWH's looking (תַּבִּיט) at the treacherous is not in any linguistic sense "passive." Furthermore, YHWH's appointing (שַׂמְתּוֹ) in 1:12 is no more a linguistic signal of "power" than the Chaldean's bringing humanity up (הֶעֱלָה) with a hook, dragging them out (יְגֹרֵהוּ) with a net, and gathering them (וַיֶּאַסְפֵּהוּ) with a dragnet (1:15). Thus, it is difficult to say with any precision that YHWH's "exerting power contrasts with that of the Chaldean … the Chaldean simply spatially moves humanity into his net" (p. 98). This is in addition to whether the purpose, cohesion, or coherence of any paragraph is predicated on "power." Attention to who has the power and who does not, therefore, may be well off the point.

The verbal system of Biblical Hebrew is also one of Fuller's foci that warrants comment. He notes his disapproval of the complexity of verbal taxonomies found in the grammars. In light of that, Fuller hopes to "overcome this potentially sticky problem" by using a "descriptive, data-driven" approach (p. 38). This approach appears to me to fail on two accounts.

First, the assumption that there is simplicity lying behind the so-called "convoluted maze of categories listed in the various grammars" may well be false. That is, the complex and complicated taxonomies in the grammars may be so because the verbal system itself is in fact complex and complicated. Simplifying the verbal system for heuristic purposes is at times warranted, but the eschewal of complicated grammars on the basis of alleged overly complex systems of categories does not suffice for a linguistic monograph.

This is not to suggest that Fuller should not have employed a descriptive, discourse model of the verbal system, however. Any researcher can choose his/her own method and carry it out. The issue at hand is that Fuller appears to dismiss the rather standard taxonomies because they are complex.

Second and more important, the "descriptive" approach to the meaning of the verbal system in Habakkuk 1, for example, seems to describe the wrong data. True, the verbs (*qaṭal* and *wayyiqṭol*) in 1:11 "inform the reader that the Chaldean passes on, transgresses, and incurs guilt" (p. 73). However, such information has much more to do the lexeme and *binyan*—not the choice of *qaṭal* over against *wayyiqṭol*.

This book deserves a careful read. Any scholar considering a linguistic application to a biblical text would do well to observe Fuller's thoroughness and results. Furthermore, scholars of Habakkuk will profit from the interpretive conclusions throughout the book.

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Magdala of Galilee: A Jewish City in the Hellenistic and Roman Period. Edited by Richard Bauckham. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2018, xx + 436 pp., $79.95.

This volume, edited by Richard Bauckham, provides a collection of essays reporting and studying the archaeological and historical evidence relevant to Magdala. Major excavations at the site have been conducted by three groups, one led by the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum (SBF, 1970s, 2006–2012), one by the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA, beginning 2009), and one by Universidad Anáhuac México Sur (UAMS, beginning in 2010) in conjunction with the IAA. (In the interest of full disclosure, it is important to acknowledge that I have been a member of the UAMS excavations, beginning in 2012.) *Magdala of Galilee* brings the findings of all three groups together, along with the relevant historical evidence, to produce a comprehensive overview of Magdala as a whole.

The volume contains twelve essays in total, authored by a variety of contributors. Chapter 1, "Magdala as We Now Know It" by Richard Bauckham, provides a thorough overview and reconstruction of Magdala in antiquity. This is a wide-ranging study, covering the names of the site, its identification, the history of excavations, the question of the date of Magdala's founding, an outline of its history, its urban plan and character, public structures, fishing industry, and residential areas, as well as the question of a possible priestly presence at Magdala, the ethnicity and culture of the city, and its significance for the Gospels. This chapter is presently among the most detailed overviews of Magdala and is recommended for scholars with an interest in Galilee in the late Hellenistic and Roman periods.

Chapter 2, by Anna Lena, discusses the harbor at Magdala, including the water level of the Sea of Galilee in antiquity, concluding that the water level was between -208 m. and -209 m. when the Hellenistic harbor was built (pp. 87–88). Chapter 3, by Marcela Zapata-Meza, is a report on the domestic and mercantile areas of the UAMS excavation. The discussion of Buildings E1 and E3 of UAMS Area A, a complex that includes four stepped water installations that have been identified as *miqva'ot* and a room with a mosaic floor (pp. 91–95), is noteworthy. Also of note is the discussion of Street 8 in UAMS Area E, which leads to the synagogue and the western wall of which may mark the western limit of the city (pp. 103–4), which is sometimes ignored in discussions of the layout of the city. The findings of this chapter affirm that "the main settlement period in this part of the ancient city was in the Early Roman period" (p. 106). Chapter 4, by Ronny Reich and Marcela Zapata-Meza, discusses the "Domestic Miqva'ot," the four aforementioned stepped water installations. The authors make a convincing case for the identification of all four pools as groundwater-fed *miqva'ot*. Of particular interest here are the discussion of the source of the water that feeds the pools (pp. 120–21) and the interpretation of the area in which the two *miqva'ot* were found in Building E1 as "a wing of rooms that seem to serve the purpose of keeping the Jewish purity regulations" (p. 122). The identification of these rooms in this way invites a natural comparison with the *miqva'ot* in the houses of the Herodian Quarter in Jerusalem (p. 122).

Chapter 5, by Mordechai Aviam, discusses the synagogue. This chapter will be of interest to readers interested in the NT, as Aviam draws attention to the significance of the synagogue for the study of Jesus and the Gospels (pp. 128, 131). As Aviam writes, "The discovery at Magdala has convinced, I believe, most scholars who are studying ancient synagogues that what is portrayed in the New Testament was, as a matter of fact, the reality in the Galilee, as it was in Judea" (p. 131). As one such scholar, I am inclined to agree. Notably, Aviam suggests that the discovery of the Magdala synagogue raises the possibility that spaces to host scrolls were common in Second Temple period synagogues, which is worth considering for future scholarship.

Chapter 6, co-authored by Aviam and Bauckham, discusses the Magdala Synagogue Stone, a carved limestone ashlar that was famously discovered in the main hall of the synagogue. Aviam and Bauckham agree that the Stone depicts Temple imagery. According to them, the face featuring a menorah depicts a view in the Holy Place, and the opposing face, featuring a pair of wheels, depicts the Holy of Holies (pp. 139–42). Of particular note for those interested in the study of the Stone is their argument that the wheels cannot be interpreted as rosettes (p. 141), which helps to solidify the interpretation of the wheels as related to *merkabah* imagery. Aviam interprets the Stone's function as the base for a Torah reading table (pp. 147–50), while Bauckham sees its function as a representation of the Temple on which the firstfruits were collected to be taken to the Temple (p. 155).

Chapter 7, by Santiago Guijarro, is on the topic of "Magdala and Trade." Guijarro concludes that the Magdala harbor complex served a transit market, "facilitating the transfer of goods between the eastern trade routes and the Mediterranean ports" (p. 183). Chapter 8, authored by Bauckham, is a lengthy essay on "Magdala and the Fishing Industry." At eighty-two pages, this is the longest and most detailed chapter in the book. An academic study of fishing on the Sea of Galilee in antiquity has been a lacuna in the field, and this chapter fills that gap. Bauckham's combination of archaeological, literary, and papyrological evidence makes for a compelling reconstruction. Also notable in this chapter is the case for the identification of the "vats" at Magdala discovered near the synagogue as installations related to the fishery industry (pp. 253–63). Chapter 9, by Morten Hørning Jensen, examines Magdala/Taricheae's role in the First Jewish Revolt. Jensen highlights Magdala's pro-Josephus stance, as well as its "smoldering" rivalry with Tiberias (pp. 284–85). The relationship between Magdala and Tiberias is an area that certainly requires further examination, given the close proximity of these two urban centers to one another.

Chapters 10, 11, and 12 are all authored by Bauckham. Chapter 10 examines Magdala's appearance in the list of the twenty-four priestly settlements, arguing that the list has its origin in the Hasmonean period, implying a priestly presence at Magdala. Chapter 11 examines and helpfully summarizes the Rabbinic traditions relating to Magdala, while Chapter 12 discusses the prosopography of Magdala.

The essays themselves are of good quality, though there are some minor problems to note. I can only raise a few here. In his otherwise good essay, Aviam states that, prior to the discovery of the Magdala synagogue, the earliest dated syna-

gogue in Galilee was from "the second half of the second century CE" (p. 128), but the Khirbet Qana synagogue is dated earlier than this. A few other minor issues relate to the Magdala Stone. In my opinion, Aviam's reconstruction of the Stone as the base for a table for Torah reading lacks the evidence required to make it plausible. Bauckham's suggestion that the "lamp" on the long sides of the Stone is a "Herodian wheel-made knife-pared" type (pp. 47, 144–145) is hard to accept, because it seems to lack the signature knife-pared nozzle.

Zapata-Meza's use of the term "ritual area" may cause some confusion since this term is not common in the archaeology of Galilee in our period, despite its more common use in archaeological parlance more broadly. However, it is clear that she is simply referring to the aforementioned wings of Buildings E1 and E3 that contained *miqva'ot*, and this need not be a point of major contention. On the topic of the *miqva'ot*, although Reich and Zapata-Meza make a convincing case for their identification, it would have been helpful to include discussion of the relation of the *miqva'ot* to the wells that they are connected to by the water system.

There are some general difficulties to address. The volume was published before the detailed final report of the IAA excavations, including the synagogue and the area where the possible fish workshops are located, has been published. Although this is out of the contributors' control, the lack of a final report frequently hampers the volume, as it does other scholarship dealing with Magdala. Another issue is the lack of contributors who are or have been members of the excavations. As good as the volume is, greater cooperation might have produced even richer results. This problem is amplified when we consider that five of the twelve essays, comprising some 226 pages, are authored by Bauckham himself, which does not include his co-authored piece with Aviam. Bauckham also acknowledges Stefano De Luca's withdrawal from the project (p. ix), which likely contributed to the matter.

Overall, the volume makes a clear contribution to the study of Galilee in the late Hellenistic and Roman periods and a major contribution to the study of Magdala itself. It is recommended reading for anyone interested in early Galilean Judaism or in the study of Jesus and the Gospels. Chapter 8, "Magdala and the Fishing Industry," is essential reading for anyone interested in these topics and is particularly recommended for anyone who teaches a course on NT backgrounds or archaeology. Magdala is undoubtedly among the most important archaeological sites in Galilee, and, despite the lack of a final report on the synagogue and related areas, this volume is a step in the right direction toward illuminating its history.

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Myths and Mistakes in New Testament Textual Criticism. Edited by Elijah Hixson and Peter J. Gurry. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2019, xxiii + 372 pp., $40.00 paper.

Textual criticism is a science that corrects inaccuracy, and unfortunately, the science itself at times needs to step back and undergo such correction. Thus, the need for this volume. Elijah Hixson (Ph.D., University of Edinburgh, 2018) and Peter Gurry (Ph.D., University of Cambridge, 2016) are already becoming well known for their publications in text-critical and evangelical circles. For a meticulous volume as this, they marshalled the forces of twelve other recent or current doctoral students—the next generation of young and restless textual scholars. Many of these chapters are summaries and/or extensions of their recent doctoral forays under seasoned scholars at prestigious schools on both sides of the Atlantic. Chapter by chapter they examine and debunk in detail some of the most popular yet pernicious misunderstandings of manuscripts and the process of textual criticism.

NT textual criticism, unlike its counterpart in the classics, is also a science that generates strong opinions because much is at stake for those who "trust the Bible as God's special revelation" (p. 1). In recent years, the field has become quite polarized regarding the existence of an original text, the purpose of the field, and the reliability of its outcome. Lines in the sand have been drawn most notably by Daniel Wallace and Bart Ehrman in their sequence of public debates. Both cast long shadows over this entire book. Wallace, who wrote the ten-page foreword—which could serve as a concise book review itself—is the wizard behind the curtain for much of the content since six of the fourteen contributors have either been his students or worked closely with him on other textual projects.

Ehrman, on the other hand, certainly does not go unmentioned since on average his name appears every two pages. Ehrman, who seems to enjoy being known as a de-converted inerrantist, is both corrected and shown correct. On the one hand, Peter Malik points out methodological weaknesses in Ehrman's use of $\mathfrak{P}^{66}$ regarding orthodox corruptions. On the other hand, Peter Gurry shows that Ehrman's staggering claim of 400,000 variant readings in the textual tradition is essentially true because there are actually *more* variants than that—roughly half a million he calculates. More often than not, however, the contributors show that apologists have overplayed claims of textual evidence.

Gurry and Hixson have arranged the fifteen chapters into three broad sections on manuscripts (chaps. 2–6), the copying process (chaps. 7–11), and related matters (chaps. 12–15). Their introduction (chap. 1) explains their hopes that the chapters will be a substantial response to cynicism and skepticism about the NT text on the one hand and yet an important corrective to weak arguments for textual reliability on the other.

Regarding manuscripts, Timothy Mitchell (chap. 2) opens by responding to two recent opposing theories about the earliest form of the text. In response to Matthew Larsen's theory that books did not necessarily reach a finalized form before copies began to be made, Mitchell cites examples from antiquity in which authors did occasionally express the completion of their work. In response to Craig

Evans, Mitchell argues that it is unlikely that autographs lasted for hundreds of years and served as a stabilizing effect on the textual tradition. Jacob Peterson (chap. 3) meticulously describes the difficulty in simply counting our manuscripts because of problems with overcounting, undercounting, and even how we define what constitutes a manuscript. With fascinating examples, he suggests speaking in round numbers such as "more than 5,100" manuscripts. James Prothro (chap. 4) traces the origins and crucial problems of the comparative argument between the number of NT manuscripts and that of classical literature. He does not attempt to provide an updated list of numbers; instead, he offers six suggestions as to how such a comparison should be made in a fair and balanced treatment. Elijah Hixson (chap. 5) addresses problems inherent with dates assigned to manuscripts. After providing intriguing examples of how manuscripts are dated and why this is difficult, he concludes that ranges, not specific dates, should be used for early manuscripts and that sensationalism should be avoided. Gregory Lanier (chap. 6) approaches the issue of dates from the opposite angle by showing how later manuscripts can play an important role in textual criticism.

Regarding the copying process, Zachary Cole (chap. 7) examines what can be known about the attitude and ability of early scribes. He concludes it is wrong to caricature them as either incompetent amateurs or meticulous professionals, or that they were trying to change the text wholesale. Peter Malik (chap. 8) analyzes examples of corrections done to manuscripts by the hand of the original scribe to demonstrate that scribes were willfully trying to produce copies with few, if any, inaccuracies. Matthew Solomon (chap. 9) collated every known Greek manuscript of Philemon—over 570 in all—to demonstrate what is knowable about an entire textual tradition. Not only does Peter Gurry (chap. 10) calculate the total number of textual variants and finds most to be insignificant or readily resolvable, he also balances this by showing significant difficult variants that cannot be ignored. Robert Marcello (chap. 11) argues that there are few examples of either a manuscript (such as Codex Bezae or $\mathfrak{P}^{72}$) or a variant (such as Matt 24:36 or John 1:18) exhibiting intentional theological change. Andrew Blaski (chap. 12) so thoroughly demolishes the popular claim that the NT could be reconstructed from the quotations of church fathers alone that one must wonder how such a claim could ever have been made or repeated. The book concludes with three chapters evaluating evidence and claims regarding the canon (John Meade), versions (Jeremiah Coogan), and translations (Edgar Ebojo).

This book is not light reading or for the faint of heart, but it is "must reading" for anyone working with the text or manuscripts. Fortunately, the chapters conclude with key takeaways for those who might get lost in the minutiae of details. Hixson, Gurry, and several of the contributors write using evangelical language, but others write without using such phrasing. For a volume such as this that has so much to say to *all* academics in the field, would this latter approach have been preferable, so that the book can achieve even broader interaction and readership on both sides of the debates?

The book is heavy with details and insightfully exposes the weakness of many popular and published claims. Even peripheral issues used to support subpoints in

the chapters provide fascinating aspects of the field: Peterson on how manuscripts have been lost (chap. 3), Prothro on the history of the comparative argument (chap. 4), Lanier on what it means that a manuscript is "better" (chap. 6), Gurry on how John 18 illustrates the proportions of significant variants (chap. 10), Meade on what the codex indicates about the canon (chap. 13), among many other such issues. The contributors are careful to interact with recent studies by others in the field such as Malik using Darius Müller's work on the corrections in Codex Montfortianus or Meade using Michael Dormandy's work on codices and pandects.

In their introduction, Hixson and Gurry correctly recognize that this volume is an important word but not the last word on these matters (p. 24). Questions will always remain. When Mitchell (chap. 2) shows examples from antiquity of the completion of books, does that prove that for NT books there were autographs that had achieved a finalized form before copies began to be made? When Solomon (chap. 9) examines the whole textual tradition of Philemon yet finds only three witnesses for the first 700 years, what does that indicate about how much we *do not* know about the text of Philemon? Why do evangelicals continue to fascinate themselves with $\mathfrak{P}^{52}$ (chap. 5) when it is such a tiny fragment and yet there are other early papyri that are actually substantial?

This book has done a great service to the field. It is the kind of book that must be referenced and not just read. Writers and speakers who neglect the issues addressed herein will sound needlessly uninformed when addressing such topics.

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The Proskynesis of Jesus in the New Testament: A Study on the Significance of Jesus as an Object of προσκυνέω in the New Testament Writings. By Ray M. Lozano. The Library of NT Studies 609. London: Bloomsbury, 2020, viii + 228 pp., $115.00 hardcover.

As a revision of his Ph.D. thesis under Larry Hurtado at the University of Edinburgh, Lozano's volume argues that Jesus being the object of *proskynesis* in the NT should be understood as divine worship, in contrast to viewing it as worship directed toward God in/through Jesus or simply as an act of reverence or submission. Though several smaller works have considered this topic and represent a wide range of positions, Lozano fills a need for a major study of the issue since the last monograph dedicated to the topic was Johannes Horst's *Proskynein: Zur Anbetung im Urchristentum nach ihrer Religionsgeschichtlichen Eigenart* (NTF 3/2; Gütersloh: Bertelsman, 1932). Horst is Lozano's interlocutor throughout, though the field has so changed in the last ninety years or so that Lozano's interaction with scholars like Hurtado, Bauckham, and Dunn take the bulk of his attention.

After describing the current landscape and need for the study, Lozano establishes the semantic range for the word group by considering Greco-Roman and early Jewish literature. The range is quite broad, extending from a respectful greeting to other humans to divine worship. Some authors show a more restrictive understanding of the word and reserve it for the gods such that it would be inappro-

priate for mortals (e.g. "the *proskynesis* affair" with Alexander the Great), but definitely not all. Similarly, some Jewish literature is content to have humans as the object, whereas others are not.

Chapter 2 examines Mark's two uses: the Gerasene demoniac in 5:6 and the soldiers' *proskynesis* in 15:19. Lozano discusses the possible political background of 5:6 and, though he allows for Jesus vs. Caesar imagery, he rightly argues that the more important contrast is Jesus vs. Satan. The rest of the chapter focuses on the significance of the demon-possessed man's response, "What do you have to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?" (5:7). Lozano turns to Markan Christology and argues, especially from 14:61, that this indicates divine sonship.

Chapter 3 considers Matthew and approximately doubles the length of other chapters since *proskynesis* language in connection to Jesus in Matthew far outweighs other NT writers (Matthew, 10 occurrences; Mark, 2; Luke-Acts, 1; John, 1; Hebrews, 1; Revelation, 1). Lozano emphasizes Matt 4:4, where God alone is to be the object of *proskyneō*. The first occurrence by the magi in 2:2 has political overtones, though Lozano is careful to point out the nearby presence of Immanuel in 1:18–25, so that a deeper meaning may be intended. Lozano then considers times when Matthew records *proskynesis* towards Jesus after miracles, considering that Matthew's redaction intentionally uses this charged word, which is "reflective of the high rank of Jesus" (p. 56). Interacting with Leim, Lozano considers general Matthean Christology to cement his case for divine worship.

Chapter 4 focuses on the one occurrence of the *proskynesis* of Jesus in Luke-Acts, Luke 24:52. *Proskyneō* occurs seven times in this corpus and is either found in a cultic setting toward God or false gods, or wrongly of Peter (Acts 10:25–26), suggesting that the use in 24:52 indicates divine worship. Lozano explores possible allusions, whether Jewish, as in Elijah's ascension, or Greco-Roman, as in Romulus's ascension. While he does not dismiss these possibilities, he argues that the most relevant allusion is to Sir 50:20–22 due to thematic and lexical similarities. If this well-acknowledged intertext is in view, the shift from the people offering cultic worship to God in Sir 50:21 to people worshipping Jesus in Luke 24:52 supports Luke's use of *proskynesis* here being divine worship. As with other chapters, this one ends with a discussion of the Gospel's high Christology to confirm Lozano's findings.

Chapter 5 looks at the blind man's *proskynesis* of Jesus in John 9:38. Most commentators see this as divine worship, though Steegen recently has argued that we should see Jesus as the true temple, so that the worship is ultimately directed toward the Father. Lozano responds that this perspective does not preclude Jesus from being the object of worship. Wider Johannine Christology suggests such a close connection between the Son and the Father (e.g. 5:23 and the worship scene of 20:28) and indicates that Steegen's argument is a false dichotomy.

Chapter 6 turns to the angels' *proskynesis* in Heb 1:6. Lozano argues from the wider context of Hebrews that this takes place "when he brings the Firstborn into the [heavenly] world," i.e. the ascension. This allows Lozano to argue that the worship the Son receives may be in a cultic setting in the heavenly sanctuary (though he remains tentative). Many of the texts in the catena of chapter 1 describe worship of

the Son because he is a messianic figure, but Lozano argues that this does not exclude divine worship, especially since some of the texts apply the worship of God as creator to the Son (e.g. 1:8, 10).

Chapter 7 focuses on the use of *proskynesis* of Jesus in Revelation. Lozano discusses the background of the Imperial Cult in Revelation 13 to show that worship there has both political and religious connotations. Similar to Peter in Luke-Acts, Revelation also records angels refusing *proskynesis* since it is only proper for deity (19:10; 22:8–9). Revelation 3:9 is potentially problematic for Lozano, where the "synagogue of Satan" will offer *proskynesis* before the Philadelphian church's feet. Taking the church as the object of *proskyneō,* Loronzo categorizes this as humble acknowledgment. However, Lozano argues that many parallels make chapter four the most significant passage for understanding chapter five. Since the *proskynesis* in chapter 4 is clearly the cultic worship of God, this suggests the use of the verb in chapter 5 has a similar meaning. He interacts here with McGrath's argument that this is not divine worship since there is no mention of sacrifice. Lozano argues that sacrifice cannot be the *sin qua non* of divine worship, especially with the destruction of the temple, and that the use of hymns in chapters 4–5 is a sufficient indicator.

A few methodological concerns surfaced while reading the volume. It became clear as early as his discussion of Mark that a text's affirmation of Jesus's deity directly impacts the nature of *proskynesis.* If a text sees a figure as less than divine, interpreters will understand *proskyneō* of that figure as less than divine worship. Similarly, a divine figure implies that *proskyneō* is divine worship. Thus, for Lozano to make his case that divine worship is in view, he tackles the wider issue of Christology for *each* text under consideration: Mark, Matthew, Luke-Acts, John, Hebrews, and Revelation. He does so as well as can be expected in a volume like this, while still focusing on *proskynesis* texts, but one wonders the extent to which his argument requires the unmanageable challenge of fully establishing the divine identity of Jesus in Mark, Matthew, Luke-Acts, John, Hebrews, and Revelation. Another methodological issue concerns the use of synonyms. Lozano focuses heavily on *proskyneō* language, but the reason for such exclusive interest deserves clarification. He points out how Matthew changes Mark's terminology for prostration. But how would Mark have understood these (e.g. Mark 1:40)? Why is John 20:28 only briefly considered but 9:38 receives close inspection? Since the volume concerns the meaning of *proskyneō,* its relationship to synonyms warrants greater consideration. Lastly, the nature of his scope could have been clarified. Why is he only concerned with the NT? He seems eager to distance the kind of *proskynesis* received by the Enochic Son of Man from what happens with Jesus, but the former receiving divine worship does not seem to negatively affect Lozano's case regarding Jesus. Chapter 1 ends with a brief mention of early Christian literature, but since this so clearly shows divine worship of Jesus in at least one trajectory of *proskynesis* tradition, why not explore the significance of this data?

Still, Lozano's volume has some definite strengths. He rightly brings larger Christological issues to bear on his question for each text. There may not be enough to sufficiently argue for a divine Christology, but Lozano does an admirable job working through key passages and interacting with major scholars to touch on

the relevant issues. Furthermore, Lozano's discussion of the key texts is up to date and uses several exegetical tools. He utilizes redaction criticism, for example, but only when necessary and does not get lost in it, being sure to incorporate other techniques, particularly intertextuality at significant moments. His interaction with major scholars at relevant junctures is also convincing. Overall, Lozano forms a good case for divine worship in each of the texts he considers without forcing the data to hold greater claims than they can support. The volume is gladly recommended as Lozano constructs a sound argument for the *proskynesis* of Jesus as divine worship, taking readers through an up-to-date discussion of relevant Christological issues for much of the NT along the way.

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Paul and the Language of Faith. By Nijay K. Gupta. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2020, xiii + 225 pp., $34.99.

Traditional Protestant exegesis, certainly since the Reformation, has regarded Paul's *pistis* ("faith," "faithfulness") language, when it is attributed to humans, in passive terms. That is, when Paul contrasts justification by works or works of the law, with faith in Christ, *pistis* has often been regarded as the passive reception of what God has done in Christ. Protestants have been concerned to stress God's activity alone in salvation, downplaying any role that humans may play. But dogmatic debates with Roman Catholics over the centuries may have led Protestant interpreters to misread Paul's formulations, especially when it comes to what he means when uses *pistis* language.

Nijay Gupta, in this sparkling study of the language of faith in Paul, goes a long way toward clarifying Paul's concerns. He surveys the character of *pistis* language in Jewish literature, the Greek translation of the OT, Greco-Roman literature in the ancient world, and throughout the NT, focusing especially on Paul's letters, to demonstrate that when *pistis* is only translated as "belief," "the polyvalent nature of the term is suppressed and the cognitive dimension" is overly emphasized (p. 3). He notes that the Hebrew terms that lie behind the appearances of *pistis* in the Septuagint "refer to words that are often best translated 'faithfulness' (or loyalty, reliability, commitment)," which raises the question why *pistis* is usually translated as "faith" or "belief" in English versions (p. 7).

Pistis "operates as a polyvalent noun that can modulate across a spectrum of semantic nuances," and Gupta breaks these down into three basic categories (p. 13). "Believing faith is cognitively active: believing is something you do with your mind." "Obeying faith is relationally active: faithfulness is understood in this discussion as an active form of loyalty and obedience." "Trusting faith is volitionally active" (p. 13).

In an initial chapter, Gupta provides a wide historical survey of how faith has been understood by Paul's interpreters through the centuries. In the first generations after the apostolic era, exegetes of the church such as Clement and Ignatius

used *pistis* similar to Paul in that "these apostolic fathers are quite comfortable treating [it] as a kind of virtue (not a work) comfortably paired with words like love and hospitality" (p. 37). With Augustine, however, there is a shift toward a more cognitive use of faith language, followed, and perhaps intensified, by Aquinas. The effects of all of this in our day, certainly in contemporary Protestant interpretation, is to envision faith as a response to God that typically foregrounds cognitive transformation (p. 38).

Gupta surveys ancient Jewish and non-Jewish literature in his third chapter in order to understand the varied nuances of *pistis*. In pagan Hellenistic literature, the term could be used to indicate loyalty, trust, guarantee, a mutual commitment, and even loyalty in marriage (pp. 39–46). In the Septuagint, *pistis* is often used to translate the Hebrew word *emunah*. *Pistis* also designates the covenant loyalty of the Lord, indicates trust, refers to an alliance, and can refer to fidelity and covenantal obedience (pp. 46–50). Gupta points out that "it is often argued that Paul used faith language to oppose his Jewish or Jewish Christian opponents' theology of works (or Torah works), but Jews could easily use [faith language] to talk about their religious commitments and obligations" (p. 56).

Chapter 4 examines the Jesus tradition regarding *pistis* because it may have been that Paul was "drawn to faith language because of the way Jesus used such language" (p. 58). The term is used in Matthew to indicate seeking faith and trusting faith. With regard to seeking faith, Gupta claims that "the Gospels are trying to demonstrate the *strangeness* of faith in Jesus, the backwardness of it," after discussing a number of healings that involved faith language in Matthew (p. 64; emphasis original). Trusting faith has to do with the necessity but insufficiency of understanding and assenting, if these are not accompanied with trust (p. 67). Gupta claims that Paul's use of faith language resonates with that of the Gospels in the following ways: both Paul and the Gospels emphasize believing in and trusting in God; faith is a "distinctive quality of followers of Jesus"; "the association of belief and salvation"; "the divine origin of saving wisdom and faith"; "the extraordinary faith of gentiles"; "shared interest in Isa 53:1" (p. 76).

The chapters that follow these preliminary sections then explicate Paul's letters that discuss *pistis* and Gupta brings out the different emphases in each. He examines *pistis* in Philippians and 1 Thessalonians in chapter 5, claiming that in its appearances in these letters "it makes sense to translate and interpret [the term] as 'loyalty' or 'faithfulness' in most instances in these letters, as Paul showed concern for their wholehearted and steadfast commitment to the gospel, even and especially in the face of adversity" (p. 80). This is because both communities were facing pressure for their commitment to the gospel and Paul exhorts them to allegiance and loyalty, using, at times, military imagery. When *pistis* appears in Greco-Roman literature in martial contexts, loyalty or faithfulness are indicated.

Chapter 6 is a treatment of 1 Corinthians, in which *pistis* is used to indicate a cruciform epistemological vision. Because Paul is correcting the Corinthians' way of looking at themselves, their culture, and others, he seeks to grant them a vision of the wisdom of the cross that is a renewed way of seeing all things. It may be best understood as "conviction" (p. 101). It is a "kind of *seeing-with-something-other-than-*

eyes" that "Paul means by faith and how he identifies those who believe" (p. 103; emphasis original).

Gupta's chapter treating Galatians is lively as it takes up some of the most contentious issues in interpreting this letter. He reframes some of the worn debates by asking in what way contemporary Jews would have understood Paul's *pistis* language. Would they have heard his critiques of works of law and his commendation of *pistis* in terms of advocating for passivity? Paul's fellow "Jews could hardly make sense of anyone (even the maverick Paul!) referring to [*pistis*] as if it were something that does not inherently involve active operation" (p. 137). Gupta goes to the heart of some of the impulses running through interpretive schools that determine how they envision the interplay of divine and human action in salvation so that *pistis* is understood as passivity. Interpreters press for this because they imagine that any notes of human effort or agency diminish God's work. But Gupta reminds them that in Galatians, Paul strongly emphasizes doing, and especially in a context in which *pistis* is being worked out (cf. Gal. 5:6) (p. 140).

In treating Galatians, and drawing upon Dunn and Hooker, Gupta notes that Sanders's expression "covenantal nomism" "fits Paul's perspective insofar as it includes both gift and demand" (p. 142). Paul's burden is not to avoid an emphasis on human action and advocate for mere belief or passivity. Rather, he is stressing that obedience to God in Christ takes the form of "'obedience of faith' rather than Torah obedience" (p. 142). He proposes the term "covenantal *pistism*" to capture the reality that while his "approach to religion resembles his earlier life in some ways," after his conversion, his discipleship was oriented around Christ and not Torah (p. 142).

In chapter 10, Gupta takes up the debate over how to translate and understand Paul's genitive expression *pistis Iesou Christou*. After reviewing the familiar positions of objective and subjective genitive interpretations, he opts for a third view proposed by Ota, who does not regard the expression as referring either exclusively to Christ's faithfulness or human faith. Rather, it refers to an entire system that is comparable with the Torah or Judaism. That is, "this is not an individual reality (or personal, individualized faith) but a collective-communal one given by the grace of God" (p. 175).

Gupta has offered a robust study of Paul's faith language in his letters that will provide scholars with an opportunity to reconfigure past formulations that have not considered the variety of ways that *pistis* operates in Paul's articulations. In many ways, this is a book that has long been waiting to be written.

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Jesus, Skepticism, and the Problem of History: Criteria and Context in the Study of Christian Origins. Edited by Darrell L. Bock and J. Ed Komoszewski. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2019, 386 pp., $34.99 paper.

This volume represents the contributions of 18 authors with concluding responses and reflections by Larry W. Hurtado, Scot McKnight, and Nicholas Perrin. A cast of established conservative evangelical scholars (e.g. Michael F. Bird, Craig L. Blomberg, Darrell L. Bock, Jeannine K. Brown, Craig A. Evans, Craig S. Keener, Beth M. Sheppard, and Daniel B. Wallace) with a handful of newer scholars (Michael B. Metts, Greg Monette, Darlene M. Seal, and Ben Sutton) provide selected treatments of issues related to the historical Jesus and Christian origins. Space does not permit a chapter-by-chapter review of the work, so only the highlights are provided below, followed by an evaluation of the work's contribution to the methodological shift currently underway in the study of the historical Jesus.

The book contains several strong chapters that advance the conversation regarding evangelical involvement in the study of the historical Jesus. The chapter by Blomberg and Seal entitled "The Historical Jesus in Recent Evangelical Scholarship" (pp. 43–66) clearly and concisely surveys the history of evangelical engagement in the study of the historical Jesus in an even-handed way. The authors conclude with several helpful suggestions for future evangelical engagement in the quest, including further collaborative projects, such as the Institute for Biblical Research project *Key Events in the Life of the Historical Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), and the possibility of a fourth quest for the historical Jesus. They propose this fourth quest could focus on the contribution of the Fourth Gospel to portraits of the historical Jesus. Blomberg and Seal conclude that "if evangelicals continue with the momentum they have exhibited in recent decades … the best days for historical Jesus research may be yet to come" (p. 66).

Toward that end, Paul N. Anderson provides a detailed report on "The John, Jesus, and History Project and a Fourth Quest for Jesus" (pp. 222–68). Anderson clearly describes the neglect of the Fourth Gospel in historical Jesus research and makes a strong case for its future inclusion in the quest. Anderson provides several pieces of evidence for considering the use of the Fourth Gospel as a legitimate historical witness to the life of Jesus. For example, the Fourth Gospel includes "mundane, topographical, spatial, contextual, and linguistic features" consistent with what would be expected of someone close to the early Jesus tradition (p. 238). When the Fourth Gospel is taken seriously as a source of historical data, a more robust picture of Jesus that is in many ways consistent with the Synoptic portrait arises (pp. 259–64). While it is not clear why this would constitute a fourth quest (it seems to be merely an extension of the careful attention to Jesus's context that characterized the third quest), Anderson's critique of reliance on the Synoptics alone in historical Jesus studies should encourage a reconsideration of traditional methods.

A significant chapter in the book is Wallace's "Textual Criticism and the Criterion of Embarrassment" (pp. 93–124). Wallace constructs a careful argument that what is demonstrated in early scribal practice—changing what were perceived to be

embarrassing texts—appears to mirror what is seen in the earliest layers of the Gospel tradition. While this text-critical argument does not directly demonstrate that the criterion of embarrassment is a legitimate historical tool, "it does show *a pattern of reaction to the material that is on a continuum with the evangelists*" (p. 103; emphasis original). Wallace then surveys several variant readings as evidence that scribes changed wording that they considered embarrassing (Mark 1:34, 41, 5:1; Luke 23:45; John 8:57). He concludes that the variants observed in early scribal activity "constitute evidence that the criterion of embarrassment is a valid tool in the search for historical authenticity in the Jesus traditions" (p. 124).

Other contributions deserve notice, but cannot be discussed in detail: "Collective Memory and the Reliability of the Gospel Traditions" by Robert McIver (pp. 125–44) provides a strong and accessible introduction to issues related to memory and the transmission of the Jesus tradition; Sheppard skillfully introduces a fresh historiographical approach in "Alternate History and the Sermon on the Mount: New Trajectories for Research" (pp. 183–204); and Evans and Monette provide a classic illustration of the proper use for the criteria of multiple attestation and embarrassment in "Jesus's Burial: Archaeology, Authenticity, and History" (pp. 269–84).

One weakness of the book is that it does not contain any clear overarching argument or theme to draw the chapters together. The amount of attention certain contributors give to Chris Keith and Anthony Le Donne's 2012 work on *Jesus, Criteria, and the Demise of Authenticity* (London: T&T Clark, 2012) makes it seem as though some viewed their work as a response to Keith and Le Donne (e.g. Metts, pp. 67–68; Bock, pp. 205–7; Evans and Monette, pp. 270–74). Other contributors, however, make little or no mention of the Keith and Le Donne volume (e.g. Anderson, Brown, Keener, and Sheppard). The back cover of the book states that it "presents a nuanced and vitally needed alternative to the skeptical extremes of revisionist Jesus scholarship," but the roadmap to this goal is generally unclear. As such, Bock and Komoszewski's work would have been helped by an introduction to guide the reader toward the purpose for each chapter's inclusion. As it stands, the chapters do not seem to flow well together or probe a consistent theme other than issues related to the historical Jesus and, to a lesser extent, Christian origins. The inclusion of two chapters on the book of Acts also seems out of place with the rest of the work.

Another difficulty in the collection is that the substance of at least three chapters in this book seem to be found elsewhere: those by Bock, Keener, and Michael Licona. In these, they appear to have largely reworked arguments that are already published in other works. It is challenging to see how the practice of reprinting previously available material significantly or purposefully advances the conversation in this area.

In the end, many of the critiques of the criteria approach found in Keith and Le Donne's volume still stand. In his response toward the end of Bock and Komoszewski's book, Hurtado provides a strong analysis of the overall tenor of the work when he wonders "if the contributors to this volume have noted with sufficient care the distinction posited in the Keith/Le Donne volume between *criteria*

used to isolate 'authentic' material, i.e., material that has supposedly not been affected by the transmission of it, and the critical principles that can be used in assessing historical claims about Jesus" (p. 347; emphasis original). Hurtado describes a major ideological shift that Keith and Le Donne's volume encourages: a movement away from seeking isolated sayings or events that have been untouched by the transmission process toward one that seeks to account for how all Gospel material has been influenced by memory and transmission. As Keith has argued elsewhere, the criteria approach is based on a form-critical understanding of the Gospels' composition—an understanding that does not find strong support in recent studies of the historical Jesus. The emphasis of Keith and Le Donne on social memory theory should be seriously considered as a viable alternative to the criteria approach.

Overall, the work provides several strong contributions that advance the conversation regarding investigations of the historical Jesus. Those involved in the quest for the historical Jesus should read selected chapters of the work with care. The book is helpful in places, but in general it does not provide a strong response to Keith and Le Donne's volume. If this volume was indeed intended as a response to Keith and Le Donne's work, a direct response from proponents of the criteria method still lies in the future.

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Matthew within Sectarian Judaism. By John Kampen. Anchor Yale Bible Reference Library. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019, xvii + 320 pp., $65.00.

In *Matthew within Sectarian Judaism*, renowned Qumran scholar John Kampen brings the full weight of his expertise in the Dead Sea Scrolls to bear on the question of the socio-religious setting of the Gospel of Matthew. Kampen has produced a superbly researched, well-written, academic monograph on a topic that has dominated the landscape of Matthean studies for the better part of the last thirty years.

Kampen begins to set the stage for understanding his work in his brief, eight-page introduction. His literary analysis of ancient Jewish texts is rooted, on the one hand, in the 1990s social-scientific approaches to the study of Matthew (whereby he subsequently adopts the position of these scholars for a Galilean provenance of the Gospel), and, on the other hand, in sect theory. The author helpfully raises the issue of nomenclature. Scholars began to adopt "Judaisms" as a way of acknowledging the variegated beliefs of Second Temple Judaism, and Kampen maintains that we remain incapable of determining a comprehensive description of the dominant community, despite the efforts of some to map later rabbinic texts onto the first century. He also tackles the equally thorny term "Jews" (Ἰουδαῖοι). Surprisingly, he does not address "Christian"—especially since some of his more important secondary sources discuss its problematic nature. For example, Kampen engages in some detail with Anders Runesson's work ("Rethinking Early Jewish-Christian Relations: Matthean Community History as Pharisaic Intragroup Conflict," *JBL*

127 [2008]: 95–132), which acknowledges the problematic nature of "Christian," as does Anthony Saldarini, whose works Kampen also employs fairly extensively.

In the opening chapter, "Matthew and the First-Century Jewish World," Kampen asserts that Matthew represents a late first-century, Jesus-movement oriented, Jewish sectarianism located in Galilee. He thus examines those facets he believes most directly connect to Matthew's provenance: the Gospel's Greek composition, finding it fully consonant with Jewish Palestine ("characterized by cultural hybridity and shifting identities" [p. 17]); the urban character of Matthew whereby *polis* should not equate to size but to commercial or administrative importance to a surrounding region; the level of conflict reflected in the text (Matthew's community appears to be at serious odds with the scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, chief priests, elders, as well as local Roman officials); and the Jewish nature of Matthew. Here Kampen argues that the Gospel is "*not about Jews* or even *about Jewish issues. … It is addressed to Jews about the substantive questions relevant to Jewish life immediately after the destruction of the temple*" (p. 20; emphasis original). The rest of the chapter examines the different groups that contended against Matthew for the true vision for Jewish life in the first century. One minor quibble would be that the first section of this chapter should have been part of the "Introduction," since he does extend his previous discussion of Ἰουδαῖοι and because he summarizes other introductory issues like method and early reception history.

Chapter 2, "Matthew within Jewish Sectarianism," has as its point of departure the results of the social-scientific studies of Matthew by Andrew Overman and others. Most of the chapter explores the pre-AD 70 sectarianism of the Dead Sea Scrolls and the evidence in early rabbinic literature for post-AD 70 Jewish sectarianism. Chapter 3, "The Polemic of the Sermon on the Mount," is the longest chapter and showcases Kampen's immense dexterity in the Dead Sea Scrolls. The author adopts the definition of "sectarianism" by Albert Baumgarten (in *The Flourishing of Jewish Sects in the Maccabean Era: An Interpretation* [JSJSup 55; Leiden: Brill, 1997]), which focuses on difference, antagonism, and separation, and then he offers a detailed exegesis of the Sermon, particularly the Beatitudes and the Antitheses, in conjunction with these forms as they appear in the Scrolls. The close correlation with the Qumran texts that he examines leads Kampen to conclude that the Sermon does not address those outside the Matthean community—Palestinian society at large—but rather, only those within their number. The implication, then, would be that the various injunctions are not designed to point people (like the crowds) salvifically to Jesus, but to help those who already confess him and follow him as their Messiah.

Kampen advances the discussion of wisdom in Matthew in his fourth chapter, "Sectarian Wisdom." He offers a detailed exegesis of wisdom texts in the Dead Sea Scrolls as the groundwork for understanding wisdom in Matthew, concluding that, while it certainly has a Christological function (something recognized by previous studies), for Matthew wisdom remains more of an expression of knowing and doing the will of God—part of the grand vision for first-century Jewish life. Chapter 5 ("Communal Organization and Discipline") considers group structure and ordering. Here again the author's skill in the Scrolls is evident as he works through their dif-

ferent legal texts. For Kampen, Matt 18:15–20 gives clear expression of a sectarian ordering of their community. The somewhat staid nature of legal texts (at least to me) and the detailed way in which the author works through them made this the hardest chapter to get through.

Having previously identified difference, antagonism, and separation as key components of sectarianism, Kampen examines another: conflict, in "Jesus and His Opponents" (chap. 6), turning his exegetical sights on Matthew 23 and 26–27. He adopts (albeit softly) the Pentateuchal structure of earlier scholarship, arguing that the final structural transition in the Gospel begins at 21:1. Kampen insightfully contends that the diatribe of Matthew 23 must be read in conjunction with the Olivet Discourse of 24–25. Unlike Mark and Luke, Matthew prefaces the Olivet Discourse with this polemic (which reflects the language and issues of Qumran and early rabbinic literature) because the Mattheans were clashing more intensely with other Jewish groups than the audiences of Mark and Luke. Furthermore, the trial and crucifixion narratives shift the responsibility of Jesus's death onto the Jewish leadership in a more pointed fashion than the other Gospels. The final chapter, "Commissioning the Sect," examines Matt 28:16–20 in correlation with pertinent Qumran and other Second Temple Jewish texts, which results in Kampen understanding "all the nations" as conveying a Jewish apocalyptic eschatological vision (cf. Isaiah 41–66 and Zechariah 1–8), characterized by foreign nations becoming part of a renewed Israel. The Matthean "Great Commission," then, while affirming a universal mission, "focuses on the life of the Jewish community within the empire rather than the empire itself" (p. 200). The book ends with a brief conclusion that summarizes the content of the previous chapters.

Kampen has produced an excellent scholarly work. The book demonstrates his expertise not only in the Dead Sea Scrolls but also in other Second Temple Jewish texts, as well as rabbinic literature. The reader gets the impression that his twenty-eight-page bibliography is merely representative, not exhaustive. Although his piece is academic, at times he tries to make it less so by translating some Greek terms. However, he does not simplify consistently: he surprisingly translates some Greek words—that would be easily understood by virtually anyone who would pick up this type of book—but refrains from doing so in other instances where it might be expected. At times Kampen can overstate his case: he strongly stresses that religion in antiquity had to do with practice rather than beliefs, but this seems like a false dichotomy. The *halakhah* (praxis) that characterizes the *shema*, for example, is predicated on the confession (belief) that the God of Israel is one. God rebukes Job and his friends precisely because they misunderstood God's nature (belief) and consequently spoke incorrectly of him (praxis). Examples could be multiplied. Kampen argues that Pharisees lacked any substantial power in ancient Palestine; but given what he terms Galilee's "dynamic" make-up, could it not be the case that in some locales the Pharisees exercised considerable power while in others they did not? In which case the chief opponents for the Mattheans, depending on where they resided, could still be the Pharisees. Moreover, Kampen's sectarian reading of Matthew still does not preclude a wider audience: the way Matthew envisions Jewish life could nonetheless be for all.

In the end, Kampen has written a valuable contribution to Matthean studies. His reading of some passages has challenged me to rethink and refine my own. Scholars especially interested in the intersection of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Matthew or reading Matthew within the orbit of Second Temple Judaism will profit immensely from this tome.

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Matthew, Disciple and Scribe: The First Gospel and Its Portrait of Jesus. By Patrick Schreiner. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019, xiv + 288 pp., $29.99.

"To read the Gospel of Matthew well is to read it with the Jewish story line—all twenty-four books that precede it—rumbling in the mind" (p. 7). According to Schreiner, Matthew saw himself as the discipled scribe of Matt 13:52 who brings out treasures old and new. "The Gospel itself demonstrates how Matthew accomplishes the scribal task mentioned in 13:52" (p. 10). In other words, the Gospel of Matthew as a whole is Matthew's attempt both to show how the OT is fulfilled in Jesus, and to show how Jesus must be read in light of the OT: "The new interprets the old, and the old reveals the new" (p. 103). Matthew learned this method of reading the OT from Jesus, and Matthew encouraged his readers to emulate this pattern by reading his Gospel in light of the whole OT story.

Part 1 establishes Schreiner's thesis and method. In chapter 1, he presents Matthew as the discipled scribe who has learned to interpret the OT rightly from his "sage-king" (p. 21). Matthew is "so familiar with the OT and Jewish traditions and Jesus' life that he interweaves the two and uses the new-old paradigm as the key for organizing, interpreting, and describing the life of Jesus" (p. 30). In chapter 2, Schreiner outlines Matthew's method for using the OT. "Matthew learned from his teacher that the arrival of the apocalyptic sage-messiah fulfills the hopes of Israel; this results in the unification of Jewish history. The method Matthew employs to communicate this conviction is 'gospel-narration' through the use of shadow stories" (pp. 37–38). Because the hopes of Israel have been fulfilled in Jesus, and because the history of God's people is ultimately a unified history, Matthew can tell shadow stories, "stories that echo the previous narrative of Israel" (p. 241). These shadow stories are at times very explicit, at other times very subtle. Through his use of shadow stories, Matthew "encourages his reader to engage and open their minds to the wonder of Jesus as the key not only to the OT but also to all of heaven and earth" (p. 57). So modern readers of Matthew have not so much a method for reading Matthew as they have presuppositions concerning the nature of Matthew's Gospel. These presuppositions encourage creative readings of the story of Jesus in Matthew in light of the OT.

Part 2 is the application of the argument presented in Part 1. Schreiner sees Jesus as the new David (chap. 3), the ideal and wise king (chap. 4), the new Moses (chap. 5), the new Abraham (chap. 6), and ultimately as the new Israel (chap. 7). As the new David, Jesus rules as king over God's kingdom; as the ideal and wise king,

Jesus embodies wisdom; as the new Moses, he leads God's people in a new exodus; as the new Abraham, he establishes the new family of God; and as the new Israel, he leads God's people out of exile through his death and resurrection. The final chapter on Jesus as the new Israel is the climax of the book and serves as an example of the kinds of arguments Schreiner puts forward. He argues, "Narratives function at several levels, and those who search for 'one meaning' in narrative are not attending to the richness that lies within. Matthew doesn't have to restrict himself to one point" (p. 209). Thus Schreiner concludes with the claim that Matthew has written his Gospel from start to finish with the entire story of Israel in mind.

Schreiner includes two charts that show how Matthew's stories function at multiple levels. On page 213, Schreiner argues that Matthew presents Jesus as the New Moses (chaps. 5–7), the new Joshua (chap. 10), the new Solomon (chap. 13), the new Elisha (chap. 18), and the new Jeremiah (chaps. 23–25). On page 233, Schreiner argues for another layer of shadows in which Matthew's genealogy parallels the creation account of Genesis (1:1–17), the birth narrative parallels Abraham (1:18–25), the travel narrative of 2:1–23 recalls Israel's travels, the beginning of Jesus's ministry in chapters 3–4 is thematically tied to the exodus, the Sermon on the Mount (chs. 5–7) echoes Sinai, Jesus's healings in chapters 8–9 recall the Law enacted in Exodus-Deuteronomy, the sending of the twelve in chapter 10 finds its shadow in the conquest, chapters 11–12 parallel the period of the monarchy, Jesus's parables in chapter 13 reflect the wisdom tradition of the OT, divided reactions to Jesus in chapters 14–17 are a fulfillment of the divided kingdom under the prophets Elijah and Elisha, Jesus's instructions for the church in chapters 18–20 reflect the hope for a new community found in the OT prophets, the conflict of chapters 21–25 points back to the condemnation of the prophets in the OT, and finally, chapters 26–28 point to the fulfillment of the exile and return from exile: "Matthew traces his story from Genesis to the end of Chronicles (the first and last books in the Jewish canonical order). Though he did not do so in a wooden fashion, there are enough clues in his Gospel to reveal that underneath the narrative there is a frame: an infrastructure pointing readers to Jesus as Israel's hope" (p. 239).

Schreiner's work can be classified as what Klink and Lockett call biblical theology as worldview-story: "Because the story line running through the text is *the* key to the Bible's subject matter, the narrative approach relies on the plot line of the Bible's story as a means to understand each individual passage" (*Understanding Biblical Theology: A Comparison of Theory and Practice* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012], 96). Therefore, the extent to which readers accept Schreiner's approach to Matthew will likely depend on their presuppositions related to topics like biblical theology and intertextuality. Many readers will at points find themselves heartily echoing some of Schreiner's claims, at times appreciating the force of his arguments, and at times wondering if his claims reflect the apostle Matthew's intentions or Schreiner's own creative thinking. To give just one example, Schreiner argues that Jesus's birth in Matthew 1:18–25 mirrors the birth of Isaac in Genesis 17, both being unnatural childbirths God used to draw his people back to himself. Schreiner supports this claim by noting verbal parallels between the text of Matthew 1 and the Greek version of Genesis 17:19. Surprisingly, Schreiner does not mention Isaiah 7:14 as the

source of the quotation in Matthew 1:23. In fact, Schreiner does not refer to Isaiah 7:14 in his book, even though Isaiah is the source of the very first fulfillment quotation in Matthew. This lack of reference to Isaiah 7:14 leaves the reader with many questions. Since Isaiah 7 actually refers to the birth of a child, how likely is it that Matthew intended a reference to the birth of Isaac and not to the child in Isaiah? Does this understanding of Jesus as the new Isaac go back to Matthew himself, and if so, what connection does the quote from Isaiah 7:14, with its use of the name "Immanuel," have to the story of Isaac?

This example highlights the main difficulty in assessing Schreiner's work. Since he has argued that Matthew's use of the OT is based more on theological presuppositions than a certain method, and since he has argued that Matthew has invited his readers to engage in creative exegesis, how can modern readers know if they have creatively misread Matthew? Schreiner's work suffers from the same methodological deficiencies as some other works in the field of intertextuality. Without a method for discerning whether these shadow stories were intended by Matthew, readers are left without a way to assess Schreiner's claims. It would not be fair to say that Schreiner is promoting endless meanings of Scripture in a way that moves past authorial intent, nor is he adopting a reader-response approach to the text. However, without providing delimitations for this creative exegesis, Schreiner has left open the door to any number of readings of Matthew. And without having established a method for reading Matthew as a discipled scribe, he leaves his readers wondering about the proper limits of this kind of hermeneutics.

Schreiner is to be commended for his rigorous attempt to view Matthew in light of the OT. Certainly, the Gospel of Matthew must be understood in light of how Jesus fulfills the whole story of the OT. Schreiner has helped demonstrate that the OT is essential to a proper understanding of Matthew, but some readers will be left unconvinced by how far Schreiner extends his claims.

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Reading Romans Backwards: A Gospel of Peace in the Midst of Empire. By Scot McKnight. Waco: Baylor University Press, 2019, xv + 220 pp., $29.95 paper.

In *Reading Romans Backwards*, Scot McKnight offers what for many readers might be their first glimpse into the true heart of Paul's letter to the Romans: *Peace in the Midst of Empire*. The book is a contextual reading of Romans in which McKnight persuasively argues that the "strong" and the "weak" of chapters 14–15 are the intended audience throughout the letter and that the practical issues that divide the two groups are the impetus for the theology of chapters 1–11. According to McKnight, "What Paul had in focus was the lack of praxis, the lack of lived theology, the lack of peace in Rome, and he wrote Romans both to urge a new kind of lived theology (12–16) and to offer a rationale (1–11) for that praxis" (p. xiv). Thus, Romans 1–11 is not Paul's *magnum opus* written to answer anachronistic questions or a treatise on atonement theology with a few practical but auxiliary matters

thrown in at the end. Nor is it purely about soteriology and how both the Jew and the Gentile are saved by faith alone. Rather, chapters 1–11 are Paul's pastoral theology addressed to the churches in Rome who needed to hear again the gospel message of peace—a peace that, unlike the *Pax Romana,* undercut all notions of power and privilege typically used to grant status and thus created divisions within the church.

The book is divided into four main sections, following the traditional chapter divisions of Romans. What is unique about the book's structure, however, is that McKnight begins his re-reading of Romans with chapters 12–16, in which the socio-political climate of the divided church in Rome is addressed most specifically. He then turns to chapters 9–11, followed by 1–4 and 5–8. Hence, he reads Romans "backwards."

Perhaps the most uniquely helpful aspect of the book in general, and chapters 12–16 in particular, is McKnight's ability to help the reader imagine those initial house church settings in which Jew and Gentile were gathered together at the feet of Phoebe to hear this letter for the first time. McKnight skillfully weaves in first-century rhetorical practices that would undoubtedly have shaped the reception of Paul's letter in these initial readings. The reader is taught to imagine the weak (i.e. those Jews who boasted in their covenantal position and obedience to Torah and who likely refused to pay taxes to Rome) and the strong (i.e. those [primarily] Gentiles who boasted in their leadership of the church during the Jewish expulsion from Rome and their recognized freedom from the requirements of Torah) as each group remorsefully receives and pridefully rejects Paul's critiques. Readers are taught to hear with the original audience this ancient text in its own time and space. This alone makes Romans come alive. Also helpful in these early chapters is the way in which McKnight maps out the "Christoformity"—an embodied "God Orientation," "Body-of-Christ Orientation," and "Public Orientation"—which Paul calls all believers to in the Roman church. This three-directional embodiment helps to make sense of those passages directed toward the strong and the weak, as well as passages such as 13:1–7, which appear tangential at first but which make structural sense once placed within this larger context of Christoformity.

McKnight views Romans 9–11 as Paul's reconfiguration of the events of Israel's past for the sake of forming "a narrative about God's surprising faithfulness in the missionary movement to include gentiles into the one family of God, Israel" (p. 61). Paul's emphasis in this section, according to McKnight, "is not about who gets saved in the deeply personal sense but *about who the gospel agents are in God's redemptive plans*. It's about *where we are in the plan of God for cosmic redemption* (p. 65; emphasis original). He argues that 9:1–11:10 is written to the weak and views 11:13 as the point at which Paul directs his attention to the strong. In 9:1–11:10, McKnight sees six themes that present themselves in Paul's reconstructed narrative, each of which makes sense of the text but also raises additional unanswered questions. These unanswered questions only continue in the following comments on 11:11–36, particularly as McKnight argues that the "all" of 11:26 refers to "Israel-in-the-flesh, who is also Israel-by-faith-in-the-Messiah" (p. 88). McKnight states at the start of the book that this is his reading of the text and not a comparison of scholarship. Neverthe-

less, this is one anticipated place where any experienced reader will be left wanting, despite the stated purpose of the book (p. x).

I expect the veteran reader to find McKnight's treatment of Romans 1–4 the most beneficial (or challenging), particularly if that reader maintains a soteriological rather than ecclesial reading of Romans. This first section of the letter, McKnight argues, is written not to the Jewish Christians in general in Rome, but rather to the weak of chapters 14–15. More specifically, McKnight argues, Paul is rhetorically directing his case against the Judge, the "major representative of the Weak" (p. 105). McKnight's argument is based on the similarities of language between what Paul says in 1:18–32 about Gentile sinfulness and what the Wisdom of Solomon 13–14 says about Gentile sinfulness, specifically a "stereotyped *immoral pagan idolater*" (p. 104; emphasis original). McKnight writes that "Paul's language is not identical but close enough that it is reasonable to think Paul either is using Wisdom of Solomon or is dependent on the kind of tradition at work in the letter" (p. 104). In Romans 2, according to McKnight, Paul shifts his focus from the stereotyped Gentile sinner to the "Jewish converts to Jesus who in the person of the Judge want to impose Torah on gentile fellow believers (the strong)" (p. 107). Romans 2–4, then, is a series of three questions asked by the Judge about the Jewish advantage, to which Paul responds with critique of the Jewish boastfulness. Paul's point in all of it, McKnight writes, is that "the Weak are to welcome the Strong because they are all welcomed by God through Christ by faith, not by Torah observance" (p. 137).

Throughout this entire section, McKnight weaves in a whole host of recent debates (for those with ears to hear) and his perspective on each of them (e.g. the righteousness of God, the faith/faithfulness of Christ, etc.), but his main argument revolves around establishing the connection between the audience of Romans 1–4 and the social context of Romans 12–15. His examination of the connection with Wisdom of Solomon was too short to convince me that the Jewish text was the basis for Paul's rhetorical approach, particularly in Romans 2–4 (a more solid case is made for 1:18–32). Nevertheless, I do find McKnight's presentation of a hypocritical Jew and his questions to align rather easily with the boastfulness and judgmentalism of the weak in Romans 14–15. Establishing a connection to the Wisdom of Solomon is not essential for establishing this larger contextual connection. Once the weak (or a representative of the weak) are viewed as the audience of Romans 1–4, the start of Romans becomes both literarily and theologically a whole new text, even for the Romans scholar.

While Romans 1–4 is addressed to the weak, Romans 5–8 is largely addressed to the strong and is "the solution to the problem of tension between the Strong and the Weak in the Roman house churches" (p. 142), the "theological underpinnings for the lived theology of Romans 14–15" (p. 180). McKnight maps four "modes of conversation" in these chapters, namely, sections in which Paul addresses a generic group/all, and uses "you," "we," and "I" as personal pronouns to make his points. McKnight's comments in this section follow these pronouns, and while helpful on many levels, also leaves the narrative of 5–8 feeling a bit disjointed. Nevertheless, he weaves in topics such as sin and death as agents, the importance

of participation in Christ for Paul, and Paul's emphasis on Christoformity—all topics which the average reader of Romans may not have previously encountered.

This book is a must-read for students, pastors, and scholars alike. The way in which McKnight frames Romans as a whole, by demonstrating the contextual basis for reading the weak and the strong as the audience of chapters 1–11, not only reveals new insights along the way but helps Romans come alive as a first-century text within its particular time and space. The short chapters read almost as devotionals at times, and the summaries at the start and end of each chapter help the reader along. For those who have an interest in Romans but have not kept up on its scholarship, the way in which McKnight weaves in his perspective on current issues of debate will possibly reveal a whole new letter (though, a few more endnotes for this audience would have been helpful, especially on those debatable topics foundational to his argument [e.g. the audience]). Though likely too advanced for undergraduates, *Reading Romans Backwards* should be on every required reading list for all seminary-level and above course on Romans. It is an excellent book, insightful to read, and has already shaped the way in which I teach and preach Romans. I am confident it will do the same for most of its readers.

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Galatians: A Commentary. By Craig S. Keener. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019, xlviii + 848 pp., $59.99.

Craig S. Keener, F. M. and Ada Thompson Professor of Biblical Studies at Asbury Theological Seminary (Wilmore, KY), is a regular contributor to the field of biblical scholarship, including a noteworthy four-volume *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012–2015), more than 4,000 pages in length. The current commentary is proportionately probably just as long, though mercifully for both author and readers alike, Paul's letter to the Galatians is considerably shorter than Acts. Structurally speaking, *Galatians* begins with introductory material, a 45-page introduction, followed by more than 540 pages of commentary (pp. 47–588), a 124-page bibliography (pp. 589–712), and a detailed series of indices (pp. 713–848), encompassing subjects, authors and selected names, Scripture, and other ancient sources.

The introductory material includes a full translation of Paul's letter (pp. xxxvii–xlvi) and an outline (pp. xlvii–xlviii). Keener outlines the content and argument of Galatians in six major parts: I. Epistolary Prescript: Gospel Greetings (1:1–5); II. Thesis and Refutation: No Other Gospel (1:6–12); III. Narrative Defense of the Gospel (1:13–2:21); IV. Argument Especially from Scripture (3:1–5:12); V. The True Basis for Ethics (Refuting Detractors) (5:13–6:10); and VI. Closing Appeal (6:11–18). His translation is idiomatic and explanatory. He renders Paul's self-reference to being an ἀπόστολος (1:1) as "an agent commissioned." He translates the plurals of the same term in 1:17, 19 as "commissioned agents." He adopts an inclusive rendering for ἀδελφοί (i.e. "brothers and sisters"), not only for the voca-

tive (or nominative of address; 1:11; 3:15; 4:12; etc.), but also in 1:2 in reference to Paul's ministry circle. He punctuates the entirety of 2:15–21 as encompassing Paul's citation of his encounter with Kephas (Peter; cf. NIV 1984, NASB 95, TNIV, NIV 2011), rather than limiting it to 2:14 (cf. RSV, NRSV, NET, ESV, CEB). (Incidentally, he employs Kephas [1:18; 2:9, 11, 14] rather than the typical Cephas for Κηφᾶς and the more precise Jacob in place of James for Ἰάκωβος [1:19; 2:9, 12].) He translates the verb δικαιόω (2:16 [ter.], 17; 3:8, 11, 24; 5:4) as "[to] right." In 2:16 he renders the passive verbs as divine or theological passives ("… righted with God [δικαιοῦται] …, so that we may be righted with God [ἵνα δικαιωθῶμεν] … will be righted with God [δικαιωθήσεται] …"; cf. similarly 3:24). He renders ἔργα νόμου of the prepositional phrase ἐξ ἔργων νόμου (Gal. 2:16; 3:2, 5, 10) as "law-works." He translates οἱ ἐκ πίστεως (3:7, 9) as "the faith-people." In 3:10, 13; 4:22, 30 he renders the formulaic γέγραπται rather freely as "the Bible says." At points he includes interpretive glosses for explanatory purposes: "I left for Arabia [the region where the Nabatean Arabs live]" (1:17); "Then after fourteen [more] years" (2:1). On other occasions, such as in 6:15, he renders καί as "and," reserving discussion as to whether it is epexegetic (*that is* …) for the commentary portion.

Keener surveys a wide range of issues in the introduction, often rather briefly. He contends that Paul's argument is not against Judaism itself, but against the faction of Jewish believers in Christ who insisted that his converts must accept the Jewish law to belong to God's people. At issue were two different visions regarding Gentile believers. Paul envisioned Gentile believers as spiritual proselytes, whereas his competitors viewed them merely as sympathizers or God-fearers, still needing marks of the covenant to become full children of Abraham (p. 3). He favors a date for Galatians *after* the Jerusalem Council (cf. Acts 15), but some time *before* the collection (hence c. AD 50–52; p. 13). Keener favors the southern Galatian theory relative to the recipients and destination, encompassing the churches of Pisidia Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and possibly Derbe (cf. Acts 13–14; p. 22). As some other contemporary commentators, Keener avoids the older designation "Judaizers" for Paul's opponents. He maintains, following Hays, that it "both gives the wrong impression that Paul's conflict in the letter is with Judaism and misunderstands the verb ἰουδαΐζω … in 2:14" (p. 22 n. 145). Keener concedes that the answer to the question of whether Paul's letter to the Galatians was effective proceeds largely based on silence. He nonetheless considers it telling that the letter was preserved and notes, more confidently, that in the long run it was "certainly effective for the wider Gentile church, which followed Paul in allowing admission to the covenant community without circumcision," a point seemingly true in Galatia too (p. 45).

The commentary portion is expositional in nature and follows a verse-by-verse format. Keener's translation of individual verses is set out in gray highlighting, followed by expository comments. Greek words appearing in the commentary and related footnotes are transliterated. Thousands of footnotes accompany the commentary in which he identifies germane ancient sources and interacts with contemporary scholarship. Representative interpretations include the following: He understands the temporal statement Ἔπειτα διὰ δεκατεσσάρων ἐτῶν of 2:1 consecutively vis-à-vis 1:18, "then after fourteen [more] years" (p. 109, cf. xxxviii), rather than

seeing the reference to be concurrent with 1:18. He does not see a break between Antioch and Paul based on 2:11–14 (pp. 139–43). In an excursus on justification (pp. 173–77) in connection with 2:16, he discusses the lexical semantic range and theological implications of the δικ- word group. He notes that in Galatians, righteousness comes by Christ rather than the law and the verb answers the probable claims of Paul's critics that his gospel does not produce righteousness (p. 176). Keener favors the objective genitive interpretation of διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (through *faith in* Jesus Christ) and ἐκ πίστεως Χριστοῦ (on the basis of *faith in* Christ) in contrast to the increasingly popular subjective sense of "faithfulness of" (e.g. Longenecker, Hays, et al.; cf. NET, CEB). He likewise devotes an excursus to this subject (pp. 177–83). In an excursus (pp. 183–88) regarding "law-works," he suggests a consensus seems to be emerging that Paul intended any of the law, but the issues at hand in Galatians were especially those that particularly defined one as having become Jewish: most prominently circumcision. Keener understands ἐὰν μή in 2:16 adversatively ("but instead"), rather than an exception. In a footnote, however, he offers the exception sense as an alternative: "Or, 'unless they are also justified'" (p. 171 and n. 778; cf. xxxix n. 4). He understands the prepositional phrase εἰς Χριστόν in 3:23 to be temporal: "until Christ" (cf. RSV, NRSV, ESV), rather than in the telic sense adopted in several English translations (e.g. NASB, NKJV, NIV 1984, NJB, NASB 95). He renders the distinctive Pauline phrase τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου (4:3) as "elementary entities of this world" (cf. 4:9, where he renders τὰ ἀσθενῆ καὶ πτωχὰ στοιχεῖα as "the impotent and impoverished elementary entities"). He understands them to be "the elements of nature that [the Galatians] wrongly venerated as deities" (p. 333). The virtue and vice list of 5:19–23 invites an overall contrast between the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit (p. 508). In 6:1, he understands ὑμεῖς οἱ πνευματικοί in a favorable sense ("you who are people of the Spirit"), rather than in pejorative, sarcastic, or delimiting sense (pp. 529–30).

As one might anticipate from Keener's prior body of work, the strength of his commentary is his full awareness of postbiblical Jewish and Greco-Roman source material (cf. his fourth index, pp. 777–848), and full engagement with a wide range of secondary literature, as his notes and bibliography attest. In addition to commentary and detailed footnotes, Keener includes some 34 excursuses throughout, providing readers with additional information on matters as diverse as cultural background (agent wills, pedagogues), geographical locales (Nabatean Arabia, Damascus, Antioch), theological topics (conversion, justification), and ancient practices (did Jews eat with Gentiles, correction in antiquity, supporting teachers). Keener also provides comparative charts (e.g., pp. 102–3, 286, 296, 401) and Bridging Horizons sections (e.g., pp. 120–21, 137–39, 165–66, 311–18). Despite its overall thoroughness, Keener's *Galatians* gives very limited attention to text-critical matters (I detected only four references in connection with 1:6, 15; 3:21; 4:25). It will also not be the first place to turn for help with details on the grammar and syntax of the Greek text or for a full engagement with OT background (his index of OT references, for instance, is 9 pages long, vs. 27 pages of post-biblical Jewish sources, and

roughly 38 pages related to Greco-Roman sources). Yet, weighed as a whole, its strengths are very significant and more than offset any limitations.

Keener has established himself as a first-rate interpreter of the NT, and this commentary will only enhance that reputation. While there are various matters with which readers, like the present reviewer, will disagree (such as a date for the letter *after* the Jerusalem Council [would the letter have even been needed *after* it?]), this commentary will prove valuable to anyone wanting to understand the content and context of Paul's letter to the Galatians. As with his earlier four-volume commentary on Acts, *Galatians* is a work of prodigious scholarship and highly recommended.

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The Pastoral Epistles. By Gerald L. Bray. The International Theological Commentary on the Holy Scripture of the Old and New Testaments. London: T&T Clark, 2019, xx + 589 pp., $102.00.

"This is a rare book, a commentary that actually does something new." So runs the dust jacket quote from Simon Gathercole at the University of Cambridge. What could be new about such a common literary genre—the biblical commentary—covering writings (the Pastoral Epistles) that have been plowed over so many times?

One answer lies in the author's primary field of study. It is not NT exegesis or commentary writing. It is rather theology and the history of biblical interpretation. This means that while Bray is conversant with other NT commentaries, he does not produce a work devoted largely to sifting and rearranging the material already found in other commentaries produced by NT specialists. He rather majors on the flow of the text and its focus on doctrinal, ethical, and ecclesial matters. This focus comports with the concerns of the confessing church, practicing Christians, and dedicated pastoral leaders through the centuries who have looked to the Pastorals as God's word for guidance, not for the rarified understanding of NT scholars who may be quite out of sympathy with a canonical reading and a soteriological exposition of the documents.

Substantial interaction with other commentators is present. The three most frequent discussion partners (according to the index) are Calvin, Howard Marshall, and Philip Towner (who read the commentary and offered suggestions in advance of publication). Then there is a long downward step to the next most-frequent tier: Ambrosiaster, Chrysostom, Luke Timothy Johnson, and Martin Luther. Slightly less frequent are references to Jerome, William Mounce, Theodore of Mopsuestia, and Theodoret of Cyrrhus. Yet compared to the hundreds of references to and interactions with other commentators that are common in most scholarly contemporary commentaries, Bray's interpretation of the Pastorals is free of unhealthy preoccupation with what the perceived specialist authorities allow to be said at present.

Another new thing about this commentary is the gusto with which it affirms Paul's authorship of the Pastorals. Here again we glimpse a spirit free from the paralysis of fearing to be pinned with a label like conservative, uncritical, or fundamentalist, none of which would be true in the least given the erudition informing Bray's remarks from start to finish, but any of which can be expected from a guild where the vast majority of "critical" scholars upholds a curiously obligatory and by now traditional view (going back over 200 years to Schleiermacher) that the Pastorals are pseudepigraphic. Bray sides with and occasionally references Luke Timothy Johnson's exposé (in his Anchor Bible Commentary on 1–2 Timothy) of the weak reasoning and flimsy evidence behind denial of Pauline authorship. He terms this denial "a sad, and indeed a scandalous, example of how an ideologically motivated position can be defended in the face of all evidence to the contrary and imposed as incontrovertible dogma by those who claim to be operating from a standpoint of academic objectivity" (p. 65).

This does not mean Bray is dismissive of the pseudepigraphic theory. He rather responds to it positively in two ways. First, he poses seven questions that the theory has yet to answer satisfactorily (p. 10) and conducts a running dialogue with pseudepigraphic proponents over many pages from numerous angles based on those questions. Second, his commentary represents a sustained demonstration of the plausibility of the Pastorals coming from the hand of the same apostle credited with ten other writings in a corpus in which each document begins with the identical self-designation Παῦλος.

This leads to a third and perhaps the major new element about this commentary—as would be hoped in the initial NT offering of a series designed to parallel, and from a theological standpoint excel, the venerable ICC commentaries long associated with T&T Clark: it is decidedly and self-consciously theological in perspective. What does this mean? Series editors Michael Allen and Scott Swain give a general response and justification in their prefatory remarks (pp. ix–x). More specific and extensive is the seven-page preface entitled "Theological interpretation: The Pastoral Epistles as Holy Scripture." Bray contrasts this commentary with works that admittedly appeal to "theology" in the Pastorals, like Frances Young's *The Theology of the Pastoral Letters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). "The dividing line that separates the theological from other forms of commentary" is the conviction that the writings being commented on, in this case the Pastorals, "were written with an authority that came from God" (p. xiv). Moreover, a theological commentary on a subsection of the NT will also acknowledge those writings' place in the larger whole of Scripture and the "coherent world view that [the author] and his audience shared" relating to those Scriptures (p. xv).

To put it another way: "A theological commentary of the Pastoral Epistles is one that treats them as an authoritative word from God to his people that speaks today with the same compelling power as it spoke when it was first revealed" (p. xvii). Such a commentary "bears witness to the communion of saints and is a contemporary expression of the truth that unites all who have put their trust in Christ" (ibid.). Bray's aim, accordingly, is "to show why the Pastoral Epistles have survived

the passage of time and have retained the canonical authority that they have always enjoyed" (ibid.).

That orientation in place, Bray's focus is on the text, not prolegomena, though he does not slight these. Especially rich is "The history of transmission and interpretation" (pp. 51–68) in which he gives an account of extant commentaries in the early, medieval, early modern, and modern periods. This shows in part the withering importance of the Pastorals in the modern period due to obsession with unanswerable questions about their setting: the historical-critical quest "serves mainly to distance" the Pastorals "from the modern church," for "the more we claim to understand what we think was going on in the first century, the more we are liable to think that it is too different from our own situation to have much practical application today" (p. 67). Bray's reading seeks to bring forth what Christians who accept the Pastorals as Pauline, apostolic, and God-given find in them, as bedrock testimony to church faith and practice then and also as an enduring testimony to what faith and practice should look like at present.

The commentary devotes about 14 percent of its 589 pages to introduction, 40 percent to 1 Timothy, 25 percent to 2 Timothy, 17 percent to Titus, and 4 percent to indexes. It often brings out the triads that occur frequently (see pp. 50–51), like pure heart/good conscience/sincere faith in 1 Tim 1:5, or faith/love/holiness in 1 Tim 2:15. Bray uses the NRSV as the base text for his commentary but frequently modifies it in the course of his interpretation.

In commenting on Paul's command to pray in the early part of 1 Timothy 2, Bray brings out the nuances found by ancient commentators in the four different words Paul uses but eventually sides with Calvin's interpretation, which avoids over-subtlety. He points to the difference between the Lutheran and Calvinistic understanding of submission to rulers, observing that based on this text "Lutherans would typically be submissive to secular rulers, even to a fault," while Calvinists would subject rulers to the norm of Christ's rule and rise up to oppose rulers who too woefully failed the test (p. 141). Bray concludes: "Calvinists rebelled in the Netherlands (1566), in England (1640) and in America (1776). There is no Lutheran equivalent to this" (p. 141 n. 30). Such accounts of how texts have been understood through the centuries is one of the great strengths of the commentary and one that marks it off from a commentary produced by most NT scholars, who generally lack the grasp of the interpretive tradition that Bray has grown familiar with over his decades of study of it.

When it comes to 1 Tim 2:9–15, Bray rejects readings that imply female weakness or inferiority. In the much-disputed verse 15, Paul was saying that "by continuing to reproduce the human race, even in its fallen state, women were reclaiming the original promise of creation" (p. 172). They were thereby "wisely applying the gifts of faith, love and holiness that were given to them by the grace of God" (ibid.). In verses 11–12, Bray argues that "Paul was teaching that the relationships between men and women in the church are grounded in fundamental principles" involving creation orders and the fall "that are valid for all time and that touch the very heart of the gospel's saving message" (p. 174). While he recognizes the complexities of questions surrounding women in formerly male-exclusive pas-

toral positions in the wake of feminism's rise, he counsels that to decline to accept Paul's counsel "is to give up any claim to Scriptural authority because on this point the teaching of Scripture is clear, consistent and unequivocal" (ibid.; see pp. 167–73 for commentary and then pp. 173–76 for discussion of contemporary application).

This is a commentary informed by the rigor of world-class exegetical commentaries like those of Marshall and Towner, the hermeneutical sophistication borne of specialist familiarity with numerous interpretive patterns from other historical periods in various languages, and the theological depth of an interpreter who discerns the confessional richness of the Pastorals in part because it has become the core of his own scholarly and personal identity. It merits inclusion on the short list of best academically serious commentaries in English on the Pastorals.

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So Great a Salvation: A Dialogue on the Atonement in Hebrews. Edited by Jon C. Laansma, George H. Guthrie, and Cynthia Long Westfall. Library of NT Studies 516. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2019, xv + 319 pp., $120.00.

So Great a Salvation offers perspectives on the atonement in Hebrews. Most of the essays within this collection were presented in a paper session dedicated to Hebrews at the ETS annual meeting from 2014–2017. While this might suggest a more limited range of perspectives, one noteworthy aspect of this collection is the breadth of traditions represented. Many essays were presented by guests of the Society, and still more have been added to the collection from diverse backgrounds that were not presented in that venue.

In addition to their diversity with regards to their ideological perspectives, another feature of this collection is the diverse specialties represented. Some essays are written by scholars who have published a full-length monograph or commentary on Hebrews (Attridge, Gelardini, Guthrie, Laansma, Moffitt, Peeler, and Westfall), some by scholars who have published on Hebrews but whose primary specialty lies elsewhere (Allen, Jobes, Thiessen, and Treier), and some by scholars who have not published on Hebrews prior to this collection (Anatolios, Gignilliat, Levering, Morales, Perrin, and Schnabel). In the last case, these scholars were particularly tasked with bringing insights from their expertise into conversation with scholarship on Hebrews—or the text itself. Overall, the threads through the collection are Hebrews and the atoning work of Christ; however, the editors provide additional structure by organizing the essays into two parts: (1) one which illuminates the "contexts" reflected within Hebrews and (2) one which illuminates "themes" within Hebrews. The prior contains the first five essays, and the latter the next eleven. This vision for the project is outlined in the introduction. Within it, the editors give various explanations for some of the features of the book already mentioned (e.g. its diverse participants, original context), but they also offer extensive summaries of the chapters therein. Pulling from the chapters themselves and "[quoting] extensively" (p. 4), these summaries sometimes span multiple pages.

Though this has become something of a cliché, I feel inclined to report that within this book, as with any edited collection, the quality of essays varies wildly. Further, the means by which contributors who primarily work outside Hebrews brought their subject matter to bear on this text varies wildly. Rather than summarizing them all, in the space that remains, I will discuss some of the best contributions.

For example, Khaled Anatolios in his essay, "The Epistle to the Hebrews in Patristic Trinitarian and Christological Doctrine," summarizes the contributions of Hebrews to early Christian discussions of theology (proper) and Christology. While he does not integrate scholarship on Hebrews often, in this case, it is more understandable given the subject matter. His essay is a reminder to Hebrews scholars that early Christian literature has much to contribute to Hebrews, and yet there are few essays that serve as a bridge—like this essay from Anatolios—and even fewer from scholars with true expertise in both early Christianity *and* Hebrews.

Similarly, in his chapter on the reception of Hebrews in the work of Thomas Aquinas, Matthew Levering addresses claims that Aquinas and Hebrews are overly supersessionistic—surveying how Jewish scripture ultimately shapes Aquinas's reflections on blood and sacrifice by way of Hebrews. He concludes that these concepts have a positive role in Hebrews, and by extension in the work of Aquinas. Similar to Anatolios, Levering primarily cites literature on Aquinas; however, he does bring his insights into conversation with standard commentaries in particular. For those who work in Hebrews, the degree to which Hebrews is "too supersessionistic" is a live question, and thus, the conclusions of Levering—from an external vantagepoint—are a helpful contribution.

On the other hand, in "Mediator of a New Covenant," Daniel J. Treier offers an essay with the starting point of a classical Christological category (i.e. Christ as mediator), and yet Treier thoroughly engages with Hebrews itself, as well as related contemporary scholarship. Treier, by bringing this category to the text, weaves connections between passages that I had not seen before. With the more reception-oriented discussed above, Treier's stands among the strongest contributions to this collection from those who are not NT scholars. These essays are not the only exemplars, but they serve as representatives of broader methodological trends from that category.

Among the strongest essays from NT scholars whose expertise lies outside Hebrews are those from Karen Jobes and Matthew Thiessen. This is not surprising, however, as both of these careful scholars have published multiple articles on Hebrews in the past. For her essay, "Putting Words in His Mouth," Jobes returns to a passage on which she has written before, Hebrews 10:5–7, to discuss the presentation of Jesus as the speaker of Greek Psalm 39. She then turns her attention to another passage where Jesus speaks, 2:12–13. Later in the collection, Thiessen contributes an essay entitled, "Hebrews and the Jewish Law." In it, he argues that Hebrews does not abrogate the earthly sacrificial system, but instead "translates" or "transforms" it in light of the heavenly system in which Christ serves as high priest. Thiessen brings insights from his previous research on ritual purity to bear on Hebrews, and I hope this is merely the beginning.

Finally, we turn to the essays by those who have contributed a full-length project on Hebrews. For them, the bar is raised—a fresh contribution to a familiar text. One common thread among many of these essays is a need to reckon with the influential work of David M. Moffitt, especially his *Atonement and the Logic of the Resurrection in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Leiden: Brill, 2011). For example, George Guthrie writes on "Time and Atonement in Hebrews." He thinks that many (including Moffitt) focus too much on the role of Yom Kippur in the author's argument, to the detriment of several other rituals. This, he thinks, leads to misunderstandings regarding the timing of atonement in Hebrews. Among his conclusions is the assertation that Jesus in Hebrews is "both in and out of time" (p. 227). This last portion of the essay, as Guthrie moves beyond his critique of Moffitt and others, is something that I hope he develops further. Moffitt also contributes an excellent essay to this collection pressing what is means that Jesus is "offered once for all." Although generally commentators conclude that Christ's priestly work has ceased, Moffitt interprets 7:25 as an indication of the *perpetual* nature of the offering, "always living in order to intercede on their behalf." A final essay to highlight is also the last in the collection—Harold Attridge's "Church and Atonement in Hebrews." Attridge highlights the role of the "household" of God throughout Hebrews, weaving together discussion of the "wandering people of God," familial language, and solidarity between the people and their forerunner. The comprehensive nature of the essay leaves quite a bit of room for development—though Attridge still has offered something thought-provoking in the space provided.

This collection contains many helpful essays written by a collection of internationally known scholars. The breadth of the collection is its greatest and worst asset, and yet the end result is a must-read collection for anyone interested in Hebrews or NT conceptions of the atonement.

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Lions, Locusts, and the Lamb: Interpreting Key Images in the Book of Revelation. By Michael Kuykendall. Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2019, xix + 402 pp., $48.00 paper.

Despite the intriguing and alliterative title, Michael Kuykendall's book is not a book that one reads from cover to cover. It is really a handbook in which Kuykendall catalogues 293 of Revelation's images. The book consists of an introduction, 10 chapters of catalogued symbols, and a short conclusion.

The 28-page introduction lays out relevant background to Revelation as well as Kuykendall's viewpoint and methodology. Revelation is approached from an "evangelical" viewpoint which posits the apostle John as the author writing a circular letter to the seven churches in Asia Minor around AD 95 to encourage them in the midst of "pressure and persecution" to remain faithful even unto death (p. 1). Genre is briefly discussed with Revelation identified as an "epistolary-prophetic apocalypse" with the stress falling on apocalypse based on Revelation's opening word (p. 2). A short discussion of the themes common to apocalyptic literature

follows. The five common approaches to Revelation (preterist, historicist, futurist, idealist, eclectic) are presented, with Kuykendall's preference for "an eclectic approach with an idealist emphasis" (p. 6). Four millennial views (amillennialism, postmillennialism, historic premillennialism, and dispensational premillennialism) garner a paragraph each, with the author favoring an amillennial position. This perspective is conducive for his understanding that the symbols of Revelation are to be appropriated by every generation of readers.

Kuykendall argues that readers of Revelation must ask what the symbol means, for it is a "better approach to assume symbolic meaning first and foremost in John's images" (p. 7). To do so, Kuykendall lays out seven interpretive steps which will be key to his ten chapters on the symbols. First, readers must recognize that Revelation is filled with symbolic imagery and come to the text with "symbolic readiness" (p. 8). Second, readers must look for the intratextual interpretation of the symbols within the context of Revelation. In steps three through five, readers must look for intertextual allusions to the OT, extratextual allusions in extracanonical writings, and first-century cultural-historical allusions, respectively. The sixth step is to consult scholarly works to see how Revelation's symbols have been interpreted, and the final step is to "remain open and honest and humble" in one's findings (p. 9).

In identifying the structure of Revelation, Kuykendall argues that both sequencing and recapitulation appear in the text. Texts such as the seals, trumpets, and bowls are not parallel; rather, they expand and progress "so that later visions describe more fully earlier echoes." John's visions—Kuykendall argues for 12 visions—"expand and develop the same subject matter but from different, fuller, and deeper perspectives." This he terms "progressive recapitulation" (p. 13). Thus, Revelation depicts the same one-time events—the last end-time battle, the end-time earthquake, the return of Christ, the final judgment, and the new heaven and earth—multiple times. Furthermore, John clusters words and images near the end of a vision as intratextual clues that alert the reader the vision is ending, as is history. The first five of the seals, trumpets, and bowls "reveal the ups and downs of history from three different angles" with the sixth and seventh seal, trumpet, and bowl taking the reader "to the brink of the eschaton." The three interludes also employ progressive recapitulation with 7:9–17; 11:7–13; and 14:1–15:4 serving as "end-time pictures" (p. 17). Based on this, then, Kuykendall presents his outline of Revelation consisting of a prologue (1:1–8) and epilogue (22:10–21) with 12 visions in between (pp. 17–18).

The final section of the introduction is Kuykendall's "Master List of Entries" in which he places the images of Revelation into ten categories: Heavenly and demonic beings; nature and cosmic imagery; good and bad places; good and bad things; good and bad people; body parts and animals; food and clothing; institutions and worship accoutrements; numbers and colors; and elements of time and miscellaneous images. He explains that many symbols could be placed in multiple categories. The master list takes up nine pages, but it serves as a table of contents for the remainder of the book as page numbers are provided for each image. Additionally, the entries in each category are listed in alphabetical order.

Chapters 1–10 are each devoted to the categories listed above. For every entry, the author begins with an italicized sentence that "gives the essential essence of the symbol" in Revelation followed by the seven steps for interpretation laid out in the introduction (p. 18). The entries vary in length from short discussions, such as "face" which is discussed in one paragraph (p. 198), to lengthy discussions, such as "Gog and Magog" which takes up three pages (pp. 180–82). In general, intratextual, intertextual, and/or extratextual references or allusion for an image are noted followed by a discussion of the location and meaning of the symbol within Revelation.

The conclusion of the book consists of five paragraphs in which Kuykendall lays out the contributions of his study. For one of his contributions, he claims that "numerous extratextual connections were uncovered for the first time" (p. 337). The reader would be greatly aided by a list of these first-time discoveries as one is hard pressed to discover them in his previous ten chapters. Kuykendall also indicates that his twelve-vision outline produced a "unique" result; namely, Revelation portrays "one end-time battle, one second coming, and one final judgment" (p. 337). Kuykendall offers no discussion of this but seems to assume the reader shares his conclusion. If readers have not read the previous ten chapters in their entirety, they are left to look up and cross-reference a host of images from the previous chapters. Because of the nature of this work (as a handbook of sorts) and because Kuykendall is claiming uniqueness for this point, he owes it to his readers to lay out the argument in more than a few sentences. Kuykendall posits that in his study "more representative resources were accessed and categorized than many previous studies" (p. 337). He correctly notes that he identifies the positions of many interpreters in his discussion of the symbols which does aid readers in their own study. In consulting twenty Bible versions which in addition to providing interpretive options also revealed "intratextual inconsistencies," Kuykendall hopes that future Bible editions will make revisions (p. 338). He concludes by suggesting that more images could be examined but does not indicate any that he excluded.

Kuykendall's work is very helpful in its cataloguing of John's images; however, he does not define what he means by "symbol" or how he came to understand the meaning of each symbol. The terms "symbol" and "image" are used interchangeably throughout the work without explanation. As noted in the introduction, Kuykendall alerts readers that they must come to the text with "symbolic readiness" (p. 8), but this is left undefined. If a head is not a head, why does John use the image of a head? John *does* see a head, a horse, a dragon, etc. The readers of Revelation (past *and* present) are called to pneumatic discernment. Nevertheless, Kuykendall helpfully challenges the literal interpretations of the symbols used by Dispensationalists (and other literalist approaches). For instance, he demonstrates that multiple images are used for the church, such as the lampstands, the two witnesses, the temple, the bride, and New Jerusalem. He argues against a literal battle at Armageddon, saying that Armageddon is a symbol, not a geographical location (p. 118). With some images, however, he seems to wrestle with balancing his concern to avoid literal interpretation while maintaining an appreciation for the fantasy world of John's visions. For example, in his entry for "bitter" he wants modern readers to understand that John does not "choke down a scroll" (p. 231) but under his earlier

entry for "scroll," he states that John eats the scroll (p. 137). In discussing the eagle, Kuykendall rightly decries interpretations in which "a literal eagle suddenly speaks English … or is transmogrified into modern aircraft" as undercutting the symbol's intention (p. 217). I wholeheartedly agree, and yet aside from brief comments that often occur under separate entries, Kuykendall does not offer his readers guidance on how to appreciate the event taking place in the vision where an eagle *does speak*. A discussion of this in the exegetical steps or the conclusion, especially in light of the fact that readers might not have read every entry in the ten chapters of symbols, would be beneficial.

These critiques aside, Kuykendall's work is of value to anyone interested in the Apocalypse. It is well written and accessible to those in the church or the academy. I would recommend it as a companion text to a critical literary commentary that appreciates the narrative flow of Revelation.

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The Violence of the Lamb: Martyrs as Agents of Divine Judgement in the Book of Revelation. By Paul Middleton. Library of NT Studies 586. London: T&T Clark, 2018, xv + 283 pp., $39.95 paper.

With a touch of humor, Paul Middleton notes that a book's preface is often the place where authors might accidentally "reveal something of what drives or motivates their research" (p. ix). Though Middleton declares, "I have resolved not to write anything of interest in this preface!", in fact, he goes on to do so. He notes that "my academic work has primarily focussed on the beliefs and practices of early Christian communities, particularly in relation to ideas and attitudes to martyrdom" (ibid.). He also mentions that he did his doctoral work under the late Larry Hurtado on "the development of Christian theologies of martyrdom" (ibid.).

These remarks are interesting because such expertise widens the scope and significance of Middleton's book. Although it is titled *The Violence of the Lamb: Martyrs as Agents of Divine Judgement in the Book of Revelation*, and although it appears in the Library of NT Studies, the book's central thesis has the potential to influence not only the scholarship of the canonical scriptures but all martyrological texts from the subsequent three centuries. In other words, while the book is certainly situated within biblical scholarship, its thesis has ramifications for the entire field of early Christian studies.

And what is this thesis? The back cover summarizes it well: "The act of martyrdom in the worldview of the Apocalypse is usually considered to be an exemplification of non-violent resistance. In contrast, Paul Middleton argues that such an act represents direct participation by Christians in divine violence against those the author of the Book of Revelation portrays as God's enemies." Middleton himself puts it this way: "In the book of Revelation, martyrdom is *not* an act of non-violent resistance" (p. 1, emphasis added).

If we remove the specific language about the book of Revelation, the remaining core of Middleton's thesis provides a fascinating lens through which to view all martyr texts up through the Diocletianic persecution, and perhaps beyond. Take Polycarp, for example—the quintessential "lamb led to the slaughter," a sacrificial victim who marches willingly to his own demise. What, then, are we to make of his ominous declaration, "The fire you threaten me with burns merely for a time and is soon extinguished. It is clear you are ignorant of the fire of everlasting punishment and of the judgement that is to come, which awaits the impious" (*Mart. Pol.* 11.15–17; trans. Musurillo, *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000], 11)? Or consider Perpetua and her companions as they entered the arena, making motions that declared, "You [the wicked judge] have condemned us, but God will condemn you" (*Pass. Perp.* 18.8; Musurillo, 127). In both cases, the martyrs participate—proleptically, at least—in the imposition of divine judgment. There are many more such instances in martyrological literature which could be profitably interpreted through Middleton's paradigm.

His book begins with a wide-ranging introduction that examines various approaches to Revelation. Issues of canonicity, historical criticism, and the history of interpretation are discussed, including some of the popular and non-scholarly uses to which the book has been put (e.g. David Koresh and Waco; the *Left Behind* novels). A central argument of Middleton's introduction is that many interpreters, such as John Dominic Crossan or John H. Yoder, have incorrectly categorized Revelation's martyrological themes as non-violent. After summarizing the counter-thesis that he is about to propose (pp. 14–15), Middleton initiates his argument in five chapters.

Chapter 1 offers one of Middleton's most important contributions to early Christian studies. Although he seems desirous of avoiding aggressive polemics, his arguments nonetheless refute what has become something of a scholarly consensus of late: that because the surviving martyrdom texts are often tendentious and rooted in late legends, the actual experience of pre-Decian persecution must have been so sporadic and infrequent as to be almost non-existent. This thesis has been most notably championed by Candida Moss, who popularized it in her provocatively-titled book, *The Myth of Persecution: How Early Christians Invented a Story of Martyrdom* (New York: HarperCollins, 2013). Middleton notes that Moss believes Christians in the first three centuries experienced persecution for, all told, "fewer than ten years" (p. 28).

Attempting to socially locate Revelation with an eye toward its date, Middleton argues against this ascendant martyrological consensus. He contends that violent persecution and/or negative social pressure were sufficiently widespread, and sufficiently connected to the imperial cult apparatus, to constitute a real phenomenon that was truly experienced by even the earliest believers. Not only did government-instigated persecution exist as the basis for second-century martyrdom texts, it can even be pushed back into the first century as the legitimate context for many NT writings. Middleton considers societal and governmental persecution, some of which was ostensibly related to the imperial cult, to be a genuine reality behind numerous early Christian texts, including canonical ones (pp. 29–39). Its ubiquity

must indicate something other than devious rhetorical manipulation or communal paranoia.

Middleton does not try to argue that the imperial cult was aggressively enforced in the first century. Instead, he contends that "suspicion or hostility toward Christians" could have led to a "demand to demonstrate loyalty to Rome" through sacrifice to local cults, or interrogation before a judge in which "a sacrifice test could have been deployed" (p. 39). Middleton's work on the origins of the sacrifice test offers an important contribution to our understanding of early Christian persecution. He argues that this moment of forced decision did not originate with Pliny the Younger when he mentions it in his famous correspondence with Trajan around AD 111. Middleton adduces evidence from Josephus, Mark, Q, Hebrews, *Shepherd of Hermas*, 2 Timothy, and 1 John to prove that there were earlier examples of an all-or-nothing, yes-or-no moment of confession. In other words, Pliny's sacrifice test was a phenomenon already known to him.

The argument that persecution existed in the first century, including government- sponsored persecution that was connected (notionally, at least) to the imperial cult, goes against the grain of today's scholarship. Yet Middleton makes a cogent case that localized pressure was not only widespread and frequent, but was realistically experienced by Christians through the framework and terminology of emperor worship. Based on these findings, Middleton dates Revelation to the late first century (p. 238) because there is no reason why its pronounced martyrological themes could not have been part of the lived experience of John of Patmos or his original readers. Beyond the issue of Revelation's date, these claims are important for our broader understanding of Christian persecution. Apparently, it existed earlier than some have claimed.

The remaining four chapters can be summarized briefly because their larger import is what seems to matter most. These chapters substantiate Middleton's thesis noted above: that the Lamb imagery in Revelation, far from offering a passive and non-violent counterpoint to Rome's brutality as many interpreters have suggested, actually allows Christians to participate in God's cataclysmic judgment of the wicked. The Lamb and his martyr-imitators are not led to the slaughter as pacifists. They are strong warriors who defeat the beastly enemies of God through conquest and subjugation.

Chapter 2 refutes the notion that the Lamb in Revelation should be considered "tame." Quite the opposite: while the Lamb is surely "slain," his corresponding Lion imagery requires him to be seen as powerful rather than pitiful. Chapter 3 then demonstrates how the Lamb's divine power is played out in his role as protomartyr. "The slain Lamb … is a symbol of power and divinity," a mighty victor who is portrayed with "exalted theology" and "lofty" imagery (p. 130). In fact, "he shares the attributes and functions of God" (p. 131). The Lamb's death is not weakness, but the means by which he conquers his foes.

It is in the Lamb's role as judge that we see the full force of his violence. Chapter 4 describes how the seals, trumpets, and bowls of Revelation prove that the Lamb is no passive or meek figure. He aggressively metes out judgment upon "Babylon," which stands for decadent and whorish Rome and all that it represents.

"Violence abounds in the judgement scenes of the Apocalypse," Middleton declares (p. 187).

In the fifth and final chapter, Middleton demonstrates how the Lamb's role as proto-martyr and judge is extended to all Christians, inviting them to participate in his conquering work. "John's idea of what it means to be a faithful Christian is mediated solely through the image of the martyr … [T]he martyr becomes, in the Apocalypse, an agent of violent divine judgement" (p. 187). Middleton summarizes his thesis when he writes in his final paragraph, "There is little sense in which martyrs in the Apocalypse offer a model of non-violent resistance" (p. 238). Like Jesus himself, they are overcoming warriors who totally crush the forces of evil.

The conclusions of Paul Middleton's excellent book are more than just factually correct. They also offer an innovative way to understand how ancient martyrs were framed and understood; and how the early Christians, from the very beginning, experienced persecution from the hostile culture of their day.

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