

BOOK REVIEWS

The Bible Among the Myths: Unique Revelation or Just Ancient Literature? By John N. Oswalt. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009, 195 pp., \$17.99.

In his introduction to *The Bible Among the Myths*, John Oswalt indicates that the topic of this book has occupied his thoughts for decades. This fact is manifestly evident in his footnote citations, as a number of these books were published in the 1950s and 1960s. At the same time, Oswalt makes it clear that the subject matter in these books is just as relevant today as it was then. Subsequent to this seven page introduction, Oswalt goes directly to the main body of the book, which is divided into two major sections: (1) The Bible and Myth; and (2) The Bible and History.

Revelation, myth, and history are the main topics of this book, where they are nearly always treated on a grand scale. While Oswalt does deal with specific mythological materials, these treatments are always and only in service to his greater themes. That is, by any scholarly definition, the term “myth” cannot be applied to the Bible. One cannot divorce “fact” from “meaning,” and “contrary to the nineteenth and twentieth century delusion, science and logic are not self-evident” (p. 26). These points are all subsumed under the main point he makes. That is, “the Bible, essentially different from all other religious literature (except that derived from it), claims to be the result of God’s breaking in upon distinct persons and a distinct nation in unique, non-repeatable acts and words” (p. 194). Six decades ago, Bible scholars maintained that Israel’s religion was unique and stood in stark contrast to the religions of its ancient Near Eastern neighbors. According to Oswalt, the view that the Bible must be seen as having appropriated myths from its Near Eastern neighbors is the result of a shift in assumptions over the past five decades or so, and is not the result of new discoveries.

The book itself is divided into two main parts containing five chapters each. The first part, subtitled, “The Bible in Its World,” begins by defining myth. It then situates the creation and transmission of the Hebrew Bible within the context of its ancient Near Eastern historical and geographical contexts at a time and place in which “continuity thinking” prevailed. Continuity thinking was the natural result of humans reasoning backwards from the creation to the unseen. Under this view, the gods look, behave, and feel as humans do. By contrast, the essence of the Bible’s portrayal of reality is consistent with its transcendent vision of reality in which humankind has received revelation from outside of itself.

Having dealt with scholars who categorize the Bible as myth, Oswalt addresses those who claim the Bible is not history. Here, Oswalt differentiates between historical accounts in Judeo-Christian Scripture and those *purportedly* historical accounts of neighboring pagan nations—that is, nations whose “history” shows up in royal annals, epics, king lists, and chronicles. Oswalt also demonstrates convincingly that whereas these nations’ written “histories” virtually always presented a biased, even fanciful account of a king’s reign or military campaign, (e.g. two nations would routinely claim to have won the same battle, or the losing nation’s annals would fail utterly to mention the battle at all), the Hebrew Scriptures do not paint the protagonist nation in any sort of special light in and of itself. On the contrary, God’s people repeatedly failed to keep covenant. Yet, the writers of Scripture faithfully recorded these failures within the

sacred text. This is just one of the crucial differences Oswalt identifies and contrasts with the written accounts of the surrounding nations. More than just a book about the Bible, this is a book dealing with presuppositions and worldviews.

In sum, it may be said that this book presents us with a scholarly apologetic that defends the historical veracity and theology of the OT, for “the veracity of the theological claims of the Old Testament is inseparable from the veracity of the historical claims” (p. 16). Alas, one must wonder what would happen if the mythology advocates were to succeed in their quest. Will future generations reading about the lives of these scholars and their literary productions likewise judge them to be mere myths as well?

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The Archaeology of the Bible. By James K. Hoffmeier. Oxford: Lion Hudson, 2008, 192 pp., \$29.99.

James Hoffmeier, a leading evangelical Egyptologist and archaeologist, has written a basic primer for the beginning student of the Bible on the value of archaeology for Bible study. His aim is to explain briefly the place of archaeological study in understanding the Bible, then survey how the results of that study can help us understand more fully both testaments.

The book is divided into three parts that (after chaps. 1 and 2), move chronologically through the Bible. Part 1 (chaps. 1–4) includes an introduction to biblical archaeology, its birth and method, and a brief survey of how some of its finds bear on our understanding of Genesis and Exodus. Part 2 (chaps. 5–9) surveys the relevance of discoveries for understanding the history of Israel in the land from the conquest to the return from exile. Part 3 (chaps. 10–13) covers the Greco-Roman background to the NT, discoveries related to Jesus’ life and death, Paul’s missionary journeys, and the seven churches of Revelation. A brief epilogue sums up the presentation, and a short bibliography and index conclude the book.

The book is illustrated on almost every page with beautiful photographs of objects or sites related to the discussion or relevant maps or sketches. A chronological chart fronts the book (pp. 8–9). The text is interspersed with brief discussions of side issues, such as “The Decipherment of Cuneiform,” “The Dead Sea Scrolls,” “Ur of the Chaldees,” and a host of other related topics. These are simple but informative. The appearance and layout of the book reminds one of a coffee table-type book.

For Hoffmeier, archaeology must be integrated into a balanced and broad approach to the study of the Bible. He applies its results to four areas: better understanding of the ancient world and context of the Bible; complementing the data of the Bible when possible; challenging erroneous interpretations of the Bible; and confirming the historicity of some events described in the Bible.

The discussions are necessarily brief but create a thirst for more. Hoffmeier expresses his opinion about the issues he addresses and usually takes a conservative stance. For example, the customs portrayed in the patriarchal narratives reflect the first half of the second millennium, as does the treaty form reflected in Exodus and Deuteronomy. The Joseph story fits well the Egyptian context. Hoffmeier’s own archeological work comes into play as he describes the route of the exodus and the location of the Egyptian cities mentioned in the early chapters of Exodus. He leans toward a later date for the Exodus but presents both views. He accepts the new reading of the Moabite stone that finds a reference to David. In the NT section, he thinks the bone box with the name Caiaphas

refers to the family of the Caiaphas of the Gospels, and he accepts the James ossuary as authentic.

Hoffmeier includes a few personal comments throughout on either his own work or his own travels in the areas discussed. These provide a nice human interest to the book. Not many of us were born in Egypt or met Roland de Vaux as a child!

Beginning Bible students will find much of value in this book, and hopefully it will motivate them to further study and a deeper appreciation of the rich cultural background to both OT and NT. I would highly recommend this book for them. A helpful addition to the book would be a section that suggested books to read next. The brief bibliography provides some guidance but the neophyte would not know where to begin. Although readers of *JETS* will probably not find much that is new, this is a good volume to put into the hands of interested Christians in your churches.

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Deep Exegesis: The Mystery of Reading Scripture. By Peter J. Leithart. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009, viii + 254 pp., \$19.95 paper.

"It is written that the letter kills but that the spirit gives life. As the letter cloaks the spirit, so a husk veils corn." With these words, Gregory the Great advised readers of the Song of Solomon to peel away the literal meaning of Scripture so one may look deeply at the true, spiritual sense that is obscured by the letter (*Comm. Cant.* 4; trans. David A. Salomon, available at <http://www.sage.edu/faculty/salomd/nyssa/great.html>). Peter J. Leithart, Senior Fellow of Theology and Literature at New St. Andrews College in Moscow, Idaho, also wants to look deeply into Scripture, but his method directly contradicts that of Gregory. Instead of peeling away the husk of the letter to reveal the spiritual "corn," Leithart advocates "devoted attention to the husk" and aims "insistently, manically" to present "a hermeneutics of the letter" (p. 34).

Deep Exegesis contains six chapters bookended by a preface and an epilogue. In the preface, Leithart tells us that his aim in this book is "to describe and defend the ways biblical writers themselves read the Bible" (p. viii). However, he does not spend much time dealing with apostolic exegesis of the OT, as one might expect from this statement. Rather, he concerns himself with how the biblical authors construct meaning, how they convey information to their readers through the "husk." Actually, he does this on an extended basis only for the story of the blind man in John 9, a passage to which he returns in nearly every chapter.

As Leithart makes clear in chapter 1 ("The Text Is a Husk: Modern Hermeneutics"), he wants to develop a literal but not literalistic hermeneutic, one that pays close attention to the words on the page, following the clues inherent in them to discover not just the bare minimum of what Scripture conveys "in the letter," but all that God wants to communicate to us. In Leithart's view, the "husk" of the letter constitutes an essential part of the divine message, and it is by detailed consideration of this husk that the reader gains insight into deeper matters. The seventeenth century becomes the definitive era during which the letter was equated to the husk that could be discarded, though, as Leithart admits (p. 214, n. 9), similar ideas feature in all periods of Christianity. Chapter 1 focuses especially on Spinoza and Kant as those who grounded "true religion" in philosophy and morality, with Scripture subservient to these principles. If the wording of the Bible presented an obstacle to rational religion, one should seek a deeper message not dependent on the letter. The implication of Leithart's analysis here

is that evangelicals (Leithart's primary audience) who downplay the details of the biblical text in the pursuit of truth are following in the footsteps of Spinoza and Kant, and the examples of "Kantian evangelicals" include Peter Enns and Richard Longenecker (pp. 29–34).

Chapters 2–6 spell out Leithart's proposed hermeneutical method. Chapter 2 ("Texts Are Events: Typology") argues that the meaning of texts changes based on subsequent events, just as attempted murder becomes an assassination only when the victim dies. Leithart uses such analogies to interpret the quotation of Hos 11:1 in Matt 2:15—"Matthew gives new meaning to Hosea, but the meaning he gives does not violate Hosea's original meaning. The meaning changes as Hosea's prediction comes to fulfillment, but the change is consistent with the original sense" (p. 65). This is because Hosea's comment about God's deliverance of Israel from Egypt surely entailed a view of God as Redeemer, not just once but also thereafter. Perhaps Hosea did not know exactly what God's future redemption would look like, but he, like Matthew, would have recognized it when he saw Jesus.

Chapter 3 ("Words Are Players: Semantics") delves into the many different significations of words—there is more to a word than just its primary meaning, which itself changes according to context. Chapter 4 ("The Text Is a Joke: Intertextuality") considers the information authors assume their readers will have and the allusions authors can make to that information. Good readers "eisegete" texts by interpreting them with outside knowledge assumed by the author; good readers also need to know which outside knowledge is relevant to the passage at hand. Chapter 5 ("Texts Are Music: Structure") analyzes especially the element of repetition in the way authors organize their texts. Finally, Chapter 6 ("Texts Are about Christ: Application") argues that texts concern Christ (the head) and the church (the body of Christ) if we have eyes to see.

This book provides good illustrations of how to explore the words on the page. Leithart does not stretch the meaning beyond recognition, as some examples of allegory do; rather, he meditates on the various ways authors communicate with their audience, and he attempts to see all that is present in the text.

On the other hand, there does not seem to be much new here; *Deep Exegesis* calls once again for a "close reading" of the biblical text, so that it echoes much scholarship over the past few decades. Moreover, the extended analogies (e.g. to literature, music, and other art forms) Leithart employs to establish his points, though sometimes helpful, grow tiresome in the later chapters as the reader waits for the application to the Bible. Another weakness is Leithart's presentation of his material in terms of polemic against the views of other scholars, especially in the early chapters, when it would be better framed as *addenda* to what might be perceived as an over-emphasis in a certain direction. Suffice it to say that after reading chapter 3, I still endorse Moisés Silva's *Biblical Words and Their Meaning* (Zondervan, 1983). All of Leithart's contrary evidence constitutes useful nuances that hardly overturn Silva's thesis.

The sparse endnotes and brief bibliography indicate that Leithart's intended audience is the well-informed lay reader or the beginning seminary student.

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Abusing Scripture: The Consequences of Misreading the Bible. By Manfred T. Brauch. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2009, 293 pp., \$18.00.

In his new book *Abusing Scripture: The Consequences of Misreading the Bible*, Manfred Brauch sets off on a journey to show that there is an "intimate relationship

between the abuse of the Bible and abuse in the church and in the world" (p. 11). Having recognized that abuse, he intends "to point beyond it toward a better way, and to challenge all those who affirm the inspiration and authority of Scripture to increasingly participate in this better way" (p. 11).

In the introduction, Brauch defines Scripture abuse as the "interpreting and applying the Bible in questionable or irresponsible ways" (p. 15). He notes that this abuse can be both intentional and unintentional, and he is "particularly concerned about the abuse of Scripture within the tradition of the Christian faith that upholds the Bible as the unique Word of God and affirms its divine inspiration and authority" (p. 16). He posits that people within this tradition "often interpret and apply Scripture in ways that are abusive, thus distorting its meaning and message" (p. 18).

In chapter 1, "The Nature of Scripture," the author affirms the human authors were both inspired by God and guided by the Holy Spirit. As a result of this "mysterious intersection of the divine and human dimension of Scripture," the Bible is infallible. Unlike those who hold to the inerrancy of Scripture, for Brauch this infallibility "includes the possibility of misunderstanding, mishearing, or only partially hearing and understanding the revelatory speaking and acting of God" (pp. 24–25). He sets his view of Scripture on the pillars of intention and incarnation, where intention refers to the Scripture's existence "by divine providence and inspiration so that Jesus and his good news can be proclaimed" (p. 27), while incarnation refers to "the enfleshment of God's Word through human words, culture and history" (p. 28). Through this dichotomy, the author affirms the Bible is both fully human and fully divine. "It is fully human, with all that this implies regarding the presence of limitation, and it is fully divine, with all that this implies about its inspiration and authority" (p. 31).

Starting with chapter 2, "The Abuse of the Whole Gospel," Brauch asserts that one abuses Scripture when one does not teach and/or preach both "the gospel of personal salvation" and "the social gospel." He goes on to argue that the gospel is not just for the purpose of "saving souls," but that the gospel also "has to do with God's concern for the larger arena of human life in community, in social groupings, in political and social structures" (p. 37). He accuses those who show a primary concern "for personal salvation from bondage to sin" and not for a "transforming social concern and action" of being guilty of "offering the world a half-gospel" (p. 44).

In chapter 3, "The Abuse of Selectivity," the author affirms that when one ignores or rejects "parts or passages of Scripture that support a different teaching, or present an alternative perspective, or advocate an opposing view," one abuses Scripture. This can be done when issues in tension are present, such as God's sovereignty versus human freedom, the relationship between men and women, and/or "evangelism focused on personal salvation or concern for social justice" (pp. 47–48). Brauch goes on to treat in detail three such issues that stand in tension: submission to governing authority; the relationship between men and women in home, church and society; and the relationship between God's blessing and faith.

Chapter 4, "The Abuse of Biblical Balance," is very much related to "The Abuse of Selectivity." This type of abuse "distorts the overall message and purpose of Scripture by emphasizing certain biblical doctrines, perspectives, themes or mandates, while ignoring or minimizing the equal, or even greater, importance of complementary ones" (p. 81). Brauch discusses this type of abuse by looking at the sins of the flesh vs. other sins, the quest for correct beliefs vs. doctrinal certainty without sober restraint and humility, and the passion for truth versus ethical enthusiasm.

"The Abuse of Words" takes place "when words and expressions are decoded . . . in ways that are not in keeping with the original encoding" (p. 124). The author discusses the word "helper" that is used to refer to Eve in relation to Adam in Genesis 2, as well as the use and meanings of *'ādām*, "pain and toil," "head," "submission," and "flesh." He argues that the use and meanings and these words have been used to support

one's theological bent, and abuse happens when one ignores the original author's context.

Chapters 6 and 7 cover the very important topic of "The Abuse of Context." While chapter 6 discusses the literary and theological aspects of contexts, chapter 7 deals with the importance of understanding the historical situation and cultural reality of Scripture. Brauch suggests that some abuse these principles when misinterpreting the words of Jesus from Matt 26:52 "For all who take the sword will perish by the sword." He rebukes the prominent evangelical Christian leader James Dobson for the way he used this verse to defend the military action of the U.S. in killing Al-Zarqawi, the terrorist who masterminded the 9/11/2001 attacks. Brauch goes on to give other examples of such abuse in regard to texts such as Psalm 121; Prov 29:18; Isa 61:10; Hos 4:6; 1 Cor 3:16–17; Acts 2:4–11; Acts 2:38, 1 Cor 13:9–10; Luke 17:20–21; and Gal 3:27–28. The author concludes by reiterating that his goals were to show "how Scripture is in fact all too frequently and pervasively misinterpreted, mishandled, misunderstood and misapplied in and by the Christian community, both individually and collectively," and "to demonstrate repeatedly, via multiple examples, that the abuse of Scripture has consequences" (p. 251).

The book's primary strength lies in the presentation of biblical issues that stand in tension, such as submitting to Caesar vs. submitting to Christ (pp. 48–56); the relationship between men and women in home, church and society (pp. 56–69); and correct belief vs. the restraint of humility (pp. 93–104). Another strength is the author's correct affirmation that Scripture can only be interpreted accurately when done in its proper literary, theological, historical, and cultural contexts (chaps. 6–7).

While the book has some strengths, the weaknesses prevail. From the outset, the author affirms that the Bible can contain errors. While he notes that the Bible "is trustworthy and perfectly sufficient for the redemptive, life-and-word-transforming purpose for which God inspired it," Brauch also asserts that errors can make their way into Scripture due to the human writers' limitations—errors that "include the possibility of misunderstanding, mishearing, or only partially hearing and understanding the revelatory speaking and acting of God" (p. 25). When discussing the relationship between men and women in home, church, and society, the author makes the gross generalization that in the Christian communities around the world where the woman's role in leadership is restricted, "the correlation between male dominance and domestic violence has become a serious concern" (p. 57). Brauch implies that the egalitarian view is the correct view. When Scripture says that "Christ is the head of every man, and the husband is the head of his wife, and God is the head of Christ" (1 Cor 11:3), Brauch suggests that this is not talking about hierarchy, but relationship (pp. 59–62). While he might be correct in that there is no difference in the man's and woman's identity before Genesis 3, things change considerably after the fall. He argues that "the curse of Genesis 3 is to be understood not as prescriptive (what should be) but as descriptive, revealing what is the human condition when separated from relationship with God" (p. 64). The author carelessly states that Paul's words in 1 Tim 2:14 are due to "his use of the Jewish interpretive tradition" that "blamed the woman (and her female descendants!) for sin and evil in the world" (p. 129). Brauch is also reckless in his word studies. In his discussion of Paul's use of the word "head" in 1 Cor 11:3, he concludes that "Paul did not use the word *head* in the sense of 'authority over' (chief, ruler, boss, master)" (p. 146). Brauch concludes this "on the basis of both external evidence (usage in Greek literature and the Greek translation of the Old Testament) and internal evidence (exegetical study of the relevant texts)" (p. 146). His starting point is the use of the Hebrew *rōš*, which can be translated "head," "beginning," "choicest," "chief," or "leader." Brauch incorrectly affirms that "there are only six Old Testament texts (out of 180) where *rōš* designates a figure of authority and is translated by the Greek *kephale*" (p. 137). In fact, the word appears more than 280 times in the OT, and out of those times, the word designates

a figure of authority more than a third of the time. When the Septuagint does not use *kephalē*, it still uses a word that denotes someone in authority.

Brauch takes on those “within the tradition of the Christian faith that upholds the Bible as the unique Word of God and affirms its divine inspiration and authority” (p. 16), but in the process he is the one who often exceeds sound cultural and linguistic exegetical interpretative practice to establish his point. In his fervor to argue against those who are on the right of center on the theological spectrum, it is clear he consistently lands to the left of this center. (This comes into sharper focus in appendixes C and D.) The book definitely deals with hermeneutical issues, but much better and balanced alternatives are available through Zondervan (Counterpoint Series), InterVarsity, and B & H’s works that treat multiple views.

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At Home in a Strange Land: Using the Old Testament in Christian Ethics. By Andrew Sloane. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008, xii + 259 pp., \$19.95 paper.

Andrew Sloane’s *At Home in a Strange Land* comprises a general introduction to the use of the OT in contemporary Christian ethics. He assumes his readers are committed to following Christ, but may not have given much consideration to the contemporary relevance of OT texts.

Sloane begins with a brief overview of biblical hermeneutics. He is committed to initially discovering the author’s intention in communicating to the original audience, taking the context into account. While brief, the section is succinct and useful for someone who may not be familiar with hermeneutics.

Chapter 1 ends with a brief introduction to ethics and ethical theory. Sloane notes that much of contemporary ethics focuses on the role of rules, consequences, or character in making decisions about issues and situations. While not rejecting this approach, Sloane maintains a biblical one has different emphases. What he calls the “biblical personalist perspective” takes all these factors into account. This is because the Bible’s “primary message is not propositional but rather personal and relational . . . present[ing] us with a picture of God and the world, the community of faith that God has brought into being, and God’s purposes for us and the world” (p. 30). This leads him to conclude that “the moral life is less a matter of crisis decision-making (the ‘moral dilemma’ approach to ethics) than a pattern or texture of living” (pp. 31–32). This underlying belief impacts Sloane’s approach to using the OT in ethics. With each text, he looks for what it has to say about the moral vision God has for his people rather than just what it declares on an issue or situation.

Sloane takes this approach throughout his book. Rather than giving propositions and methods first and then applying the principles to different passages, he develops his approach while engaging different passages. Such an approach works well for those new to a topic who may find it challenging to go through theoretical material before getting to practical application. Sloane shows how his approach works with passages from various OT genres: law (Lev 19:9–10); narrative (2 Samuel 11–12); poetry (Psalm 24); prophecy (Mic 6:6–8); and wisdom (Ecclesiastes 11). Each passage allows Sloane to show how he handles biblical texts. In each case, he shows how the passage helps shape a moral vision for followers of Yahweh. He applies his conclusions to contemporary issues, such as sexual morality, handling power, global justice and the environment.

Chapter 3 chapter approaches things differently by starting with ethical issues. Sloane examines three issues where OT teaching is often challenged if not rejected:

slavery, being clean or unclean, and holy war. The issues are explained clearly and different perspectives presented. Sloane arrives at balanced positions on each and remains faithful to the biblical text. He also provides examples of how these teachings apply or do not apply to contemporary ethical issues like trafficking of women and modern warfare.

Sloane returns to his approach of starting with biblical texts in the next chapter, but goes into greater depth with each. The creation account (Genesis 1–3) is applied to modern environmental issues and gender relationships. He uses this example to stress the importance of discerning what God intended the text to say to its original audience. He then examines the Ten Commandments (Deut 5:6–21) one at a time, stressing their contemporary relevance. He demonstrates that their purpose is “to shape a moral vision, to give us a picture of the character of God and God’s people, rather than to give us a list of rules to live by” (p. 170). As such, they fit within the relational and community-based approach Sloane emphasizes.

In the final chapter, Sloane returns to an issues-based approach, looking first at cloning and then idolatry. He shows how Isaiah 46, understood in its original context, has a message that applies to contemporary dependence on money, technology, and human systems. Sloane’s handling of cloning was the one issue I found a little disappointing, which may be because it is the one I am most familiar with as a bioethicist. He used terms like “therapeutic cloning” and “research cloning” in ways that differ from how they are usually defined. He touches on many aspects of the topic, but focuses on cloning babies for spare organs. However, as he states himself, hardly anyone advocates doing this. It would have been more useful if he had addressed one of the many choices Christians and others are already facing and for which they have need of biblical direction.

My one concern with the book is that Sloane’s own background knowledge of the texts informs his analysis and conclusions. Yet a reader might not come away from his book knowing how to access similar material. Sloane does not use footnoting and gives few references in the text. In avoiding an overly academic style, he may have let the pendulum swing a little too far in the other direction. He lists further resources in his appendices, but calling these “the Geek Zone” might not make them attractive to all readers.

Overall, Sloane has provided an excellent introduction to help Christians apply the OT to their moral lives. Anyone with a solid general education would gain a lot from the book. However, many would benefit from reading it along with guidance from someone with more in-depth biblical training, such as within a discipling relationship or classroom setting. Sloane regularly refers to contemporary songs and films that address related topics, thus providing helpful connections for younger readers. This is a welcome text that provides practical guidance for all of us seeking guidance through the moral maze of modern life.

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The Bodies of God and the World of Ancient Israel. By Benjamin D. Sommer. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009, 334 pp., \$85.00.

What do we make of the numerous instances within the OT that portray God as having a discrete form? Do we explain them away as mere anthropomorphisms and in the process “collect copious and convincing examples of God’s embodied nature, only to deny the corporeality of the biblical God on the basis of an unsupported assertion that the biblical authors didn’t really mean it at all” (p. 8) or do we take these instances

seriously and conclude the biblical authors believed God did have a body? In his new book *The Bodies of God and the World of Ancient Israel*, Benjamin Sommer takes the latter approach since “[t]he evidence for this simple thesis is overwhelming” (p. 1).

Sommer, professor of Bible and ancient Semitic languages at Jewish Theological Seminary of America, attempts two tasks: to demonstrate that in the Hebrew Bible, God has more than one body, and to explore the implications of this for a religion or biblical theology of the Hebrew Bible (p. 1). Sommer’s thesis will no doubt elicit strong initial reactions; however, his definition of a “body” is not as controversial as it first appears: “something located in a particular place at a particular time, whatever its shape or substance” (p. 2).

Sommer begins by examining the perspectives of other ancient Near Eastern cultures and concludes that people had a fluid view of divine embodiment that included multiplicity of personhood and location. This is clearly seen in Mesopotamia in documents such as *Enuma Elish*, in which various deities are equated with one another yet they simultaneously remain independent (p. 17). Some ritual texts merge two gods together as implied in the name “^dDagan-Ashur,” which includes only one DINGIR sign (a determinative that indicates the divine nature of the person; normally each object or person would have its own determinative), which indicates the author apparently perceived Dagan-Ashur as one god even though Dagan and Ashur were also separate deities (p. 18). Furthermore, Mesopotamian rituals such as *mīs pī* “washing the mouth” and *pīt pī* “opening the mouth” were performed to cause gods to inhabit idols. In addition to gods inhabiting one idol, there were often multiple statues of a deity in different locations. Therefore, the deity was present in several places simultaneously (p. 22). This is also seen in localized versions of divine names such as Ishtar of Arbela and Ishtar of Nineveh (p. 35).

It is clear that Levantine cultures shared many religious perspectives with Mesopotamia. Most striking is the appearance of localized manifestations of Yahweh within inscriptional material, such as “Yahweh of Samaria” and “Yahweh of Teman.” Also, Sommer draws a parallel between the divinely inhabited images in Mesopotamia and a divinely inhabited house or pillar within ancient Israel (pp. 28–29).

Furthermore, biblical writers often portray Yahweh as embodied. Yahweh waited on top of Mount Sinai for ten months until the Israelites finished the tabernacle, which he then inhabited. Sommer writes, “For P, the Israelites became a nation, truly deserved the name Israel, only when God arrived in their midst and they responded accordingly—that is, when the tabernacle was complete and they initiated their worship” (p. 111). Later, Yahweh resided in the temple and subsequently left during the “templeless period.” Within Christian tradition divine fluidity is codified in the doctrine of the Trinity (p. 133). Sommer states that the theological model that undergirds a Trinitarian perception of God is consistent with classical Jewish belief: “No Jew sensitive to Judaism’s own classical sources, however, can fault the theological model Christianity employs when it avows belief in a God who has an earthly body as well as a Holy Spirit manifestation, for that model, we have seen, is a perfectly Jewish one” (p. 135). Sommer further states, “The only significant theological difference between Judaism and Christianity lies not in the Trinity or in the incarnation but in Christianity’s revival of the notion of a dying and rising God, a category ancient Israel clearly rejects” (pp. 135–36). Sommer sees P as “the most Christian section of Hebrew Scripture” (p. 136), and this fact “renders deeply ironic many Christians’ aversion to this part of their Scripture” (p. 137).

However, not every part of the Hebrew Bible embraces divine embodiment. Sommer points to the Decalogue found in Deuteronomy, which “downplays the notion of divine embodiment by insisting that God’s body never came to the earth,” while the Decalogue in P “tells us that God rested on the seventh day,” which portrays God as having a body that can rest (p. 138). According to the Deuteronomists, God never dwells on earth but

remains in heaven (p. 139). Even though one spot is authorized and set aside as more special so that the cult can take place there, according to D the location is symbolic in “pointing toward God rather than housing God” (p. 139).

Lastly, Sommer includes a lengthy appendix (pp. 145–74) on monotheism and polytheism in ancient Israel. While Israel shared many religious perceptions with cognate cultures, biblical religion distinguished itself from its neighbors with its emphasis on God as the exclusive creator of the universe over which he has complete control (p. 173).

Sommer’s discussion of divine embodiment and fluidity within Mesopotamia and his application of it to the biblical texts is deeply fascinating and enlightening. Given the historical dominance of Christian scholars, who should at least in theory embrace a form of divine embodiment, within biblical theology it is quite striking that divine embodiment and fluidity are either rejected outright or almost entirely ignored by OT theologians. Now that Sommer’s book is available, no responsible OT theology can neglect a discussion of these elements. Within Christian theology, divine embodiment finds its clearest expression in the incarnation, and the doctrine of the Trinity is an explicit adoption of a fluid view of divine personhood. However, as Sommer has ably shown, these perspectives are already embedded within the Hebrew Scriptures, and we are indebted to him for reminding us of this and for encouraging us to integrate these concepts into biblical theologies.

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The Lost World of Genesis One: Ancient Cosmology and the Origins Debate. By John H. Walton. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2009, 192 pp., \$16.00.

John Walton is well known in the evangelical academic community, having written or edited a number of valuable books. His commitment to serious scholarship is unquestioned, and he has earned the trust of the evangelical community. His résumé is an important backdrop to *The Lost World of Genesis One*, since its content is bound to disturb some readers.

Walton’s thesis is straightforward: since our modern scientific culture is just that—modern—our cultural context would have been utterly foreign and incomprehensible to the biblical writers. For Walton, any attempt to embed modern science into Genesis 1, whether by traditional, literalist creation science, or other approaches by Christian scientists involving evolution or modern Big Bang cosmology, amounts to imposing a foreign culture onto the text.

Walton unfolds this general thesis by offering eighteen propositions, each of which forms a chapter. Over the course of these propositions, he carefully lays out comparative ancient Near Eastern data that mirrors and informs Genesis 1 as a compelling example of ancient cosmology, albeit with a unique theological purpose. Those steeped in Semitics and ancient Near Eastern studies would not find much that is new here, except perhaps for Walton’s contentions that Hebrew *bara’* speaks of “functional ordering” rather than creation and that the cosmos needs to be viewed as God’s temple, which becomes a guiding rubric for what God does throughout Genesis 1.

Walton’s book is aimed at the non-specialist. Consequently, the bulk of the linguistic and literary evidence for Genesis 1 as ancient cosmology is appropriately withheld. What is included adequately informs the reader that Genesis 1 is quite consistent with the ancient cosmologies known from surrounding cultures.

The first proposition (“Genesis 1 is Ancient Cosmology”) is arguably the most crucial. Walton knows full well that many of his readers will object to his thesis, per-

haps especially those who equate biblical inspiration, authority, and inerrancy with the question of whether Genesis 1 is scientifically coherent in its literal exposition. He patiently and clearly explains why this is ill advised and perhaps even impugns God's decision to dispense revelation when he did at the time in which he did. The danger lies not in making Genesis palatable to modern science, but in changing the intended meaning of the inspired text itself. Walton writes:

If we accept Genesis 1 as ancient cosmology, then we need to interpret it as ancient cosmology rather than translate it into modern cosmology. If we turn it into modern cosmology, we are making the text say something that it never said. . . . Since we view the text as authoritative, it is a dangerous thing to change the meaning of the text into something it never intended to say. . . . If God aligned revelation with one particular science, it would have been unintelligible to people who lived prior to the time of that science. . . . We gain nothing by bringing God's revelation into accordance with today's science. In contrast, it makes perfect sense that God communicated his revelation to his immediate audience in terms they understood (p. 17).

Walton brings analogies to the reader's attention that reinforce the coherence of his thesis. For example, when the OT speaks of the "mind" and refers to the seat of emotions and intellect as the heart, liver, kidneys, and intestines, modern science cannot be aligned with such a notion. As Walton notes, "When God wanted to talk to the Israelites about their intellect, emotions, and will, he did not revise their ideas of physiology and feel compelled to reveal the function of the brain. . . . Consequently, we need not try to come up with a physiology for our times that would explain how people think with their entrails" (pp. 18–19).

The irony and impact of Walton's thesis is palpable. Evangelicals who champion a hermeneutic that insists the Bible's original context is critical for discerning its meaning frequently do not follow through consistently when it comes to Genesis 1. More pointedly, Walton's thesis forces us to ask whether we are truly committed to study the Bible in its ancient context or not, and whether evangelical scholars will be content to describe and articulate scriptural concepts like inspiration and inerrancy in ways that honor this context or will insist on crafting those concepts under modern conditioning.

While I would quibble with Walton on certain points, I see Walton's work as an essential primer on the *realia* of Genesis 1 and a much-needed corrective to the inconsistent hermeneutics found in apologetics material on origins. Frankly, this is a book that needed to be written and was long overdue. Walton shows us we are far better off to focus on how a creation with a lone external, independent, intelligent Cause conforms much more lucidly to the findings of modern science than to resist letting the Bible be what it is. Walton has provided both the impetus to pursue that course and a coherent framework for understanding God's decision to communicate revelation in ancient times rather than now.

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The Epic of Eden: A Christian Entry into the Old Testament. By Sandra L. Richter. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2008, xii + 263 pp., \$24.00 paper.

Sandra Richter's stated goal for writing *The Epic of Eden: A Christian Entry into the Old Testament* is "to deal a mortal blow" to what she refers to as "the dysfunctional closet syndrome" (p. 19). Written in an informal, "folksy" style, the book targets primarily a

lay audience that has at best a general awareness of OT facts or stories, but is at the same time basically unaware of “how they mean,” what they mean, and how the OT prepares for the NT. In light of a “great barrier” she rightly perceives to exist between the modern reader and the message of the OT—a barrier of time and culture—the author devotes the first three chapters to “setting up” her “guided tour” of the OT flow of redemptive history.

In chapter 1, “The Bible as the Story of Redemption,” Richter sets out to bridge aspects of the cultural barrier in her discussion of Israel’s tribal culture; here she engages the phenomena of “patriarchal,” “patrilineal,” and “patrilocal.” While the first of these terms will be somewhat familiar to a lay audience, the latter two will be less so; all three terms are adequately explained, discussed, and illustrated. The *ברית-אב* motif is employed as a common denominator in her treatment of the three categories.

Another aspect of bridging the gap is encountered in chapter 2, “The Bible in Real Time and Space.” Here Richter first develops something of a chronological/historical backdrop against which the OT is to be understood. To do so, she asserts, “We are going to organize the story of redemption as the biblical writers have, around five major eras” (p. 47). These five eras focus on Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses and David; a covenant administration is associated with each, according to Richter. This latter point is less obvious in the “Adam narrative” than in the other four—a point to which this review will return. She pursues the narration of each era/individual using the paradigm of “Real Time” and “Real Space;” her intent is that the reader understand something of the historical, cultural, geographical setting in which each movement of redemptive history was played out. Chapter 3, her final “set-up chapter,” addresses the concept of covenant in the OT. In a non-technical manner, covenant is presented from an ancient Near Eastern perspective, rather than from a twenty-first-century, systematic theology perspective. In so doing, Richter draws the reader into the world of the OT and succeeds in “getting at” OT covenant dynamic. Cross’s view of *fictive kinship* is introduced in the covenant discussion and is linked to the *ברית-אב* motif prominent in chapter 1.

Chapter 4, “God’s Original Intent,” turns the reader’s attention to the first of the five eras anticipated in chapter 2, the Adamic era. Without dodging, yet skillfully negotiating, the many potential “textual entanglements” represented in Genesis 1–5, Richter makes a nice case that God’s original intent for humanity was “God’s people dwelling in God’s place with full access to his presence” (p. 118). While making her case, however, she argues that a suzerainty-type covenant was established by God with Adam and Eve. While admitting the term *ברית* is not found in Genesis 1–5, she asserts that the “profile” of covenant is found throughout the narrative. Yet, when readers reference her Figure 3.1 (p. 84) that provides a format of such a covenant structure, they will find only one of the five components there listed to appear, in any way, in the Adam narrative (i.e. stipulations). The text seems, rather, to represent the God/humanity relationship of Genesis 1–5 as that of “relationship of blessing,” which is not necessarily synonymous with formal, binding covenant relationship. Here one might note the movement from Gen 12:1–3 (“blessing”) to Genesis 15 (YHWH “cuts a covenant” with Abram).

Having addressed “God’s original intent,” Richter turns the focus to “God’s final intent” in chapter 5. Her basic point is that God’s original intent, violated by humanity’s response in Eden, is unchanged, and that the divine design for finally achieving that intent is what constitutes the story of the OT. She appeals to the significance of the tabernacle and temple as well as ancient Near Eastern iconography (e.g. cherubim, trees, rivers) in demonstrating the prominent theological role these structures and images play as visual symbols of God’s original/final intent, both to the Israelites and present-day readers. Her discussion brings one ultimately to the new Jerusalem.

Three additional chapters walk the reader through the remaining four eras represented by Noah and Abraham (chap. 6), Moses and the Tabernacle (chap. 7), and David

and the Monarchy (chap. 8). These discussions are generally characterized by a nice blending of ancient Near Eastern dynamics and relevant textual data that advances the biblical story of redemptive history. Richter's inclusion of the Noahic covenant in the story of redemption is to be applauded given the fact that it is often overlooked in such a discussion. On the other hand, somewhat surprising, in the discussion of Moses and the tabernacle was the writer's portrayal of Israel's move through the wilderness on the way to Sinai—"This cumbersome group manages to sustain itself and its flocks until they reach their God-ordained destination" (p. 175). God's provision for Israel on the way to Sinai is not an insignificant component in the history of salvation. The concluding chapter (chap. 9) addresses "The New Covenant and the Return of the King." Here Richter bridges the often-perceived gap between the Testaments by addressing the continuity of the theological development of God's initial/final intent.

In any such attempt at synthesizing so large a body of material, there is always the problem of selection—what biblical data should be included or not included. Furthermore, there is also the risk of oversimplifying both the data that has been selected for inclusion, as well as the biblical message itself. An example of the latter is seen in her analogy of the "fallen climber" (original humanity) and the relationship of each covenant to that situation (p. 130). Perhaps from the writer's perspective, a mortal blow has been dealt to the dysfunctional closet syndrome; the verdict, however, has not yet been rendered. Nevertheless, the targeted audience will certainly be moved toward that objective by reading Richter's discussion.

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Exodus. By Thomas B. Dozeman. Eerdmans Critical Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009, xix + 868 pp, \$55.00.

Thomas Dozeman's commentary on Exodus is the fourth volume of the Eerdmans Critical Commentary series (following volumes on First and Second Timothy, Philemon, and Psalms). The series mandate is to "remain sensitive to the original meaning of the text and to bring alive its relevance for today" (p. i). The commentaries are intended for both "serious general readers and scholars," although a general reader would need to be very serious indeed to work through this commentary.

The book is well edited and contains only a few typographical problems. The paperback cover made the book more affordable, but it quickly showed wear and tear. Dozeman helpfully gives many views on various problems, but he too frequently does not evaluate the various solutions he presents. Except for the technical notes, the commentary reads easily. The commentary will be most useful to those interested in historical critical questions; for others, the commentary is still worth reading for his many astute observations on the final form of the text, but they will find many sections wearying. The main problem of the commentary is that it does not fulfill the second part of the mandate of the series; Dozeman pays close attention to the original meaning, but he provides the modern reader with little guidance on how to "bring alive its relevance for today."

The author introduces each larger unit of text with a summary of central themes, research on authors, the division between non-P and P histories (smaller divisions than this are not discussed), and literary structure. For each smaller unit of text he provides his own translation (with the P text in bold), textual notes (mostly listing LXX variants or looking at difficult grammatical issues), and commentary. The book ends with a bibliography (52 pages) and subject, author, Hebrew word, and Scripture and ancient text

indices (43 pages). The most frequently cited modern authors are Erhard Blum, Brevard Childs, Frank Moore Cross, Martin Noth, William Propp, and John Van Seters.

Dozeman primarily focuses on historical critical and literary issues, mentioning only in passing other ways of reading and other interests, such as a liberation reading of Exodus (p. 55); a feminist reading of the midwives (p. 75); and the translation history of “witch” in relation to witch hunts in medieval England (p. 543). He frequently looks at how other biblical texts interpret or relate to Exodus. The introduction provides a helpful overview of the recent shifts in Pentateuchal studies. Dozeman follows the Documentary Hypothesis by identifying repetitions as a sign of multiple authorship, dating Deuteronomy to the Josianic reform, and dating the P literature later than Deuteronomy, but he departs from it by ignoring the E source, closely relating J (non-P in Dozeman’s terminology) to Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History, and viewing the P History as a supplement to the non-P History rather than an independent source (pp. 35–43). He assumes a “moderate” view of dating the advent of Israelite history writing primarily to the exile and postexilic time period (p. 24). Exodus records salvation history (p. 26), but the wilderness as an episode in salvation history linking the Exodus to the Conquest most likely dates from the exile (pp. 354–55). The events recorded in Exodus did not actually happen, as the Israelites were an indigenous group in Canaan (pp. 28–30). The P history presented “a utopian picture of divine holiness in the midst of the Israelites, not a historical account of a lost sanctuary” (p. 627).

Only a sampling of his historical critical conclusions can be given here. The P History sometimes gives a different interpretation of events than the non-P History; for example, the P author might have extended the genealogy to Phinehas as a critique of the non-P historian’s positive view of the Midianites (pp. 171–72). The Israelites sacrificed their firstborn (p. 297). The Song of the Sea has mythological backgrounds, which the non-P author historicizes (p. 308). The first commandment presupposes the existence of other gods (p. 480). Both the prohibition against ascending stairs to an altar and the absence of a royal city and monarchial terminology for the sanctuary may be a polemic against the monarchy, a king ascends stairs to the throne (pp. 514, 571, 574).

Along with his interest in historical critical questions, Dozeman is also a perceptive reader of the present form of the text. He is interested not just in how each source portrayed an idea, but also how the canonical form portrayed it. For example, he interprets the Covenant Code (Exod 21:1–23:19) as one law code in its present form (p. 524). Following are a sampling of his literary and final form observations. He divides the book into two major sections: the power of YHWH (Exod 1:1–15:21) and the presence of YHWH (Exod 15:22–40). The fulfillment of the population promise in Egypt brought Israel suffering instead of blessing (p. 45). The break between Genesis and Exodus indicates a break in the Israelite knowledge of YHWH; YHWH’s name had to be reintroduced between generations (p. 133). The purification of water in the wilderness is a reversal of the plagues (p. 369), as is the raining down of bread from heaven instead of hail (p. 382). Israelite failure before Sinai did not bring punishment, but failure after Sinai, when Israel was under the covenant, was dealt with harshly (p. 373). The dispute in Exod 17:1–7 is actually a lawsuit against YHWH to hold him to his promises and is not a rebellion, which is misunderstood by Moses in Num 20:2–13 (p. 389). “Eagle’s wings” might signify both the divine care of Israel and defeat of their enemies, as eagles elsewhere have great destructive power (p. 443). “Before God” (Exod 21:6) refers to a cultic setting, not a legal setting (pp. 528–29). The root meaning of “hate” is forced separation (p. 485). Moses is never idealized as a kingly figure (p. 573). Moses’ glow is permanent, contra Paul (p. 754).

Dozeman mines the ancient Near Eastern world for assistance in understanding Exodus. Based on comparative studies P law is no longer viewed as a fiction (p. 594). Exodus 21:22–23 relates to miscarriage (and not premature birth) based on ancient Near

Eastern parallels (p. 534). Temple building following victory in warfare is common in the ancient Near East (p. 573), but the Exodus version is distinctive because neither God nor Moses built the temple, but two humans endowed with divine wisdom (p. 675). A controversial and not very convincing idea is that the sound heard by Moses and Joshua on their return from the mountain (*qol 'annot*; Exod 32:18) refers to the voice of Anat; either Anat has replaced Moses as the Israelite leader or she is a positive model of devotion to the divine being Baal (p. 709).

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The Sword and the Stylus: An Introduction to Wisdom in the Age of Empires. By Leo G. Perdue. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008. 502 pp., \$38.00.

Leo Perdue has offered wisdom literature savants another masterpiece on the scribal setting of wisdom literature in the ancient Near East and Israel. He provides a socio-political setting of scribal movements for the books of Proverbs, Job, Qoheleth, Ben Sira and The Wisdom of Solomon. He finishes with a triad of chapters on the relation of wisdom to apocalypticism, the wisdom and apocalypticism at Qumran, and finally the continuing wisdom streams into rabbinic wisdom. The work is topped off with an extensive 45-page bibliography.

Without a doubt, Perdue is one of the leading thinkers on the planet on wisdom literature with major publications that include *Wisdom Literature: A Theological History* (Westminster John Knox, 2007); *Proverbs* (John Knox, 2000); *Wisdom & Creation: The Theology of Wisdom Literature* (Abingdon, 1994); and the recently released collection of articles on *Scribes, Sages, and Seers: The Social Roles of the Wise in Israel and the Eastern Mediterranean World* (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009), updating his epic work *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (Eisenbrauns, 1990). One also should not overlook his classic dissertation, *Wisdom and Cult* (SBL, 1977).

Perdue is richly steeped in the literature of the sages inside Israel and the ancient Near East. His scribal social construct covers Egypt, Mesopotamia down to Ptolemaic and Seleucid times. This current work now includes Roman and Rabbinic sources. His acumen and life-long study in wisdom texts are combined more recently with an integrative sociological/history of religions approach that is reflected on every page of this well-crafted volume.

Perdue's "Prolegomena" makes a thorough survey of the imaginative thought world and vocabulary employed by scribes of the various empires. His survey of Egyptian wisdom texts presents their *Weltanschauung* within the social matrix of the royal courts and schools (e.g. the house of life in Egypt, the *edubba* in Sumer, and the *bit tuppi* in Akkad). His treatment of Mesopotamian scribes, including the seven legendary sages (*apkallū*), who preceded the cosmic deluge, could be supplemented with Van Der Toorn's *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible* (Harvard, 2007). Perdue's grocery lists of vocabulary typical of sages from Egypt (p. 15), Mesopotamia (p. 29), and Israel (pp. 90, 161–65) needs development but would have increased this 500-page tome beyond its current heft. His extension into Hellenistic empires and scribes—introducing *gnomologia*, *paroimia*, and *chreia*—is very helpful (p. 42). His descriptions of the education of Philo and Josephus were fascinating and show the breadth and depth of his scholarly expertise.

Perdue's discussions of the collections in Proverbs and the editorial work of the scribes of Hezekiah's day who highlighted *šaddiq* ("righteousness"; cf. Egyptian *ma'at*,

“order”), the retribution principle, and creation theology as providing an overarching interpretative framework was useful. The scribes of Proverbs were portrayed as reflecting humble fealty to the royal sponsoring power structures and traditional wisdom in contrast to the more radical calls for social justice of the prophets. His discussion of the rhetoric of Madame Wisdom’s protreptic invitations, schools in early Israel, and Agur as a mantic sage were insightful. He believes the proverbial collections were redacted during the Ptolemaic period in Second Temple schools as a professional manual for youth. His repeated rendering of Madame Wisdom (Proverbs 1, 8, 9) as imagery drawn from Yahweh’s consort Isis/Asherah that was later toned down into a metaphor by post-exilic monotheistic Zadokites will be hard for many evangelicals to embrace (pp. 92, 109, 111–12). Because his focus is on scribes, he understandably underplays oral/folk sources (p. 107; cf. Golka, Westermann, Fontaine, Mieder). One should also be aware of Dell’s overlapping work on *The Book of Proverbs in Social and Theological Context* (Cambridge University Press, 2006).

Perdue sees Job as built from traditional narrative sections that open and close the book (chaps. 1–2, 42) reflecting unquestioning piety that could no longer be justified by the elitist sages whose crisis of faith had been induced by the Babylonian holocaust. As a result, they constructed dialogues that featured a feistier Job to counter the pietistic narrative framework. Perdue avers that the additions of the cosmic battle of Yahweh and mythical Leviathan and Behemoth are necessary because they demonstrate that even God himself is not all-powerful and his rule is limited. Even he cannot remove the proud and wicked but must continue his own battle with cosmic forces of evil (p. 136). He notes that in Job there is an unsettling of traditional sapiential theology, where retribution and God’s justice are rebuffed as false (pp. 139, 149). The Elihu speeches are seen as populism opposing the Jewish leadership of the Second Temple society and Persian colonial domination but ultimately offering an unsatisfactory defense of God.

Perdue handles the wisdom psalms as later insertions into a developing Psalter that took shape during the Hellenistic period. His listing of sapiential wisdom terms in the Psalms was helpful but beckons elaboration. His fivefold categories of wisdom psalms and discussion of individual psalms were quite useful. He sees two types of scribes emerging in this late Persian period—those serving in the temple under the Zadokite hierarchy and those under the governor’s administration (p. 181). Their ascendancy countered the demise of prophecy in the Persian period. The author gives a fine treatment of Ezra as the scribe/priest of God Most High and the scribe of the king (p. 189).

Perdue seats Qoheleth in the Ptolemaic period (c. 200 BC) at a time when Hellenism and its skepticism was making inroads into Alexandrian Judaism. He notes growing Jewish dissatisfaction with Ptolemaic domination just prior to Antiochus III’s expansion into Palestine. He also provides a fascinating treatment of the Ptolemaic/Seleucid transition including pre-Hellenistic archaeological finds at Tel Dor. Qohelet struggles with breaking the traditional wisdom nexus of act/consequence and with rejecting the law of retribution where the righteous are blessed and the wicked perish. Perdue links the autobiographical style with Egyptian autobiographical tomb narratives of deceased Egyptian rulers (p. 204) reflecting the voice of a fictional Solomon. Later, a Ptolemaic scribe inserted more traditional wisdom responses (“fear God”).

Perdue’s treatments of Ben Sira and The Wisdom of Solomon reveal his fluid and open view of the canon. He is very accepting of the historical settings acknowledged in Ben Sira’s prologue (p. 266) and gives insightful and interesting discussions of the periods of Antiochus III and Antiochus Ephiphanes as well as Jewish reactions to the Hellenistic “civilization of *paideia*” and the role of the *gymnasia* in Hellenistic education. He features terms such as “aretology” (hymns honoring the virtues of the gods/humans); “protrepsis,” “paraenesis,” “panegyric,” and “encomium” as Greek structures embedded in Ben Sira, who argued for Torah wisdom over Hellenism (p. 270). Ben Sira was clearly an elitist scribe with wealth and education who considered his own writings

as inspired and worthy of canonization (p. 273). His discussions here of sage as teacher, physician, counselor, and interpreter of Scripture are quite fruitful.

The Wisdom of Solomon was from an Alexandrian Jewish sage during Herodian times of the Roman empire. Perdue's discussions of Anthony and Cleopatra and the Alexandrian Jews of the Diaspora are fascinating reading for anyone interested in NT backgrounds and reflect the breadth and depth of his scholarship. His treatment of xenophobia, Jewish pogroms in Alexandria (AD 38) and Judea (c. AD 66), and Roman claims of the Jews being atheists and misanthropes (p. 316), are enlightening and well documented.

In his final chapters, the author demonstrates the connection of apocalypticism and wisdom. Perdue does not suggest a unilinear development, but a connection that came as a result of the composers of apocalyptic literature often drawing on the rich traditions and imagination of wisdom.

This work is a thorough history of the social environments of scribalism from the early kingdoms of Egypt and Mesopotamia down through the Neo-Babylonian, Persian, Ptolemaic, Seleucid, and Roman periods. Many evangelicals will find plenty to chew on with his rejection of a fixed canon, the normativity of biblical texts, and divine inspiration as well as his rooting imagery of Madame Wisdom in Yahweh's alleged consort. This sweeping work on the social history of the scribes makes an important contribution for understanding the wisdom literature as shaped by scribes.

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Psalms, Volume 2: Psalms 42–89. By John Goldingay. Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007, 744 pp., \$49.99.

Those familiar with the field of OT study will no doubt recognize the familiar name of John Goldingay, professor of OT at Fuller Seminary and author of numerous commentaries and other books on OT topics such as hermeneutical methods and biblical theology.

This commentary is the second volume of a three-volume work by Goldingay on the Psalms; volume 1 (Psalms 1–41) appeared in 2006 and volume 3 (Psalms 90–150) in 2008. These are contributions to the series edited by Tremper Longman entitled Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms, joining volumes by Richard Hess on Song of Songs (2005); Longman on Proverbs (2006); the just-released work by Craig Bartholomew on Ecclesiastes (2009); and the final projected volume on Job by Longman, which is forthcoming.

There is no shortage of commentaries on the book of Psalms, both in antiquity down through today, and while certain OT books may have suffered relative neglect for decades, Psalms has never been among those. It is therefore reasonable to wonder why yet another is needed, and what possible gap in coverage Goldingay's volumes could fill.

The targeted audience of this particular series by Baker is clergy and seminary students. Further, according to Longman, the series editor, the primary focus is on the message of the book, "and the commentators have labored to expose God's message for his people in the book they discuss" (p. 8). The editor then lays out the format to be followed in the commentary (p. 9). First, there is an introduction, which takes up matters of title, authorship, date, language, style, text, ancient Near Eastern background, genre, canonicity, theological message, and connection to the NT. Second, the author provides an original translation with explanatory notes. Third, a section-by-section commentary follows through the text, addressing both the structure of the

passage and engaging interpretive issues. This interpretation section highlights the text's meaning in its original historical setting. The fourth and final section presents concluding theological implications. Here the author seeks to connect the message of each passage both with the rest of the canon (OT and NT) as well as its continuing relevance for contemporary life.

The success of this volume should only be measured, then, against these stated goals, so I will address these one at a time. First, while this second volume (Psalms 42–89) does have a very brief “Author’s Preface” (pp. 11–12), it does not provide the introduction. There is an approximately 55-page introduction in the first volume, and presumably the issues promised by the series editor for this section appear there, but that simply means a reader wishing that information as it relates to Psalms 42–89 will have to acquire the first volume in addition to this one.

The second element of the commentary is the translation, and here Goldingay shines. He blends together quite successfully both formal and functional aspects of the text, preserving the poetic aesthetics while retaining and highlighting original language word nuances. His footnotes reveal his solid grasp of the Hebrew text, text critical acumen, and interaction with the relevant lexicons and secondary literature both past and present. Scholars will appreciate his contribution here, with the only possible weakness that, given his skill, he is certainly capable of providing more. Granting the target audience, however, he cannot be faulted.

In the third section, Goldingay normally provides approximately one full page of discussion in which he explains the structure of the passage and places it against its historical background, to the degree that this can be surmised on a chapter-by-chapter basis through the Psalms. This is followed by the section-by-section interpretive commentary of the passage at hand. His mature reasoning and fresh insight are worthy of the highest compliments. In my judgment, it is precisely this kind of commentary that is most needed by those ministers whose libraries are necessarily limited but who desire to engage the text in a serious and thoughtful manner. Goldingay explains the development of thought, and exemplifies the best of scholarship in doing so.

The concluding section on the theological implications of each psalm is also normally about one page in length. On the whole, Goldingay offers good ideas for preaching points and timeless truths on each of the psalms. His own reflection will stimulate pastors who seek to relate the word of God to the world of today. However, Goldingay is less successful in relating each psalm to its canonical context. In the preface, he acknowledges that the cutting edge of Psalms research revolves around the structure of Psalms as a whole, and “the way sequences of psalms belong together and expound a theological view of their own” (p. 11). But he follows that sentence by stating, “I am not enamored of this study. . . . I remain of the view that the main focus of psalm study needs to be the individual psalm” (p. 11). He does not defend his choice, nor does he point to any potential problems he sees in reading them as a unity. Consequently, his focus is “on the psalms as we have them” (p. 11), and he seemingly disregards the fact that what it is that we have is, in fact, a *book* of psalms, and that we do not have psalms individually circulating independent of their context.

Curiously, Goldingay implicitly then betrays his own stated position at the very outset of his commentary by choosing to treat Psalms 42–43 as a single literary piece (a custom followed by most). Following this notable exception, from this point on he defaults to his preferred disregard of context for the rest of the volume.

Overall, this is a fine commentary in most respects, well designed and executed for its intended, pastoral ministry audience. But it is disappointing that a scholar of Goldingay’s caliber elected not to engage “the cutting edge.”

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The Narrative Effect of Book IV of the Hebrew Psalter. By Robert E. Wallace. New York: Peter Lang, 2007, xi + 132 pp., \$58.98.

Robert E. Wallace, Director of International Programs and Assistant Professor of Religion at Shorter College, Rome, GA, has written a study of Book IV of the book of Psalms. "My intention," he writes, "is to focus on the fixed, final form, the canonical 'shape' of the Hebrew Psalter, specifically, how the shape of Book IV (Psalms 90–106) affects the way one reads the whole Psalter, and vice versa" (p. 1). He begins his study with the obligatory survey of scholarship, in which he first examines general scholarship on Psalms (though he omits any discussion of the important canonical readings by David C. Mitchell, *The Message of the Psalter*, Jamie A. Grant, *The King as Exemplar*, and Robert L. Cole, *Shape and Message of Book III*) and then specifically focuses on Book IV. Wallace then sets forth his methodology. He agrees with Robert Alter's idea that biblical poetry has a "narrative impulse," and so asks, "Is it profitable to consider the Psalter as a narrative whole?" (p. 11). He is not as concerned with the shaping process of the Psalter as he is with the shape. He acknowledges significant debt to the work of both Gerald Wilson and Nancy deClaissé-Walford.

In the next four chapters, Wallace works his way through a canonical/contextual reading of Book IV. In chapter 2, he looks at "The Intercession of Moses (Psalm 90–92)." He links Book IV with Book III, noting that a change has taken place in the relationship between God and Israel (Patron-client), and, because of the shame brought onto the nation and the chosen king by the exile, God needs to restore his honor as Patron. Moses, who precedes David, resurfaces in his role as leader of the nation. Wallace finds significant intertextual links with key passages in Exodus and Deuteronomy. Just as in these two books, God destroys and Moses intercedes, so again, in Psalm 90, God has destroyed (in the exile) but Moses intercedes. The narrative of the Psalter highlights Moses, who will speak once again to a nation in crisis. Psalm 91 also connects with Deuteronomy, both lexically and theologically. Psalm 91 is "a blessing for protection from the consequences of exile" (p. 26). Finally, Psalm 92, a Sabbath psalm, calls the community to give thanks to YHWH for his deliverance.

In chapter 3, Wallace surveys "The Majesty of Yahweh (Psalm 93–100)." The kingship of YHWH continues the emphasis on Torah and Moses, and this emphasis reaches through Psalm 100. This section of Book IV, says Wallace, takes the reader from the disillusionment and disorientation of the end of Book III to a place of reorientation, based on Torah, Moses, and the kingship of YHWH. Connections with Exodus and Deuteronomy continue throughout this section. The reader finds that in Psalm 100, the psalmist is finally able to make a confession of faith, which he could not make in Psalm 95. Why? Because, for the psalmist, "YHWH has just now become king" (p. 50). This allows the psalmist to affirm, "YHWH is good" (Ps 100:5).

In chapter 4, "David's Deference to Moses (Psalms 101–103)," Wallace suggests the whole office of kingship is subordinated to Torah and Moses. The story of David is "retold" in Psalm 101; David promises to follow YHWH and keep Torah. In Psalm 102, however, David is just another fellow sufferer, hurting from exile with the nation. In Psalm 103, David turns to Moses for answers, and thereby sanctions Mosaic primacy.

In chapter 5, "Back to the Beginning (Psalms 104–106)," Wallace essentially concludes his study of Book IV. Psalm 104, a creation psalm, emphasizes YHWH's rule over all creation. Psalm 105 focuses on YHWH as actor (and promise keeper), not Israel. Psalm 106, however, tells the other side of the story; while YHWH has kept his promises, Israel has broken hers. Book IV, says Wallace, ends in a valley, not on a mountaintop. In chapter 6, "The End of the Matter," Wallace steps back from the details and summarizes his argument.

In terms of evaluation, there is more here to affirm than to reject. Wallace has demonstrated the benefits of reading these psalms in close connection with each other, in

the context of the book, and in light of intertextual allusions. I wonder, however, if the emphasis on Torah is as much of a solution to the psalmist(s) as Wallace suggests. True, it was forsaking of Torah that brought about exile, but surely there is more to the forward, future orientation, to eschatology and the Davidic messiah, than to the backward, Torah-based, orientation. If Torah is the answer, why the emphasis on the Davidic messiah elsewhere in the Psalter? Why is the messianic figure of Psalm 118 presented as a NEW Moses, not the old one? Although some have overemphasized the role of eschatology in the Psalter (e.g. Mitchell), Wallace seems to minimize its significance.

Nevertheless, if I disagree here and there with some of Wallace's conclusions, it is not because of his methodology. Wallace consistently employs a canonical/contextual hermeneutic that seeks primarily to understand a given psalm in relation to adjacent psalms, the book of Psalms as a whole, and significant intertexts. The ultimate quest is to understand the message, or narrative, of the Psalter as it has been edited and received by the believing community. This method leads to interesting questions about the theology and message of the entire book. Wallace's work joins a slowly growing number of studies that seek to understand the Psalter using a canonical/contextual interpretation. In my judgment, more work is needed along these lines. Hopefully, in the not-so-distant future, a consensus about the message of the Psalter and its constituent parts will begin to emerge. These are indeed exciting times to be a student of the book of Psalms.

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The Goodly Fellowship of the Prophets: The Achievement of Association in Canon Formation. By Christopher R. Seitz. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009, 136 pp., \$19.99 paper.

Christopher R. Seitz, formerly a student of Brevard S. Childs of Yale and a currently Professor of Biblical Interpretation at the University of Toronto, Wycliffe College, is a prolific author particularly interested in OT studies with special attention to Hebrew prophecy, theological interpretation of Scripture, and canonical reading of the Book of the Twelve. The latter is well articulated in his new book *The Goodly Fellowship of the Prophets: The Achievement of Association in Canon Formation*. The current volume was published in the Acadia Studies in Bible and Theology series. The material within it was first delivered in a form of public lectures at Acadia Divinity College in Nova Scotia in 2007 (preface, pp. 9–13). Seitz's mind is focused on the formation of the biblical canon and the achievement of prophetic association as exemplified by a canonical reading of the Book of the Twelve, or Minor Prophets. It caught his attention in the recent work *Prophecy and Hermeneutics* (Baker, 2007), and was largely extended in the current volume.

This piece of work tackles noteworthy questions such as: (1) What methodology is to be utilized to set the formation of the canon in the early church? (2) What is so special about the canonical method that addresses both theological and hermeneutical concerns? (3) How should one assess the idea of a closed/open canon so commonly misunderstood by many today? (4) How remarkable is the canonical association between the three major divisions of the Hebrew Bible? Seitz attempts to answer these questions in his 136-page book, which is introduced by a remarkable note: "My conviction is that the Book of the Twelve is a 'goodly fellowship of the Prophets,' akin to the apostolic fellowship represented by the Pauline Letter Collection within the Canonical New Testament, and likely both its formation and form" (p. 12). While making this bold theological statement, the author introduces his work with a survey of influential contemporary biblical scholars

and their views of canon development and formation (pp. 17–30). Further, Seitz unfolds the recent work done on the Twelve and the character of the prophetic accomplishment. He tries to give the reader a sense of what is going on in the field, which is both a helpful and uneasy endeavor when one takes into account the number of works written on the canon problem. The introduction is closed up with a focused, intentional object to address “newer developments in critical assessments of the Prophets” (p. 29).

The following points are essential to Seitz’s argument. First, we must assess the phenomenon of prophecy that began with Moses and extended to Malachi’s prophecy and his eschatological hope for a future arrival of a “messenger” before the coming of the Lord’s Day. Second, the Writings category does not exhibit internal associations within its books as the Law and the Prophets do (regarded as the “rule and syntax” of Israel’s life). Third, a remarkable observation is the ambiguous functionality of the Writings corpus operating in close relationship to the Torah-Prophets corpus. The number and order of the books incorporated within the Writings are not the key factors in respect to their canonical shape. Fourth, the OT has significantly influenced the NT’s form, hermeneutics, and canon (pp. 31–48). Following is an examination of “The Challenge of Order and Arrangement in Standard Old Studies” (pp. 49–76). Seitz underscores not only the importance of inquiring into the order and arrangement of the OT books, but also the criteria by which it must be done. The next chapter, “The Achievement of Association in the Prophetic Canon” (pp. 77–103), focuses on the prophetic division of the canon and the books incorporated within it. Special consideration is given to the Minor Prophets and their internal associations so closely affiliated with the canonical formation of the Hebrew prophecy. The closing chapter, “The Accomplishment of the Writings” (pp. 105–25), highlights the problem of the Writings that stands out within the canon of Scripture. The Writings is an entirely different category that should be handled in light of the existence of independent collections such as Psalms, Job, and Proverbs; the Megilloth; Daniel; and more. Seitz draws another important conclusion when he writes, “The canonicity of the NT is an analogous and derivative phenomenon, taking its logic and bearings from the existence of an anterior witness in a given material form” (p. 131). The latter will be thoroughly examined in Seitz’s forthcoming volume *The Character of Christian Scripture*. The present book is supplied with a general index of names and topics (pp. 133–36). A bibliography is a needed element that is lacking in the present edition of the volume.

Overall, this book offers a good analysis of the canonical formation of the tripartite Hebrew Scriptures and their place in shaping the Christian canon of the Bible. Seitz makes no sharp distinction between canon and Scripture (as it is argued in this book). The integrity of canon and Scripture is well preserved in *The Goodly Fellowship of the Prophets*. The current volume is a solid contribution to the growing field of canon studies; however, much lends itself to further research and debate. Seitz’s research will provide an enduring resource for scholars engaged in research of the biblical canon.

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Daniel. By Sharon Pace. Macon, GA: Smyth and Helwys, 2008, xxiv + 383 pp., \$55.00.

The Smyth and Helwys Commentary Series is designed to be “user friendly” and accessible to Bible students at any level. Sharon Pace’s commentary on Daniel in the series is a fine example of a well-written commentary that will appeal to both professional and layman. While there is little interaction with the biblical languages, Pace demonstrates a mastery of recent literature on Daniel and is sensitive to both Jewish and

Christian historic interpretations of the book of Daniel. Her conclusions on critical issues are not particularly unique, following Collins (Hermenia) and Goldingay (Word) on most major points. Outside of a handful of specialized studies, conservative scholarship on Daniel such as Miller (Broadman and Holman, 1994) is ignored.

As with other contributions in this series, sidebars illuminate the text of the commentary with further cultural or historical details, such as brief definitions of key terms or explanations of non-biblical books. Sometimes these sidebars take the form of parallel texts from the Hebrew Bible or other literature, such as Josephus, Second Temple period texts (*Enoch, 4 Ezra*), classic Jewish or Christian exegesis, or modern reflections on Daniel. This feature is particularly valuable when reading Daniel 11, where an encyclopedic knowledge of the Seleucid and Ptolemaic dynasties is helpful. While these sidebars are valuable (and in many cases fascinating), they are supplemental and not necessary for the overall argument of the commentary. In general, the sidebars are remarkable for their variety. For example, in the commentary on Daniel 6, Pace includes several brief excerpts from Talmudic sources and a commentary selection from both Jerome and Calvin. Juxtaposing these different voices alongside the commentary on Daniel creates connections that are otherwise missed. Most critical issues appear in sidebars, usually citing important monographs on Daniel. For example, Yamauchi is cited in a sidebar on the identification of Belshazzar (p. 160), and two articles by Al Wolters appear in a sidebar on the writing on the wall (p. 181). As a result, endnotes are minimal.

Pace divides the book into two sections based on genre. She argues that like Esther, Judith, and Tobit, Daniel 1–6 was written in the Persian period and was designed to offer a model for Jews living in the Diaspora. This is clear for Pace because these chapters deal with the problems the Jews faced living under Persian and later Hellenistic overlords. Citing the political situation found in Ezra as an example, one Persian monarch may be supportive of the rebuilding of the Temple, yet the next aggressively against the Jews and their traditions. Chapters 1–6 are therefore not objective history; the Babylonian kings are “ciphers for Persian rulers who govern their subjects with both care and caprice” (p. 7). While the bulk of chapters 1–6 were produced in the Persian period, Dan 2:40–45 is an insertion into the text by a later author who was aware of the marriage alliances of the Ptolemies and Seleucids.

Reflecting the mainstream of contemporary scholarship on Daniel, Pace argues that the apocalyptic section (chaps. 7–12) was written just before the death of Antiochus IV Epiphanes in 164 BC. Because of the format of the commentary, the introduction to Daniel is brief. Typical arguments for and against the late date cannot be seriously weighed. This is an unfortunate shortcoming of the Smyth and Helwys series. However, since this is the working assumption of the commentary, support for the later date is found in appropriate places throughout the commentary. For example, Pace argues that the fourth kingdom of Daniel 2 and 7 is Greece and the goat of Daniel 8 is Antiochus. Likewise, the “anointed prince” of Dan 9:25 is likely Onias III and the final “week” refers to the cessation of worship under Antiochus. Pace is clear that chapters 8 and 9 are non-historical, stereotyped depictions of the progress of history up to the time of the writer. The details of the final vision of the book, however, can be confirmed from descriptions of the Seleucid kingdom found in Josephus and Maccabees. Pace therefore reads Daniel 7–12 alongside texts from 1–2 Maccabees, Josephus, Polybius and other primary sources. These texts are placed in sidebars to illustrate many of the difficult allusions to history in Daniel 11. She interprets all of Dan 11:21–45 as *ex eventu* prophecy referring to Antiochus IV Epiphanes, although verses 40–45 “turn to general statements about what will happen in the future” (p. 333). This is problematic, however, since Antiochus did not die in the land of Israel in a final battle—a detail Pace acknowledges. In the introduction, she describes these verses as “genuine predictions” with no awareness of the successes of the Maccabean revolt. If the final editor of Daniel had no problem

inserting political marriages into Daniel 2, one wonders why this prophecy was not also “updated” to more accurately reflect the way in which Antiochus died.

As with other volumes in this series, each commentary section concludes by making connections between the text and contemporary culture and issues. For example, Pace connects the experience of the fiery furnace to the problem of racism in America via a film based on the short story *Shadrach* by William Styron. Since the refusal of the three young men to bow to the Babylonian idol is analogous to the civil rights movement in the American south, Pace addresses the contemporary problem of racism. However, some of these connections eventually run far afield from the theological points made by the text of Daniel. Pace illustrates chapter 5 by discussing William Walton’s oratorio *Belshazzar’s Feast* in order to detail anti-Judaism prejudice in (primarily) nineteenth century biblical scholarship. While her comments on developments within the field of biblical scholarship are excellent, they ultimately are tangential to the themes of the text of Daniel. In the second half of the commentary the “Connections” sections are rather brief, reflecting the difficulty of these chapters.

The commentary is accompanied by a CD-ROM that contains a PDF file of the commentary. However, no extra features (e.g. additional artwork or sidebars) appear in the electronic form of the commentary. This is unfortunate, as the CD-ROM format lends itself to higher resolution images and more appropriate maps that might have been used in a classroom setting. The text is fully searchable and can be copied for use in a word-processor, although the electronic version would have been enhanced if the indices were hyperlinked.

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The New Testament in Antiquity: A Survey of the New Testament within Its Cultural Contexts. By Gary M. Burge, Lynn H. Cohick, and Gene L. Green. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009, 480 pp., \$49.99.

The crowded world of NT introductions and surveys recently welcomed a new arrival in *The New Testament in Antiquity* by Gary Burge, Lynn Cohick, and Gene Green. As indicated by its subtitle, *A Survey of the New Testament within its Cultural Contexts*, the distinctive emphasis of this volume is on the social, cultural, and historical background to the NT documents. The most distinguishing feature of this work—as far as first impressions are concerned—is the striking visual appeal of full-color images, subtly highlighted sidebars, and an overall design that invites the reader to settle into the text, reflect, and turn the page. The graphics and callouts are not mere window dressing; rather, they helpfully illumine the content of the discussion and the context of the NT world. For example, images of inscriptions bearing the names of actual NT characters (Pilate, Sergius Paulus, Erastus), artistic reconstructions of typical first-century dwellings, attractive maps, pictures of important archaeological finds (e.g. the “seat of Moses”), and so on, will connect the reader more concretely to the text of the NT and the cultural milieu(s) in which it was written. In other words, the design of this book is pedagogically astute; pertinent, eye-catching graphics and attention to visual aesthetics will engage a broader range of senses and ignite the imagination of students in a way that a “just-the-facts” kind of a textbook will not. In this respect (and only this respect) I would compare this NT survey to Bart Ehrman’s smartly designed NT introduction (4th ed.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). However, the visuals and graphics in this Zondervan title are superior.

Of course, one cannot judge a book by its cover or a NT survey by its impeccable aesthetics. Professors and students expect a NT survey to cover concisely and accurately a wide range of material, as well as significant introductory issues. One of the strengths of *The New Testament in Antiquity* is that it is co-authored by three scholars, each with their own research specialty, which results in a better informed presentation of issues and texts than one typically finds in a single-author NT survey written by a generalist. The book begins with chapters introducing the historical setting of the NT, the Jewish setting of Jesus' ministry, and the Greco-Roman setting of Paul's ministry. The Gospels are treated in canonical order and are introduced by chapters focusing on the sources behind the Gospel narratives and the central events of Jesus' biography. Paul's letters are treated in approximate chronological order, beginning with Galatians, and are similarly introduced by an overview of Paul's life and teaching. These preliminary chapters provide an excellent overview of the world of the NT and are worth reading in their own right.

Chapters addressing specific NT books begin with a general introduction, which usually addresses matters such as date, destination, recipients, social setting, and one or two significant introductory issues (e.g. Matthew's relationship to Judaism, north Galatia vs. south Galatia, etc.). This is followed by a section-by-section overview of the contents of the document or a summary of its message, including an outline of the book. It was not clear why some books (e.g. 2 Corinthians) received a section-by-section synopsis, while other books (e.g. Hebrews) warranted only a summary of its message. The final section of each chapter takes up critical interpretive issues that benefit from focused (albeit brief) reflection (e.g. historiography and Acts, pseudepigraphy and the Pastoral Epistles, symbolism in Revelation, etc.). Along the way, the discussion is enriched by a generous and diverse assortment of "Notes from Antiquity" sidebars. These callouts highlight important historical, social, literary, or theological issues raised by the text and provide a succinct summary of the topic under consideration. A random sample culled from various chapters illustrates the diversity of subjects treated: the parables of Jesus; the "I am" sayings in John; the voice of Jesus in Romans; Judaism in Antioch; hierarchy and Roman society; Cicero on Roman crucifixion. I found these sidebars informative, apropos, and generally well-chosen topics to highlight.

The final chapter of the book is dedicated to the preservation and communication of the NT documents. This chapter discusses the transmission of the text through scribal activity, the development of text types, the emergence of the canon, and a short but informative discussion of translation theory. Interesting examples of text-critical problems and differences in modern translations are included, which allows students to see the practical value of topics that might be considered quite remote and only tangentially related to their faith. This struck me as a helpful conclusion to the book, especially for students whose entire NT curriculum may consist of a single NT survey class.

The perspective of *The New Testament in Antiquity* is evangelical. I found its presentation of data and evaluation of critical issues to be careful and cautious; a healthy convergence of scholarly rigor and open-minded conservatism. Throughout the work there is a concern to connect the ancient world to the modern world and the message of the NT writers to the lives of its twenty-first century readers. This is particularly evident in the "Questions for Discussion" section that concludes each chapter. These are written to prompt intentional reflection by the contemporary reader and are often application-oriented in nature. For example: "If people cannot comprehend Jesus when they encounter him (as in the first half of Mark), what are the practical implications of this for evangelism today?"; "What is revolutionary about the church? Does it always live up to its calling?" (Ephesians); or "How does Hebrews enhance our understanding of God? Of Christian discipleship?"

I suspect *The New Testament in Antiquity* was written primarily for undergraduate students, but I would not hesitate in assigning it for use in a graduate course. Both

graduate and undergraduate students will find it engaging and informative. This volume considerably raises the bar in terms of wedding attractive layout and top-notch scholarship.

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Christianity in the Making. Vol. 2: Beginning from Jerusalem. By James D. G. Dunn. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009, xv +1347 pp., \$80.00.

The second of three volumes in the magisterial treatment of the rise of Christianity by James Dunn, Lightfoot Professor Emeritus of Divinity at the University of Durham, is as impressive as the first: *Jesus Remembered*. With a panoramic knowledge of the primary and secondary literature, Dunn traces what we can most likely know as historians from every conceivable source about the church from the first Easter to the fall of Jerusalem in AD 70, synthesizing meaning and significance at each step.

An introductory section surveys “the quest for the historical church,” noting how we have arrived at the same place as with Jesus—thoroughly rooted in a Judaism that would later redraw its boundaries more narrowly so as to exclude those in its midst following the Nazarene. It also examines the historical value of the sources, canonical and non-canonical. Luke, in Acts, used Thucydidean freedom in composing his speeches and clearly put his theological stamp on his sources. Yet in virtually every passage, plausible historical cores of information can be defended. The letters Paul wrote include 2 Thessalonians and Colossians (probably via Timothy), but not Ephesians or the Pastorals.

“The first phase” takes us from Jerusalem to Antioch. The “big bang” event that set everything else in motion, of course, was Pentecost. Those dubious of the “enthusiasm” and “mass ecstasy” depicted here are unfamiliar with how influential revival movements elsewhere have functioned. Convinced that Jesus rose from the dead, his followers re-configured their understanding of Jewish messiahship into a more exalted concept, even if clear references to his deity were to await a later date. The communal nature of this “messianic sect” was not so unlike Qumran as to be unbelievable.

The first steps toward moving out from Jerusalem came from the Hellenistic Jewish messianists. Here Dunn follows Martin Hengel more than Craig Hill. Differences with the Hebraic Jewish Jesus followers were linguistic, to be sure, but could not have helped but be cultural as well. The Hellenist Stephen may well have been the first to articulate clearly a break from the temple cult, for which he was martyred. The “all” who were persecuted may refer to his fellow Hellenists, with the “apostles” remaining in Jerusalem as a synecdoche for the Hebraists.

The close link throughout early Christian sources between the presence of the Spirit and true faith suggests that the “believers” in Acts 8 were not genuine ones until Peter and John supplemented Philip’s ministry. Conversely, the surprisingly “early” arrival of the Spirit with Cornelius and company publicly demonstrated the presence of true faith, even among non-Jewish God-fearers. This episode, combined with the even more radical step of fully Gentile individuals becoming “Christians” in Antioch, paved the way for the transformation of this fledgling movement into something much more than just another Jewish sect. It also produced what may be called Peter’s own “conversion.”

Saul of Tarsus quite likely did persecute the “apostates” who followed Jesus, with a Phineas-like zeal, hoping to purify Israel so that God could bless it. His Damascus-road event was both a conversion and a commission, as he recognized he could no longer defend his ethnic boundary markers if Jesus was indeed the risen Lord. Later persecution

under Herod Agrippa I led to Peter's departure from Jerusalem, not yet for Rome, but for itinerant missionary work. James, the half-brother of Jesus, would from this time on emerge as the third key early Christian leader, overseeing the church in Jerusalem.

With Paul's first missionary journey, a watershed was crossed. Gentiles now were coming to faith in Jesus on a regular basis without circumcision being required, due to the ministry of the Spirit himself in initiating them into the new covenant community. This precipitated the theological crisis that led to the Apostolic Council. Dunn takes Gal 2:1–10 to be too similar to Acts 15 for the two events not to be the same, despite their inherent contradictions and the case that can be made for equating Galatians 2 with Acts 11:26–29. He dates Galatians to AD 52 or 53. He thus, somewhat improbably, sees Paul and the church at Antioch parting ways, with Paul not able to agree to the more conservative, compromise conclusions instigated by James in Jerusalem on Gentiles and law-keeping. Galatians 2:11–15 shows Paul's rejection of the Judaizers' attempt to preserve James's take on things: "that an exception had been permitted rather than a principle conceded" (p. 480). Although Peter would emerge as a mediating figure between James and Paul, on this occasion Peter's view prevailed. Had it not, Paul would have certainly said so.

The next major part of Dunn's book thus primarily follows Paul's more radical ministry as apostle *par excellence* to the Gentiles. Its 460 pages could almost make a self-standing volume on Paul, replete with reflection on the remaining Acts material, interspersed with miniature commentaries on each of the letters Dunn deems authentic at the appropriate chronological junctures in Paul's ministry. Readers familiar with Dunn's commentaries on Acts, Galatians, Romans, and Colossians and his Pauline theology will discover few surprises here, but wonderfully clear summaries of his views nevertheless. One new outline involves seeing Romans 1–11 as retracing the same chronology of God's dealings with humanity from three vantage-points: Jew vs. Gentile (1:18–5:11), the cosmic perspective, especially on the role of the law (5:12–8:39); and the role of Israel (9:1–11:33).

The eight-year period of Paul's "Aegean mission" "was the single most important development in the first decades of Christianity's history" (p. 520). His strategies suggest, with Riesner and Scott, an attempt to fulfill Isa 66:19, never abandoning his Judaism, however (witness the five synagogue punishments of the thirty-nine lashes), and always taking his message to Jews first, if possible, in each new community. His letters, like his ministry more generally, were regularly collaborative efforts.

In this context, Dunn helpfully surveys what we know about Paul's house churches, their (relatively loose) organization and format for worship and socio-economic structure (relatively mirroring in distribution the empire as a whole). During this period, Paul's emphasis on a collection for the impoverished believers in Jerusalem frequently took center stage, a collection that Acts rightly suggests failed to repair relationships with the conservative law-abiding Christians in that city. Meanwhile, Ephesus became Paul's second "mission centre" (after Antioch), and we dare not minimize how much additional evangelism he and his associates could have undertaken spreading out from there during his three-year stay.

Dunn labels his final major part, "the end of the beginning." Here he discusses Paul's passion, preferring to see one imprisonment in Rome, followed by execution under Nero, probably in AD 64. Because he rejects an early date for Acts, Dunn finds Luke's "dereliction" as a historian greatest at the end of his work, in not narrating Paul's death. Peter, too, probably arrived in Rome, not long after Paul did, and died not long after him, too, during Nero's pogrom.

Although he takes them to be pseudonymous, Dunn also includes mini-commentaries on Ephesians, James, and 1 Peter. Each, he believes, does accurately reflect the substance of the teaching of the three great early Christian leaders to whom they are attributed, even if written a little after AD 70. Each discloses the three major branches

of Christianity as they had emerged—Paul’s law-free gospel, uniting Jew and Gentile, James’ exclusively Jewish, law-keeping Christianity, and Peter’s mediating largely Jewish but partly Gentile Christianity deeply rooted in the Hebrew Scriptures but more overtly Christological (thus 1 Peter by itself) than James’s little letter. The new developments spawned by the destruction of Jerusalem await Dunn’s final volume.

Beginning from Jerusalem will not be the last word on a number of issues it raises. However, for a judicious, middle-of-the road, even conservative-leaning synthesis of the *status quaestionis* on countless topics, spiced up by Dunn’s distinctive positions at several key points, one could hardly ask for more. David Moessner’s back-cover blurb seems overly ambitious in predicting the book will become “the preferred textbook for university and seminary classes alike,” particularly if the assumption is that students will read *all* of it in one course! Yet substitute “reference work” for “textbook,” and the accolade is deserved. And those who *do* manage to work through it all will be amply rewarded.

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The Word of Life: A Theology of John’s Gospel. By Craig R. Koester. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008, xiv + 245 pp., \$21.00 paper.

Craig Koester has provided another useful monograph on the Fourth Gospel (see his earlier *Symbolism in the Fourth Gospel* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995]). In this volume, Koester explores John the theologian, or at least the theology of the narrative of John. Koester admits that there are many ways a theology of John can be explored. His approach is to work with the Gospel narrative in its present form (p. ix). This means that he will not concern himself with the identification of the background of John’s theological ideas or with the development of Johannine theology over time. This does not mean, however, that Koester’s exploration is entirely intertextual. Rather, by employing recent scholarship on John’s Gospel, as well as a survey of divergent readings of John throughout history, Koester’s theology of John grows out of several “circles of conversation” (p. x). Before an evaluation of Koester’s own conversation, a survey of the contents is in order. The volume is divided into eight chapters, each organized in categories that are based, in part, on the major figures in the narrative.

In chapter 1, “Introduction,” Koester orients the reader to theological thinking, as well as to the nature of John’s theological presentation. According to Koester, “[t]o focus specifically on *John’s* theology means developing responses to questions about God, people, and the world based on a reading of the Gospel. This theological reading works primarily with the Gospel narrative, but it is also informed by other disciplines” (p. 2, italics his). These other disciplines are primarily historical and literary, so that Koester examines issues like the origin of John’s Gospel and the theological shaping of the narrative. Since exploring John’s theology means “framing questions and developing responses through a reading of the Gospel” (p. 12), Koester examines a number of the theological questions that the Gospel presupposes. The remainder of the book, then, will reflect upon and develop this theology of John.

In chapter 2, “God,” Koester makes clear that “[t]hroughout John’s Gospel, God’s purposes drive the story” (p. 25). Koester’s primary argument is that the Fourth Gospel insists that the point of Jesus’ coming is to make the unseen God known (1:18). Yet there are several ancillary topics related to the centrality of God. First, God has communicated through and in his Word. God communicates with the world in order to bring about relationship. Second, God is the Creator and Giver of life. “Basic to John’s

theology is that God has created all things through his Word” (p. 30). Since life comes from God, questions about life are ultimately questions about God. Third, God is “the Sender.” God’s will for relationship is reflected in the theme of “sending” (p. 33). Fourth, the crucifixion raises pointed questions of God, that God is the God of the cross and resurrection. Fifth, God is “the Father.” God is not only the Father of Jesus, but he is also the Father of believers.

In chapter 3, “The World and Its People,” Koester explores the types of people mentioned throughout the Gospel, as well as the nature of their relationship to Jesus. The issues that John addresses regarding people “are not distinctly Jewish or Gentile but are predominately human problems, such as sin and death, belief and unbelief” (p. 54). In exploring these issues, Koester looks at three problems: the problem of death, the problem of sin, and the problem of evil. The dimensions of these problems define human contexts and are reflected in John’s use of the term *kosmos* or “world.” In the end, “John’s ominous portrayal of ‘the world’ gives depth to his understanding of the love of God and the work of Jesus” (p. 81).

In chapter 4, “Jesus,” Koester explores Jesus’ identity in several steps, beginning with his humanity, which is a departure from the prologue of John. Yet, as Koester argues, this approach is what the Gospel attempts, in a sense, since the narrative’s purpose is for the reader to progress to belief in Jesus, specifically in his accurate identity—Messiah and Son of God. Thus, Koester shows that Jesus is initially a human being and teacher, but soon another dimension emerges: Jesus as Prophet and Messiah. Questions about Jesus’ identity finally lead to his role as the Son of God. Jesus exercises the power of God and embodies the presence of God. This identity shows the unique role of Jesus, as well as his unity with the Father.

In chapter 5, “Crucifixion and Resurrection,” Koester introduces both a stark and disturbing element in the plot of Jesus’ story, as well as a defining element of his identity and mission. As Koester explains, “Reading John’s account of Jesus’ death and resurrection in the context of the Gospel as a whole discloses multiple dimensions of meaning” (p. 109). According to Koester, the significance of Jesus’ crucifixion reflects God’s love in human terms, the sacrifice for sin, the victory over evil, and the revelation of divine glory. The significance of Jesus’ resurrection reflects both faith in God in the present and hope in God for the future: “The completeness of Jesus’ death paradoxically conveys the completeness of divine love that brings life to others, and it is through resurrection that this relationship of love continues into the present and the future” (p. 132).

In chapter 6, “The Spirit,” Koester raises the stakes regarding the Spirit: “John has often been called the ‘spiritual’ gospel because of its soaring introduction and discourses on things above. But it might better be called ‘spiritual’ because of its intriguing perspective on the work of God’s Spirit” (p. 133). The issue is not the importance of the Spirit, but how the Spirit works. Koester explains the work of the Spirit in the following ways: the Spirit makes Jesus known, the Spirit is the source of faith and life, the Spirit is the advocate’s abiding presence, and the Spirit is a teacher and witness.

In chapter 7, “Faith, Present and Future,” Koester explains the nature of faith according to John. Koester examines faith in the present and faith for the future. Regarding the former, faith is a present trust in the midst of a relationship with God, centered upon Jesus who was crucified as well as resurrected. Regarding the latter, faith affects the nature of our hope in the future. Faith in Jesus extends beyond the present and into the future, pulling the present confidently toward it.

Finally, in chapter 8, “Discipleship in Community and World,” Koester explores the dynamics of following Jesus. John uses numerous word pictures to give readers a way of seeing themselves in relation to God, Jesus, and other people: walking in the light, a seed falling to the earth, feet washing, and abiding in the vine. Furthermore, the faith of individuals in Jesus “is integrally connected to life in community” (p. 196). Themes

related to community according to John include family and friends, unity, organization, worship of God in Jesus, and baptism and the Lord's Supper.

The Word of Life by Craig Koester is a helpful survey of key issues and themes in the theology of the Gospel of John. Without detracting from its value as a reference for John's theology, I would still like to raise a few concerns. First, since Koester's approach for determining theological categories is based on "the major figures in the narrative" (p. xi), his exploration is overtly rooted in the historical and literary disciplines. This is not a critique, since it is a warranted and necessary exercise; it is merely stating that it is not wholly theological, because the theological categories and topics are rooted in a historical-literary examination of the Gospel of John. The categories are driven by a historical agenda. Second, since the approach is driven by historical criteria and methodologies, the church has no functional place in the discussion of John's theology (even though Koester mentions the church on few occasions). For example, Koester notes that we, the readers, are living in an "interreligious" context (p. 18), that the particularity of Jesus is controversial in an "interreligious" context (p. 21), that John is no stranger to "interreligious" controversy (p. 214), and more directly, that "John writes about God for an interreligious world" (p. 25). For Koester, the church is just one of many "circles of conversation" (p. x) for determining the theological categories to be addressed in John. How might an intra-ecclesial approach to the theology of John be different? What other, maybe more pastoral, concerns might such an approach raise? These are issues that a book on the theology of John's Gospel demands of the (theological?) interpreter. As it stands, this book is still useful for students of John—it would make for an excellent textbook for college and seminary students and might even serve as an excellent reference for those serving in the church.

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Echoes of Scripture in the Letter of Paul to the Colossians. By Christopher A. Beetham. Biblical Interpretation Series 96. Leiden: Brill, 2008, xix + 342 pp., \$189.00.

The word "intertextuality" is now frequently heard echoing with increasing volume throughout the halls of divinity schools and SBL convention centers. My recent, unscientific, and informal survey of academic biblical studies journals reveals an amazingly high use of the word in article titles, and book titles referencing the term reveal the same. No scholarly name stands out more in connection with intertextuality than Richard Hays, whose seminal book *The Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989) opened new doors for thinking about Paul's use of the OT. Many, including myself, now regularly go in and out of these doors on the hunt for intertexts and in our ponderings of what it means to read Scripture canonically and theologically.

We may now add to the list of careful and detailed monographs on OT texts in the NT Christopher Beetham's revised Ph.D. dissertation, originally written under the supervision of Greg Beale at Wheaton College. Stimulated by developments in intertextual reading and noticing the lack of work done in this regard on Colossians, Beetham sets out to provide a comprehensive catalogue of the ways in which the Scriptures of Israel appear in this epistle. He begins with a brief but helpful history of modern interpretation on the issue and then states the five-fold way by which he hopes to contribute. Beetham's desired contributions are (1) to offer a thorough methodology for detecting allusions and echoes; (2) to argue for eleven such allusions and echoes in Colossians; (3) to discuss how Paul uses these hermeneutically and theologically; (4) to

analyze how early Jewish and Christian interpretation informs; and (5) to demonstrate how these allusions and echoes contribute to the overall understanding of Colossians and to the relationship between the testaments (p. 8). After a thirty-page discussion of proper methodology, the bulk of the book comprises eleven chapters in which each allusion or echo from the OT is discussed according to the order of its appearance in the letter. These chapters are followed by a nineteen-page conclusion that covers briefly a number of topics under the heading of "The Ramifications of the Investigation." In addition to the standard bibliography and indices, the book includes three appendices that offer charts summarizing the findings and the probable OT text-forms, as well as a brief discussion of whether Proverbs 2 is an echo.

How does Beetham fare on his proposed purposes? Overall, he achieves them admirably. This book is the work of a thorough and thoughtful scholar who prosecutes his goals with care. His concern to understand and elucidate the OT context for the proposed echoes and allusions is apparent and to be appreciated. Some highlights include his helpful discussion of the Second Temple development in the interpretation of Prov 8:22–31 and how this relates to the Christ-hymn of Col 1:15–20, as well as his "fly-over" of the theme of the Exodus throughout the OT and Early Judaism. In each chapter, Beetham not only addresses the OT context but also other related NT texts, the OT text's reading in early Christian interpretation, and some comments on how the intertext enhances our understanding of Colossians. These sections, although usually quite brief, show an appropriate sensitivity to broader contexts and the history of interpretation. Thus, for the most part, Beetham successfully accomplishes his stated goals. The area in which more work could always be done is in the "Hermeneutical and Theological Reflections" sections, which tend to be a bit thin.

One important caveat, however: I originally approached this book and this book review with the assumption that Beetham was attempting to provide a work on OT intertextuality in Colossians. Though he does not use the term "intertextuality" or its cognates, his obvious allusion to Hays in the title, his discussion of allusion and echo that overlaps with the intertextuality field, and his stated goals led me to evaluate the book in light of this broader hermeneutical movement. With this assumption operating, I was in many ways dissatisfied with the book, especially with the discussion of methodology. Despite the much good work that is apparent in the volume, the methodology, evaluated from an intertextual standpoint, is far too restricted and mechanistic. Despite the intended allusion to Hays own "echoes" work, it becomes apparent that Beetham's approach to reading the OT in the NT is not cut from the same cloth.

My correspondence with the author and further reading, however, clarified that Beetham's goal is indeed something different from what today is often considered intertextual reading. It is akin to what Hays observes as the more historical task of trying to prove or substantiate the direct influence of an earlier text on a later one. This is different than "trying to understand the way in which an author (Paul) creates meaning effects in a text through artful reminiscences of another text well-known to the community" (Richard B. Hays, *Conversion of the Imagination* [Grand Rapids; Eerdmans, 2005] 30–31). One task is primarily historical, and the other dimensions are literary and theological. Beetham shows awareness of this distinction by laying out a second methodology of investigation once an allusion or echo has been discerned (pp. 36–40). Yet his focus is on the more modest goal of providing solidly founded allusions based on an author-oriented approach to texts. Beetham's version of reading for allusions is primarily centered on the verifiability of an intertext. Even when he does move into more theological discussions, this too remains constrained via a linear and modern use of typology (cf. Goppelt), rather than a thicker, intra-canonical figural reading.

Thus, if we come to this finely written book looking for a model of the way forward in what it means to read intertextuality (as in Hays and others) and the kind of fruit that it can bear, we will leave with a less-than-full basket. However, if we receive it

at the more humble level of a careful catalogue of likely OT subtexts that appear in Colossians (including some healthy exegetical fruit), then we will rightly be thankful to Beetham for his thoughtful study.

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Purity and Worldview in the Epistle of James. By Darian Lockett. Library of New Testament Studies 366. London: T & T Clark, 2008, viii + 221 pp., \$130.00.

Whether it involves questions about the authorship of the letter of James or its peculiar theological assumptions or the social setting of its first readers, recent decades have seen a surge of interest, even fascination, with the document. Based on his research at the University of St. Andrews, under the guidance of Ron Piper, Darian Lockett has contributed a valuable monograph to the literature. Current and future students will need to stir his conclusions into the mix of the ongoing research.

Rejecting notions that ritual purity is either unimportant in James or that such language can be reduced to a metaphor for ethical uprightness, Lockett maintains that pollution and purity contribute significantly to James's worldview. To the degree that modern readers can ferret out the author's worldview, the reasoning goes, they are equipped with useful lenses for their exegetical and hermeneutical tasks.

Drawing on the sociological analysis of Mary Douglas and Amy Mullin, Lockett sets out to "explore the deeper function of purity language in James" (p. 20). He overlays sociological theory with a wide range of textual studies, but the works of John Elliott, Richard Bauckham, and Martin Dibelius stand out. Supported by careful exegesis, Lockett concludes that James 1:2–27 functions as an "introductory prologue" to the document. Further, 1:26–27 serves as a "literary hinge" (p. 99), preparing the reader of James for the argumentation that builds in the rest of the letter. The "deeper function" of the purity language of the letter is to reinforce or to create a shared worldview between James and his first readers. From the platform of the shared worldview, James offers imperatives that mark off sociological boundaries between believers and the world.

The "social ramifications of purity language" (p. 20) drives Lockett's study. He wants to explore the relationship between (1) a worldview where purity/pollution are important categories; and (2) the ethical and religious themes James addresses. After setting forth his purposes in an introductory chapter, Lockett devotes a chapter to a taxonomy of purity language. He searches for language that serves to restrain religious and ethical behavior within defined boundaries. Purity and pollution terminology function to define the inner cohesion of a social group, to mark off the external boundaries of the group, and in the case of James, to assist in the creation and molding of previously undefined social and religious boundaries.

Accepting the terminology of Dibelius, Lockett is satisfied to call James "wisdom paraenesis." Seeking clearer definition for the rubric, Lockett maintains that the author of James organizes his thoughts around a series of competing contrasts. In the process, he compels his readers to choose between two competing worldviews, one of which he equates with θεός and the other with κόσμος. James accomplishes his objective by dividing the text of his letter into three sections: (1) the prescript (1:1); (2) the introductory prologue consisting of short aphorisms (1:2–27); and (3) expansions on the aphorisms of the prologue (2:1–5:20). Concerning 1:26–27, he writes that "the thematic importance of these two verses cannot be overestimated in our understanding of the letter" (p. 112).

The third and longest section of James may be further broken down into two main parts (2:1–26 and 3:1–5:6), which are developed in light of the testing theme set forth in the introduction. Important to Lockett's thinking is the contention that "the contrasts and associations generated in 1:2–27 significantly inform the reading of the letter" (p. 100). "Pure and undefiled religion," coupled with separation from the world, "in the logic of James is to live within the correct religious system or 'worldview' ordered by God" (p. 105).

Having outlined his approach to the text, Lockett devotes a long chapter to the exegesis of purity language in the letter. The author finds little fault with the emphasis Elliott places on perfection in James, but he believes that perfection (τέλειος; 1:4) and cleanness (καθαρός; 1:27) bracket James's introductory prologue for a reason. The two concepts, Lockett argues, are of the same piece of cloth. The way of life James wants to engender in his readers assumes a worldview where clean and unclean are meaningful words. Cleanness and purity are inherent in the perfection that is the end of the people of God. The Christian community vis-à-vis the world is pure (ἄγνός), clean (καθαρός), and unstained (ἄσπιλος). The world by contrast is polluted, stained (σπίλος), double-minded (δίψυχος). Pollution is more than a mere metaphor for immorality or a call for ritualistic cleansing. It takes on the character of an ontological category, though Lockett does not use the word. Inherent in the world's existence is its polluted status. Christians do well when cleanness functions as a barrier to the world's pollution.

Before summarizing his conclusions, Lockett devotes a penultimate chapter to analyzing the data and reasoning he has brought to the table. For this, he draws on the study of the Jewish Diaspora by J. M. G. Barclay. Barclay examines ideal beliefs and behavior of Diaspora synagogues for the way Jews integrated with the surrounding culture or took a stance opposed to it. His categories are assimilation, acculturation, and accommodation. Lockett pays close attention to the rhetoric of James to ask the same kinds of questions of Christian communities addressed in the letter.

In the end, Lockett believes that James allows for "a high degree of acculturation, while showing a low degree of accommodation" (p. 169). By this the author means that James values and adopts elements in the culture that require no pollution of the Christian community. That James respects Greek language and rhetoric is clear from the proficiency he demonstrates in their use. In addition, he is knowledgeable about moral values esteemed by Greek men of letters. In matters such as this, James adopts the culture of his contemporary world, but there are points where James is careful to separate himself. He does not share the stance of contemporary society toward wealth and poverty, for example. To show partiality to the rich man is to become a friend of the world and to participate in its pollution.

Lockett makes a convincing case. In areas tangential to his thesis, however, he is sometimes weak. For example, he despairs too quickly of drawing any conclusions about the social circumstances of James's first readers. Granted, the document is short and what one can infer is limited. Still, when the subject of wealth and poverty comes up three times (1:9–11; 2:1–7; 4:13–5:6), when the author devotes long sections to admonishing his readers about attitudes toward the rich, there surely are inferences one may make about his expected readers. It is surprising to read Lockett's conclusion that references to the rich constitute a "traditional expectation for God to reverse the fortunes of the proud and the lowly at a future time of judgment" (p. 164). Lockett himself seems ambivalent about the matter. He adds, "Though rich and poor are not entirely empty of social connotations neither are they entirely socio-economic terms" (p. 165). This desire to have it both ways seems to be wanting to me. Elaboration would be helpful here.

The author summarizes his work by saying, "Purity language articulates and contrasts the reality of the audience with reference to how they should relate internally and to the surrounding culture" (p. 185). His case is strong. The language of purity and pollution in the letter indeed suggests that James writes from a worldview shared by

himself and his readers. The author of the document masterfully calls on his readers to understand themselves in terms of a people who are pure and unstained from the world.

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That You May Know: Assurance of Salvation in 1 John. By Christopher D. Bass. NAC Studies in Bible and Theology 5. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2008, xiv + 241 pp., \$24.99.

That You May Know is an insightful biblical theology of assurance in 1 John. Christopher Bass, a 2006 Ph.D. graduate of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, presents his revised dissertation researching the relationship between believers' efforts to persevere in righteousness after conversion and the redeeming work of Jesus Christ in determining the certainty of salvation. While he includes an analysis of historical positions on assurance and a discussion of 1 John's much debated backgrounds, his work is unique methodologically for Johannine studies in that it is an inductive biblical theology of assurance in 1 John (p. 5). He concludes that while obedience is vital for assurance of eternal life, it serves a secondary, supportive role (p. 4). Assurance is grounded primarily and foundationally in the work of Christ.

Chapter 1 surveys the major positions on assurance with attention to each position's usage of 1 John. After considering theological, historical trajectories of Medieval Catholicism, Luther, Calvin, Later Calvinism, and Arminius on assurance, Bass suggests five categories for classifying contemporary positions (p. 7). (1) "No Assurance": John does not refer to assurance of salvation but assurance that his audience is on the right side of an internal debate between the church community and secessionists. (2) "Luther and Calvin": assurance is grounded in the work of Christ, and the obedient lifestyle of a believer serves as a secondary support. (3) "Later Calvinism: The Westminster Confession of Faith": enduring assurance is dependent partly upon enduring obedience (p. 23). (4) "Arminian": present assurance of present salvation is grounded upon faith in Christ and obedience, but present assurance of future salvation is not possible because apostasy is. (5) "The Grace Movement": assurance is based upon the work of Christ, and the obedience of a believer has no part in assurance of salvation.

After laying out the possible positions, Bass begins his textual analysis. Chapter 2 considers the purpose of 1 John. Bass offers a fresh and helpful survey of possible, external backgrounds and a thorough mirror-reading of the text to determine authorial purpose and occasion. After reviewing each of the phrases wherein 1 John explicitly states its purpose, he considers 5:13 to be the penultimate expression. The purpose for John's writing is that his readership may have objective means by which to determine if they possess eternal life.

Chapter 2 is useful and insightful. A point of critique should, nonetheless, be made with regard to Bass's discussion of 2:8 (pp. 47–48). He assigns a great deal of importance to the present tense of the verbs *παράγεται* and *φαίνει*, suggesting they have an "ongoing aspect" (p. 47, n. 59). Thus, the believer still sins because darkness is passing away presently, but the believer will one day not sin because the light is shining presently. Recent research in verbal aspect theory, which does not appear to weigh in much on Bass's exegesis, encourages attentiveness to the present tense but discourages interpreters from assuming the present tense is an indication of *presently occurring*, ongoing action. John may simply adopt the present for verbal intensification or stylistic purposes, as other NT authors regularly do. The events in 2:8, therefore, may have already taken place in actual time, even though the speaker uses the present tense. Thus, his

conclusions are supported ineffectively by the verb tense. So it is possible that 2:8 refers to something other than the “already but not yet” of the believer’s sanctification process from still sinful to sinless (p. 47). Moreover, when Bass more fully examines 2:7–11, he seems to suggest that the “already but not yet” tension exists because believers (those in the light) still dwell among unbelievers (those in the darkness; p. 144). More clarification is necessary in order to accept fully his understanding of 2:7–11.

The heart of Bass’s argument begins in chapter 3, in which he posits that the ultimate ground of assurance is the cross-work of Jesus Christ (p. 96). Bass’s most important passage for consideration is 1:5–2:2. Believers are cleansed from sin and possess an eternal *ἰλασμός*. He commits the second part of the chapter to explaining other references in 1 John that depict the atonement as central for assurance (4:10; 3:5, 8; 5:5–10). His argument here is well executed and the most notable contribution of the work.

In an excursus, he considers the extent of the atonement in 2:2. He posits that 2:2 teaches “all, without distinction,” not “all, without exception” (pp. 82–83). While he puts a twist on Owen’s defense of definite atonement by applying it to 1 John instead of John’s Gospel, it is not essentially different. Following Owen, his chief complaint with other atonement views is that they are “difficult to support theologically” (p. 82). Though a particular view may be difficult to support theologically, this is not sufficient cause to dismiss it. Owen’s view of 2:2 is, in fact, more difficult exegetically in 1 John. Moreover, Bass’s summary of positions on the atonement does not mention another popular view, the “multiple-intentions” view. Thus, it is not clear that Bass’s view of the atonement in 2:2 is accurate, and readers will not find it useful.

Conversely, we would do well to notice the clarity and persuasiveness of Bass’s discussion of water and blood (pp. 88–94). 1 John 5:4b–10 has a variety of explanations, but he demonstrates convincingly that “water” refers to Jesus’ physical baptism and the three witnesses (5:7–10) are references to the Spirit, the baptism of Jesus, and the cross-work of Jesus.

In chapter 4, Bass attempts to demonstrate that John understood that the covenant promises found fulfillment in Jesus’ work; hence, Jesus ushered in a new covenant in which John’s readers fully participate (p. 98). For new covenant people, there will be an intimate knowledge of God, an indwelling presence of Yahweh, forgiveness, a united heart, and an eternal abiding between the people of God and God himself (pp. 98–119). True believers, partakers of those new covenant promises, will pass 1 John’s tests of fellowship.

Bass does a great service in suggesting covenant fulfillment in 1 John. It is not clear, however, from his work that the promises of the new covenant were fulfilled in the work of Christ. Certainly, it is possible that John is appropriating his understanding of the old covenants in light of Jesus, but it is a stretch to surmise *from 1 John* that John believed the new covenant promises were fulfilled in the work of Jesus. Bass makes a compelling case, but not a conclusive one.

Chapter 5, the lengthiest chapter (60 pp.), analyzes the three kinds of tests of life in 1 John. The tests of righteousness, brotherly love, and right belief in Jesus provide introspective, prospective, and retrospective means by which John’s readership may evaluate their status before God (pp. 162–64). Bass goes on to consider the question of apostasy with particular attention to 5:16–17. He rightly concludes that those who consistently, unrepentantly fail those tests demonstrate that they never had “the seed of God” abiding in them.

Bass concludes with a summary of chapters 1–5 and a series of pastoral implications from 1 John. He includes an appendix on the textual question of 1 John 5:18, in which he defends the reading that suggests Jesus is the “protector” or “keeper” of the believer from the snares and powers of the devil (pp. 195–202).

That You May Know is a careful treatment of the text of 1 John and a welcome contribution to the subject of believer's assurance. Ultimately, Bass is successful in defending that 1 John teaches the role of the work of Christ as primary and the works of the believer as secondary for assurance of salvation. Clearly, the pastoral and theological implications of Bass's work are manifold. Minor points of critique notwithstanding, his analysis of 1 John is insightful, thorough, and persuasive. Bass's work is a fine resource for exegetically trained pastors and a helpful supplementary text for those interested in Johannine studies or the theology of assurance.

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Jude and 2 Peter. By Gene L. Green. BECNT. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008, xxii + 420 pp., \$39.99.

The purpose of this commentary and of the series of which it is a part is "to provide, within the framework of informed evangelical thought, [a] blend [of] scholarly depth with readability, exegetical detail with sensitivity to the whole, and attention to critical problems with theological awareness" (p. ix). The author of this commentary has admirably accomplished these tasks. The epistles of Jude and 2 Peter have come of age among scholars. The study of these two literarily paired documents has moved from the margins of scholarly interest more to the center. Hence, not only is this a good commentary, but a timely one.

The commentary seeks to interpret these epistles in their cultural and historical contexts. This is a particularly daunting task. The precise contexts of Jude and 2 Peter are extremely difficult to locate because of the lack of references to these letters elsewhere in the immediate time period and because of their own lack of references to their audiences. In light of the varied array of proposals set forth in past and present research, the search for particular backgrounds will be tentative at best. Hence, to say, "The analysis [of the text] is detailed, yet the whole situation of the readers is kept in view" (p. xii), seems to be arguing in a circle: interpret the text to discover the context, then interpret the text in light of the context discovered by interpreting the text. In spite of this circular sort of interpretive method, the commentary makes a significant contribution to our understanding of these letters. Adding to its usefulness is a thirty-one page list of works cited, and forty-four pages of indices.

In spite of the canonical order, Jude is treated first, because the author believes it was written first. Second Peter employs a literary strategy called *imitatio*, a way of citing a work, in this case Jude, but transforming it to one's own purposes (p. 162). For lack of compelling arguments against its authenticity, the assumption based on tradition is that Jude (or Judas, the brother of Jesus, is the author of the letter. Since it does not attack a Gnostic threat, the most likely context is first-century Christianity in the land of Israel. The letter is written to warn against an antinomian interpretation of Paul's gospel. A major critical problem in the interpretation of Jude (and 2 Peter) is the use of so-called pseudepigraphical Jewish literature. The commentary adopts the view of Augustine that authoritative usage of a non-canonical text does not mean the non-canonical text as a whole is authoritative.

In terms of purpose, the letter of Jude encouraged its readers to stand by the sacred tradition of salvation by grace and to struggle against those who would distort it. A number of verses in the middle of the letter are devoted to comparing the heretics to those who had sinned in earlier times. The commentary does an excellent job of

discussing this intertextuality. In the end, Jude admonished the faithful to rescue those who were on the verge of being drawn away from the truth toward heresy.

Second Peter is interpreted in the commentary as though written by Peter, based on the opinion that contrary evidence is not so robust as to overturn the ancient tradition of Petrine authorship. This means the letter is interpreted in light of what is known about Peter elsewhere in canonical literature, namely, that he was a disciple of the earthly Jesus, that he was appointed an apostle (with all the incumbent authority), and that he wrote an earlier letter: "The letter stands within the circle of early Christian theology and serves as a witness to the struggles and dangers that the faith faced during its youngest years" (p. 150). As with Jude, 2 Peter is directed to churches that faced heresies, although the heresies faced are different in the two recipient groups. Jude is written to those facing a perversion of the doctrine of grace, 2 Peter to those facing a denial of the doctrine of the second coming of the Lord. In both cases the heresies led to moral degradation. As with Jude, 2 Peter is most likely directed to a first-century audience and not to a Gnostic heresy. Since Bauckham's 1983 commentary it has typically been averred that 2 Peter is testamentary literature. Green's commentary is one of the few works that questions this thesis. In my opinion, it begins to overturn the present scholarly consensus.

In terms of purpose, 2 Peter was written to encourage readers to remain true to the apostolic teaching in the face of heresy. The prophetic word, because it is old, is a stabilizing force against the novelty of heretical teaching. The apostolic word, because it carries the authority of Jesus, is the source of true Christian teaching. These two "words," prophetic and apostolic, are the source of the faith once for all delivered to the saints.

If this commentary is correct in its interpretation of statements in Jude and 2 Peter regarding the locus of apostolic truth, and I believe a good case has been made, it is no wonder that Enlightenment scholarship pushed these two letters into the second century. If they are actually first-century letters, the theory of a late development of the doctrine of apostolic authority in the writings of the NT is overturned. These letters, marginalized by much nineteenth- and twentieth-century NT scholarship, may hold a key to understanding how the writings of the NT came to have the authoritative status recognized in them by the early catholic church. This commentary would have been stronger if it had included a conclusion addressing theological concerns of the twenty-first century church, concerns such as the locus of truth in the apostolic writings. Theological statements are not wanting, but extended theological discussions along the way or at the end would have been helpful for those whose task it is to bring these epistles to bear on the church today. That said, this commentary is one that will encourage scholars to pay close attention to 2 Peter and Jude and to move them from the margins more to the center of the study of the NT.

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New Testament Theology: An Introduction. By James D. G. Dunn. Library of Biblical Theology. Nashville: Abingdon, 2009, ix + 232 pp., \$21.00 paper.

Attempts to rehabilitate the strained relationship between biblical studies and "constructive" theology continue to proliferate. One recently inaugurated project is Abingdon's Library of Biblical Theology series, edited by Leo Perdue of Brite Divinity School, which aims to do its part in revitalizing mutual cross-pollination between the descriptive and the normative in the study of Scripture and theology. The third installment in the series, by James Dunn, not only sets out the broad contours of the theology

of the NT but also charts a course methodologically for other NT volumes to come. The book is typical Dunn—clear, engaging, and provocative. Dunn is Lightfoot Professor Emeritus of Divinity at Durham University.

Two opening chapters address matters of method. Chapter 1 begins by asking what NT theology is, claiming to provide a way forward not enshackled to unhelpful distinctions made by Gabler and his heirs, while also appreciating the role of the Christian OT as the Jewish Scripture. In a discussion that echoes much of the heart of his earlier *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977), Dunn explains that he wants to engage the theology of the NT as it would have been heard, in all its diversity, in the first (not, say, the fourth) century. In chapter 2 Dunn discusses three determining factors in NT theology: the OT, the Christ event, and Spirit-governed experience. Helpful here are reminders that the NT writers saw themselves as continuing an ancient story begun in the OT and that Christ is “the fulcrum point on which the history of salvation turns” (p. 26).

Dunn then turns to NT theology proper, proceeding to identify and to flesh out four general headings that he considers “the themes that provide the most demanding challenge to a NT biblical theology” (p. 38). These are God, salvation, Israel, and Torah. The ensuing chapters tackle these one by one and show first how the OT lays the foundation for each of these loci and then how the NT writers develop them. Chapter 3 deals with “theo-logy,” how Scripture understands God himself. Dunn outlines six “theo-logical” themes inherited by the NT from the OT: God as Creator and Judge, God as one, the God of Israel, God as both transcendent and immanent, angelic intermediaries, and God’s wisdom/word. In light of the Christ event, seven key ideas are then drawn upon by the NT in reconfiguring this God: teacher/prophet, messiah, son of God, son of Man, Lord, wisdom/word of God, and the worship of Jesus. The note on which Dunn ends is the diversity of images employed by the NT writers in their “theo-logy” and Christology.

Chapter 4 moves to salvation. Israel’s theology of salvation is summed up under the five headings of God as savior, God’s initiative (with a good discussion of Yahweh’s magnanimous *chesed*), God’s faithfulness (including Dunn’s relational understanding of righteousness), atonement in Israel’s sacrificial system, and the hoped-for age to come. The event of Christ’s death and resurrection funnels into five headings synthetically delineating the NT’s handling of salvation: realized eschatology, new covenant, sacred space and atonement (focusing on the temple), diverse images of salvation (here Dunn treats the NT metaphors of redemption, justification, etc.), and the hope of salvation. Dunn’s discussion of realized eschatology is especially strong, making it all the more puzzling that he does not sufficiently integrate the temple theme into this more general discussion (pp. 86–88). Neglecting the way in which Jesus and his followers have now become the eschatological temple, he can only deem the NT’s understanding of the temple as “somewhat confused” and “not clear” (p. 86). Dunn closes the chapter by again emphasizing discontinuity within the NT witness: “The images of salvation are diverse and by no means always mutually compatible” (p. 96).

The church is the topic of chapter 5, and Dunn is clear from the outset that he is determined to retain respect for Israel as an ethnic entity. He discusses the OT under the headings of Israel’s election (focusing on Abraham); separation, zeal, and blessing; Jewish factionalism and the remnant theme; and Israel’s eschatological hope. Once again these are taken up in the NT and transformed by Christ. The emphases of this chapter will not surprise those familiar with Dunn’s previous work; a pervasive concern is “the ending of the separation between peoples” as “an important part of the gospel, in many ways the most important” (p. 114).

Chapter 6 addresses the law. Dunn outlines what would have come down to the NT writers from the Scriptures of Israel under the headings of the priority of grace over law (supporting Sanders’ covenantal nomism), the law of Israel, the wall of separation (discussing “boundary markers”), and the law as the way of life (the law describes,

rather than merits, life before God). Dunn accesses the NT's reception of these convictions by focusing on Jesus and the *halakhoth*, Paul's alleged break with the law (Dunn argues against any strong break), Christians' fulfillment of the law through the Spirit, and judgment according to works.

This introduction to the theology of the NT is both clear and stimulating. True to form, Dunn does not allow his readers to yawn their way through his writing. Disagreements will invariably surface from time to time, as is true of any clear and strong treatment of something as precious to so many as the NT. Yet this book has many strengths, such as compelling articulations of the Bible as a united storyline culminating in Christ, as well as the way in which the NT represents the eschatological inauguration of hopes cherished by Israel—though fulfilled in unexpected ways. The concern to include the experiential side of engaging the theology of the NT provides another welcome emphasis in what can often become an overly cerebral exercise (e.g. pp. 92, 126).

Readers should be aware, however, of at least two notable weaknesses. First, the stock Dunn places in the crucial significance of the Second Temple Jewish literature for understanding the NT is disconcerting (pp. 6, 14, 82, 107, 148, 154; although note p. 176, n. 25). Thoughtful pastors or lay church leaders with no exposure to inter-testamental Judaism—remember that the book claims to be an *introduction* to NT theology—may finish the book with a good dose of despair of any hope of penetrating to the heart of what the NT is about. Dunn would better serve his readers by casting the Jewish literature as illuminating to, not necessary for, understanding the NT.

Second, the strength of Dunn's grasp of the crucial salvation-historical shift that has taken place in Christ is to be appreciated, but the socio-communal ramifications of this shift dominate to the point of disproportion. In an interpretation familiar to those versed in his previous work, Dunn describes the faith-plus-works mistake addressed in Gal 2:16 as "the whole attitude that Paul now rejected completely—his own attitude before his conversion, that the law was (in the imagery of Ephesians 2) a wall dividing Jew from Gentile (Eph 2:14)" (p. 142). Here, among other places, Dunn emphasizes the horizontal to the neglect of the vertical. Fixating on the ripples on the surface of the NT theological pond, he effectively neglects what is most fundamental—the dropped pebble of God's free grace in Christ, one massive *implication* of which is inter-ethnic unity.

Dunn continues to provide learned yet accessible volumes for pastors and students; this introduction to the theology of the NT is no exception. If inaugural volumes can be trusted as representative, however, Abingdon's Library of Biblical Theology series will prove less satisfying than Zondervan's recently inaugurated Biblical Theology of the New Testament series, edited by Andreas Köstenberger (who has himself just provided the first installment, a Johannine theology). For readers comfortable with the notion that the NT canon and teaching is not only diverse and multifaceted due to human authorship but also coherent and compatible due to divine authorship, the Biblical Theology of the New Testament series should be given pride of place.

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Cosmology and New Testament Theology. Edited by Jonathan T. Pennington and Sean M. McDonough. Library of New Testament Studies 355. London: T & T Clark, 2008, x + 213 pp., \$130.00.

The title of this book co-edited by Jonathan T. Pennington of Southern Seminary and Sean M. McDonough of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary highlights what is particularly distinctive about this contribution to the study of NT cosmology. This is not

merely a collection of analyses of such things as just how many levels of heaven Paul may have thought there were (although such issues are not overlooked) but rather a refreshingly wide-ranging collection of essays that consistently and seriously engages with the theological significance of the cosmological language used by the NT authors. Some of the essays indeed have rather less to say about cosmology proper than about theology, but this can not really be considered a weakness of the book, since one of the purposes of the editors is to demonstrate the ways in which the two are necessarily intertwined.

McDonough and Pennington observe in their brief introduction that the subject of their book is one that has been relatively neglected in NT scholarship. With this volume, they aim to make a start at meeting the need for comprehensive studies that attend not merely to the use of cosmological language to say something about the physical structure of the universe but also to the way in which such language yields insights into an author's worldview and theological interests. To borrow the language of Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann (whose work is referred to several times in this volume, though not without some criticism), the NT writers are generally considered by the authors of these essays to employ cosmological language less for the purpose of describing the world "as it is" than for constructing a "symbolic universe" that reflects their values and beliefs—even if (as Robert L. Foster points out in his essay) these two purposes need not be mutually exclusive.

One question that this approach raises is what status the NT writers would assign to their own cosmological claims. As McDonough and Pennington put it, "Could the NT writers, while gravitating towards a 'three-tiered' view of the heavens, not have countenanced alternative schema for 'levels' of the cosmos, with the full awareness that these were not meant to be definitive accounts of what is scientifically the case, but rather were employed because they served useful literary or theological purposes?" (p. 3). It is unfortunate that, apart from making a few general observations concerning the unscientific "flavour" of cosmological statements in the NT, the editors make little attempt to suggest just how one might go about answering this question. McDonough and Pennington would in any case answer their own question in the affirmative and so adopt the assumption that people of the first century—including the NT writers—had "latitude . . . to employ different [cosmological] models according to their theological needs" (p. 3).

One of the merits of this approach—apart from the rather obvious way in which it lends itself to a focus on literary and theological issues—is that it allows for the potentially diverse cosmological models in the biblical books to be taken on their own terms. This has influenced the structure of the volume, which, after a chapter on Graeco-Roman and ancient Jewish cosmology, proceeds book-by-book or section-by-section through the NT, ending with a brief conclusion that explicitly calls attention to the absence of any attempt by the authors "to reconstruct a uniform 'early Christian view' of the physical universe" (p. 189). This is a project that Pennington and McDonough would consider impossible in practice and misguided in principle. In what follows, I can offer only brief comments on each of the chapters, with the aim of giving readers a taste of the riches on offer, but I will also raise an occasional question or criticism of my own.

Edward Adams (pp. 5–27) begins the book with a characteristically clear and concise survey of Graeco-Roman cosmology. Adams summarises his findings by noting that he finds "outrageous" the popular view that Greek thinkers had a negative view of the material world; he claims that, rather, "[t]he tendency throughout the Hellenistic era and early Roman times was toward veneration of the cosmos" (p. 19). Adams also briefly considers ancient Jewish cosmology, focusing on the OT and the Jewish apocalypses, with a fleeting glance at Philo. If there is a contrast with Graeco-Roman cosmologies, Adams suggests that it is to be found above all in the Jewish emphasis on praising the

creator rather than the creation, although the goodness of creation itself is also clearly affirmed.

In the following chapter, co-editor Pennington (pp. 28–44) argues for the essentially theological character of Matthew's cosmological language. Pennington compiles a substantial list of potential allusions to Genesis in Matthew (some admittedly more convincing than others) to substantiate his case that the author of Matthew intends his Gospel to be read as a book-end to the Scriptures (p. 38). Pennington suggests that the theological purpose of this for the author of Matthew is to emphasise the continuity of his Gospel with the Hebrew Bible as well as to highlight the way in which Christ inaugurates the eschaton by bringing the creation described in Genesis to its divinely-ordained fulfilment.

Whereas Pennington stresses the theological significance of Matthew's cosmological language, Michael F. Bird's reading of Mark (pp. 45–59) possibly goes a step further in finding cosmology *always* to be used in the service of social, religious, and political ends, to the extent that Mark's *Weltbild*—the author's conception of the actual physical world—must be considered essentially inaccessible. Bird's analysis proceeds from the assumption that Mark is to be situated in the context of what he calls (rather unfortunately, given recent criticisms of the popular but ill-defined expression) “apocalyptic eschatology”; he concludes that Mark, like writers of the apocalypses, envisions a transformation of the *kosmos* so that it again reflects the goodness of the original *ktisis*, but that for Mark this transformation is achieved not through military victory but through the life, death, and resurrection of Christ.

Among the several helpful features of Steve Walton's chapter on Luke-Acts (pp. 60–73) are his focus on the cosmological and theological significance of Christ's ascension and his argument that Acts in particular represents a deliberate challenge to alternative cosmologies, whether Jewish (such as those that would confine God's presence to the temple) or Graeco-Roman (such as those of the Stoics and Epicureans with whom Paul engages in Acts 17). Edward W. Klink III (pp. 74–89) next charts a clear course through some of the well-known dangers and challenges that face any interpreter of the cosmology of John's Gospel, and he also provides a brief treatment of the Johannine epistles. Klink argues for the centrality of the cosmic story (alongside the historical and ecclesiological) in the Gospel and the letters, and throughout his treatment Klink refuses to allow this genuinely cosmological dimension to be eclipsed by the merely sociological.

Joel White's chapter on the cosmology of Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Galatians (pp. 90–106) is notable for its helpful methodological discussion and exegetical insights. White acknowledges at the outset that a dearth of relevant material means that “we cannot say with any precision how Paul understood the structure of the physical universe” (p. 93), but he manages nonetheless to derive nine tenets of what he calls Paul's “cosmological narrative.” Most of these are relatively uncontroversial, although those who reject the possibility of a Pauline natural theology may dispute White's claim (based on Rom 1:20–25) that for Paul “the cosmos imparts enough information to human beings to make them aware of their obligation to worship God” (p. 96). Others might query White's focus on what he calls the “divinely ordained *hierarchy* of relationships between God, humanity and the cosmos” (p. 97; italics mine). I, for one, found unconvincing White's argument that creation's purpose for Paul is limited to sustaining human life and that it is the frustration of this purpose that leads to creation's groaning in Romans 8 (pp. 97–99); White seems to me to be on firmer ground with the assertion that “God created the cosmos to bring glory to himself” (p. 95).

Foster follows White with a look at Ephesians through Philemon, and—as I alluded to earlier—Foster is one of the few authors in this volume to query whether the language of “construction” is strictly appropriate for describing NT cosmology, since this can imply that there is no link with an author's conception of reality itself (p. 107, n. 2). In Foster's own reading of the diverse epistles that he examines, he consistently discovers a strong

cosmological dualism, rooted in the contrast between earth and heaven, present and future. At times, Foster's keenness to emphasize this point unfortunately leads him to miss potentially more nuanced views in the texts that he examines, and I was left wishing that there had been more discussion of how Paul might see any such dualisms as overcome in Christ (briefly suggested, e.g. on p. 118).

Jon Laansma ably tackles the difficult and contested issue of the cosmology of Hebrews (pp. 125–43), conclusions about which often tend to depend on the degree to which one finds the thought of this book nearer to Philo or to Jewish apocalypticism. Laansma resists limiting himself to such approaches, however, and instead, building on his previous work, he pays close attention to Hebrews's self-presentation in order to survey important issues relating to the epistle's cosmology and eschatology. Laansma's treatment of Hebrews is supplemented by some of this volume's most probing reflections on the significance of biblical cosmology (especially as it applies to Hebrews) and the methods for studying it (pp. 125–33).

In his chapter on James (pp. 144–56), Darian Lockett takes as his starting point the conviction that a coherent theology can indeed be discovered in this letter. He concludes that for James, "the cosmos is bifurcated along the boundary between . . . two world views—one associated with 'God' . . . and the other with 'the world'" (pp. 155–56). This latter realm (which can also be called "earthly") is a polluted and polluting place where the "demonic" and heavenly wisdom do battle (p. 156); the charge to readers is to be friends with God, not the world (Jas 4:4).

John Dennis takes up the difficult task of surveying the cosmology of 1 and 2 Peter and Jude (pp. 157–77). Particularly interesting is Dennis's discussion of 2 Peter 3 (pp. 170–77), where he interacts at some length with recent arguments put forward by fellow-contributor Adams, agreeing with him at a number of points but also critiquing Adams's emphasis on Stoicism rather than on OT and Jewish traditions as providing the primary background for the motifs of this chapter.

McDonough concludes the body of the book with an evocative, if disappointingly brief, survey of the cosmology of the book of Revelation (pp. 178–88). McDonough structures his examination along the lines of a play, complete with a cosmological stage and players ranging from God to the "Satanic trinity" of dragon, beast, and false prophet. In the ensuing drama, a corrupted cosmos is portrayed as disintegrating in the face of God's judgment before finally being renewed in a union of heaven and earth that takes place at the coming of God and the Lamb.

This book shares the strengths and weaknesses of any edited volume, but in this case there is greater unity in approach and outlook among the different writers than usual. The differences that do emerge are of the sort that gratifyingly send one back to the original texts to wrestle with the issues at hand. Indeed, while this volume is a significant contribution in its own right, its greatest value may well lie in the impetus it can provide to further research in NT cosmology. I warmly recommend this book to anyone interested in the cosmology or the theology of the NT, and readers will discover in the end that neither of these subjects can in fact be treated in isolation from the other.

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Four Views on Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology. Edited by Gary T. Meadors. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009, 364 pp., \$19.99, paper.

Readers will no doubt be familiar with Zondervan's Counterpoint series, a debate in print between adherents of differing views on topics of biblical and theological importance

and interest. This volume provides a much-needed discussion of *Moving Beyond the Bible to Theology*. The contributors are Walter Kaiser, Daniel Doriani, Kevin Vanhoozer, and William Webb, each propounding his own model for this move and each chapter concluding with responses from each of the other three authors. Additional “reflections” are provided by Mark Strauss, Al Wolters, and Christopher Wright.

Upon glimpsing the title, I first wondered what kind of “theology” this discussion was about. Biblical? Systematic? Canonical? What destination were the authors attempting to arrive at in this move “beyond the Bible”? Theology for ethics seems to have been the terminus of all the contributors, probably by editorial diktat. However, I found myself wishing someone would have provided more help to the one person in evangelicalism struggling—nay, agonizing!—week after week, pericope by pericope, with the issue of “moving beyond the Bible:” the homiletician. I will return to this issue after outlining and evaluating each of the four approaches.

Let us, then, first turn to Kaiser’s “Principlizing Model.” According to Kaiser, “[t]o ‘principlize’ is to [re]state the author’s propositions, arguments, narrations, and illustrations in timeless abiding truths.” And “we must receive only those meanings authoritatively stated by the authors themselves” (p. 22). While Kaiser seems to assume that these “principles” are “authoritatively stated by the authors themselves,” I am not convinced that the Bible is a compendium of timeless principles awaiting a time-transcending person perched upon an Archimedean point to unearth them.

How does one go from text to principle? Kaiser’s answer is the “Ladder of Abstraction,” “a continuous sequence of categorizations from a low level of specificity up to a high point of generality in a principle and down again to a specific application in the contemporary culture” (p. 24). Paul’s employment of Deut 25:4 in 1 Cor 9:9–12 and 1 Tim 5:18 is cited as an example of this ascent and descent. “[F]rom theancient specific situation (oxen that tread out grain) we move up the ladder to the institutional or personal norm (animals are God’s gifts to humanity and should be treated kindly), to the top of the ladder, which gives us the general principle (giving engenders gentleness and graciousness). As we descend the ladder on the other side, we meet the theological and moral principle behind our general principle (‘love your neighbor’), to the contemporary or New Testament specific situation (pay those pastors ministering to you)” (p. 25). Kaiser fails to explain where these various principles are located. Presumably, they are situated behind the text.

For Kaiser, cultural issues “intrude” on the text, seemingly a distraction from the principle in (behind?) the text. As he avers, “[P]rinciples . . . must be given priority over accompanying cultural elements” (p. 21). Doriani, in his response, rightly criticizes Kaiser’s implicit understanding of the God-given text as a husk that must be stripped away to extract the all-important kernel (principle) hidden therein (p. 54). One would also have to wonder at God’s wisdom in giving the bulk of his Scripture in non-propositional form. Perhaps God would have served himself and his people better had he just adhered to a list of propositions (timeless, of course) rather than messy stories and arcane prophecies and sentimental poetry, all of which turn out to be merely illustrations of underlying principles (behind the text). Vanhoozer is right when he responds: “Kaiser may not go beyond the sacred page, but he certainly goes behind it” (p. 59).

Next, we turn to Doriani’s “Redemptive-Historical Model.” Doriani asserts that while “the Bible is not a legal code that minutely prescribes the proper action” even in moral issues, it “does provide sufficient direction” (pp. 78–79). He offers a method for the redemptive-historical model: close, accurate interpretation; synthesis of biblical data (“God’s plan of redemption for the nations . . . is the unifying theme of Scripture,” p. 85); and application of Scripture, including the imitation of individuals portrayed as paradigms in its narratives. Surprisingly, having labeled his method “redemptive-historical,” Doriani had hardly anything in the essay redolent of that transaction, at least as it is commonly practiced by its major proponents. In fact, he seemed to be at

pains to distance himself from this camp: "Unlike a few members of my school, I maintain that the imitation of God/imitation of Christ motif pervades Scripture and is a leading source of ethical guidance" (p. 86). And, Doriani adds, some in this league "so stress the centrality of God and redemption that any move to draw moral lessons from biblical narratives is viewed as moralism and a betrayal of the principle of God-centered reading" (p. 86, n. 23). I am relieved Doriani disagrees with this company, but I am at a loss, then, as to why his method is particularly "redemptive-historical."

For some reason, Doriani decided to tackle the question of what the Bible says about celebrating weddings. While weddings appear "tangentially" several times in Scripture, he thinks certain principles may be deduced from them: celebration in weddings is valid; excess ought to be shunned; and so on. Doriani prefers to call this operation "casuistry"—"the 'art of resolving particular cases of conscience through appeal to higher general principles'" (p. 100; emphasis added). He also addresses the hypothetical question of Christian architects seeking theological consultation on what the Bible says about building projects. In answer, he appeals to Deut 22:8 (the requirement for parapets on roofs) and adduces the "principle" of safety (p. 105). All of this sounds suspiciously like "principlization" to me, as well as to Kaiser, who responds, "So where did we go beyond the surface of what the Bible expects of us? Nowhere, as far as I can see. The method seems to be identical to my method of principlization" (p. 123).

The next approach to consider is Vanhoozer's "Drama-of-Redemption Model." I view this proposal the most promising of the four. In his response to Kaiser, Vanhoozer asserts: "Instead of isolating a principle that we have then to make relevant to our situation, we need to explicate the main theodramatic action and implicate our contemporary situation in it. In short, the task is not to transform the Bible (i.e. into timeless principles) so that it can enter our world, but to transform ourselves (i.e. our habits of vision) so that we can enter into the world implied by the Bible" (p. 62). In his chapter, borrowing from Ricoeur, Vanhoozer notes that a biblical author projects a possible, eschatological world—a divine world into which the disciple of Christ is invited to enter. "To understand a text, then, is to engage the world 'in front of' it, the world it dangles in front of the reader's wondering eyes," then "'inhabiting' the world it projects" (p. 166). This might be a very profitable approach for the homiletician for the move from Bible to theology. One can conceive of each pericope of Scripture displaying a small slice of that larger canonical world—a world that God opens for inhabitation by his people, as they abide by its priorities, principles, and practices. This is a world that would be and could be, were the people of God to align themselves with it. Moreover, for Vanhoozer, projecting this world-segment is what the author is *doing* with what he is *saying*: "To understand a discourse is to grasp what an author is doing with his or her discourse" (p. 166). How would one determine this vision of the pericopal world from the text—a theology (pericopal theology?) that would "help the church creatively and faithfully to continue the way, the truth, and the life of Jesus Christ" (p. 161)? Unfortunately, no answers are provided.

Vanhoozer asserts that "Scripture is not merely a vehicle for conveying information. It is rather a medium of divine communicative action whose purpose is not only to inform but to transform: to nurture right vision, right attitudes, right actions" (pp. 170–71). That is exactly what homileticians and pastors are all about: helping the body of Christ apply the text of Scripture, changing lives, creating dispositions, and forming Christlike character, all for the glory of God. I wish there were more specifics on how to go about accomplishing this world-habitation, particularly pericope by pericope—the weekly burden of the preacher. Vanhoozer, to his credit, recognizes he is undertaking more speculation than specification. But that makes it virtually impossible for the reader to employ these concepts in any practical way. Kaiser, in his response to Vanhoozer, confesses his own perplexity: "After reading and rereading Kevin's chapter many times over, for the life of me I cannot explain to anyone else, much less myself, how the

'drama-of-redemption approach' works" (p. 204). Doriani is more critical, suggesting that Vanhoozer spend time teaching, preaching, and leading in the church. He asks: "How might his work differ if he, like many seminary professors, had been a pastor or even an interim preacher for an extended period?" (p. 209). Webb agrees: "Vanooser's approach is just a little too much in the clouds—the theological stratosphere" (p. 213).

Finally, let us consider Webb's "Redemptive-Movement Model." In his response to Doriani's essay, Webb notes that the "redemptive-movement method . . . takes its cue from a *movement dimension of meaning in the concrete particulars* of the biblical text . . . in order to discover another aspect of abstracted meaning that also resides within the text" (pp. 143–44). Therefore, according to Webb, "we must be willing to venture beyond simply an *isolated* or *static* understanding of the Bible" (p. 215). It is quite a challenge, at least for me, to conceive of a static text as having a non-static meaning. Diagrammatically, Webb's interpretive "movement" looks like this: X (original culture) → Y (Scripture) → Z ("ultimate ethic") (p. 218). For example, considering Deut 21:10–14 that talks about capturing women in war for wives, Webb would compare that command, Y (Scripture), with what was going on in the original culture, X. Noticing that Y was an improvement over X, Webb would extrapolate to an "ultimate ethic," Z. Current readers, chronologically located between Y and Z, are then supposed to do all they can to get to Z. This scheme seems to be fraught with problems. Apart from the fact that "original culture" was hardly monolithic, the critical issue is how one arrives at this "ultimate ethic," Z. Is it simply the subjective opinion of the observer? And, by seeking an "ultimate ethic" outside the scriptural text, does that mean that no text of the Bible ever articulates a terminus, an *ultima Thule*? Are we always to be seeking a "Z" outside the Bible? One wonders why one needs the Bible at all in that case.

"Movement" seems to be the "crucial" element of Webb's hermeneutic: "Movement is (crucial) meaning . . . movement provides absolutely crucial meaning . . ." (p. 221); "[m]ovement . . . is an extremely crucial component of textual meaning" (221, n. 8). Strauss, in his reflection, wonders about movement *within* the biblical text itself, the kinetics of which Webb does not consider. For instance, there appears to be a chronological development (movement?) of Paul's ideas on women's issues from his earliest letter to the Galatians to his later missives to the Corinthians and to Timothy. And what about "movement" from the Old to the New Testament, absent from Webb's model? Vanhoozer, in his response to Webb, puts it well: "In short it is not clear to me how the redemptive genie . . . once let out of the bottle, is canonically contained or regulated" (p. 268).

Personally, this book made great reading, providing much grist for thought and collegial discussion. However, as a homiletician, as already mentioned, I yearn to see a method for "Moving Beyond the Bible to [Pericopal] Theology" for the sake of the weekly proclamation event of the church, the sermon. Perhaps this book will stimulate further thought along those lines. May the debate continue!

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God of Love and God of Judgment. By Stephen K. Moroney. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2009, xii + 150 pp., \$19.00 paper.

Mediation has been a recurring theme in Stephen K. Moroney's career. As professor of theology at Malone University, he has bridged the academy and the church on both theological issues (e.g. the noetic effects of sin) and pedagogical issues (e.g. the

neutrality/advocacy debate). With respect to the former, Moroney's *The Noetic Effects of Sin* negotiates between Calvin, Brunner, and Kuyper to construct a theology of sin's effects on our thinking in such a way that he incorporates the strengths of their views while avoiding their pitfalls. With respect to the latter, Moroney has replaced the assumed dichotomy of pedagogical neutrality, in which a professor should not advocate for a particular view in the classroom, and advocacy, in which a professor seeks to model wise adjudication between views for her/his students, with his "context specific" approach that takes the school, student, and material into consideration. In short, where others see an excluded middle, Moroney sees an opportunity for further reflection.

In his latest book, *God of Love and God of Judgment*, Moroney examines the doctrine of God in what are sometimes seen to be antithetical divine attributes: love and judgment. The book's title conveys Moroney's sympathies, as God is a God of both love *and* judgment.

Before delving into the structure of his argument, however, a brief word is necessary on the lacuna filled by Moroney's study. In recent years, only a handful of theologians have tried to explore the relationship between God's love and justice. Moroney interacts with two of them, Dan Via's *Divine Justice, Divine Judgment* and Steven Keillor's *God's Judgments*, both of which concentrate more on divine justice than love. The only other book written lately that explores these issues is David Clotfelter's *Sinners in the Hands of a Good God*, but this work is written more for "the ordinary believer" (p. 21) than academic theologians. Moroney's book, therefore, fills the need for a contemporary, thoroughly researched, and clearly argued contemporary treatment of God's love and justice written for both the ordinary believer and theologians. As I mention in my evaluation below, Moroney succeeds on both levels.

The book's argument proceeds in three stages: Part I explores the ramifications in Christian belief and practice if one were to picture God as a Judge while downplaying God's love; Part II conversely examines the ramifications of prioritizing God's love to the neglect of judgment; and Part III seeks to envision God's love and judgment together. In what follows, I briefly outline the shape of the argument chapter by chapter and give an evaluation of Moroney's project as a whole.

In Part I, Moroney seeks to explore the untenable position of judgment without love. Chapter 1, "Thus Judgeth the Lord," examines the "perils of proclaiming God's judgment in current events" (p. 3). He begins by using the Puritans as an historical example of claiming God's judgment to the surrounding culture to the neglect of God's love. The Puritan on whom Moroney concentrates most is Thomas Beard, author of *Theatre of God's Judgments*, a compilation of narratives in which an individual or community neglected one or more of the Ten Commandments to great misfortune. Beard represents for Moroney the mistake of suggesting that humans can always discern God's judgments in history, and the stories Beard tells are at once humorous and disturbing (e.g. "When a man broke the Sabbath by habitually hunting on the Lord's day, 'the Lord punished with this judgment: he caused his wife to bring forth a child with a head like a dog, that seeing he preferred his dogs before the service of God, he might have one of his own getting to make much of,'" p. 7). Moroney notes that while Beard rightly sought to be biblical and maintain a strong view of divine providence, he failed to emphasize similarly God's love and draw the necessary distinction between biblical and post-biblical history.

Moroney also notes that such proclamations of God's judgment are not a thing of the past. He cites two contemporary examples of people using September 11, 2001, as evidence of God's judgment: (1) Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell both suggested that 9/11 was God's judgment for America's sin of allowing abortion; and (2) Dan Via opined that 9/11 was God's judgment on America for not having universal health care, not doing anything about the great rift between the rich and poor, and American imperialism.

One of the problems, notes Moroney, is that these figures disagree with each other in their proclamation of God's judgment. The chapter closes by noting some biblical principles one can use to understand the issue, for example, that *God* is providentially at work in the world in many ways, one of which is judging sin. However, venturing *our* own guesses as to when God judges is wrongheaded: the story of Job and the words of Jesus explicitly say that present suffering is not indicative of God's judgment (pp. 13; 21–23).

In chapter 2, Moroney discusses some examples of making the transition from seeing God as a "harsh judge to loving Father" (p. 26). He begins by recounting Martin Luther's journey. Only when Luther began to embrace God as the great redeemer did his view begin to reflect who God actually is. On this score, Paul is a wonderful example because, while he suffered, he also drew strength from knowing God as a God of love. So, too, is John Newton, author of "Amazing Grace," a great example: "Newton had come to know the whole truth—that God judged his sin as wrong but lovingly forgave him because of Christ" (p. 41). And the example *par excellence* of maintaining God's love is Jesus Christ, whose ministry and prayers continually emphasized God's love as a uniting force in the lives of his followers. Knowing God's love, suggests Moroney, enables us to respond both to God and our neighbor in that way. However, emphasizing God's judgment over love is less a problem in our contemporary culture, and Moroney uses the next two chapters to correct this equally mistaken concept of God.

In Part II, Moroney explores the mistake of prioritizing God's love over God's judgment. Chapter 3 discusses the ways in which humans imagine God. Moroney begins by giving survey data that confirms that the current trend is to view God in terms more of love than justice. While such mental and preached images of God as more loving than judgmental make us feel good, Moroney shows that for those who take the Bible seriously, this one-sided portrait of God is incomplete. Early Christians like Paul, Peter, and the author of Hebrews, by contrast, preached the God of both judgment and love; indeed, "judgment is part of Paul's gospel!" (p. 59). It is dangerous to make God in our own image, says Moroney, as it distorts our views and actions in ethics, evangelism, and theology. For Moroney, "clearly, the image of God as judge is a vital piece of a full, biblical understanding of God's character" (p. 68).

In chapter 4, Moroney discusses the "Marcion invasion" and Protestant liberal theology, both of which represent the error of emphasizing God's loving nature while neglecting the judgment of God; the idea behind both is that "all you need is love" (p. 70). In Christianity's early years, Marcion claimed that the God of the Hebrews was a different God than the God of the NT; the former was wrathful, while the latter was loving and accepting. Early Christians (e.g. Irenaeus and Tertullian) rejected Marcion's teachings (and money), and the imbalance towards love remained dormant for the church's history until mid-modernity. Moroney notes four figures in the history of liberal Protestantism who embraced a God of love to the neglect of God's judgment: Friedrich Schleiermacher, Albrecht Ritschl, Thomas Jefferson, and Anthony Hanson. One problem is that the Scriptures display equal emphasis on God's love and mercy in the OT and judgment and wrath in the NT. Contemporary popular figures also represent the misunderstanding, as Moroney criticizes John Shelby Spong, a former Episcopal bishop who took liberal ideas of God's love to the extreme and ended up rejecting many fundamental Christian doctrines. Yet the emphasis on God's love is also found in contemporary evangelicalism (e.g. Joel Osteen), in preachers who do not adequately bring a gospel of both love and judgment to their audience (p. 74). The dangers of the liberal approach (and Marcionism before it) are that it elevates reason above Scripture in theological adjudication, teaches or preaches according to pragmatic standards, makes God in human image, and shows the consequences of not proclaiming judgment alongside love.

In Part III, Moroney begins his constructive proposal that weaves divine love and judgment together. In chapter 5, after first reiterating that one needs to cherish both

God's love and judgment, Moroney proceeds to explore five models for considering God's love and one mode of God's judgment—wrath—together: (1) seeing the two as existing in conflict; (2) viewing God's wrath as subordinate to God's love; (3) approaching God's wrath as an expression of God's love; (4) maintaining a balance between love and wrath; and (5) seeing love and wrath as "expressions of God's multifaceted, united character" (p. 108). After outlining the relative strengths and weaknesses of the first four, Moroney opts for the fifth as the most biblical approach, in which "God's wrath and God's love both flow out of *who* God is . . . out of God's very nature" (pp. 109, 116). However, adherence to one model does not, Moroney notes, mean that humans can escape their finitude and sin, so he emphasizes, "a model is just a model" (p. 113).

Chapter 6 continues the argument of chapter 5 by showing both love and judgment present in Jesus' ministry in the Gospel of Matthew. However, it goes beyond the previous chapter by suggesting some implications of the fifth model for Christian praxis. As a start, Christians are reminded to attend to the plank in their own eye rather than the speck in their neighbor's. Furthermore, there are concrete ways in which Christians must also incorporate both love and judgment, namely, by accepting the biblical mandate for disciplinary correction, displaying righteous anger when appropriate, and confronting others in a caring way. For "when we are at our best, love and judgment are united together in godly ways within our lives as well" as God's (p. 139).

There is much to commend in Moroney's endeavor in this book. First, *God of Love and God of Judgment* is written in such a way that varying types of readers can easily use it. Its utility is seen in the fact that (1) each chapter contains a set of questions for reflection and discussion; (2) the book contains an extensive bibliography in the event that a reader wants to replicate the research; and (3) each chapter includes helpful summaries of the argument. In my estimation, this book would make a fine textbook for an undergraduate theology class on the doctrine of God as well as an enlightening study for a church small group. Otherwise expressed, the book is easily understandable for use in the church but carefully researched and argued for use in the academy. Here one sees the rare—yet necessary—type of scholarship I mentioned at the start of this review: mediation. In this book, Moroney transcends the normal "boundaries" of the academy and the church. And his book succeeds brilliantly on both levels. It is not so esoteric to be incomprehensible to lay readers; nor is it too simple to be of interest to the academic community of teachers and students of theology.

Second, more importantly, his exposition of both historical figures and biblical texts is exemplary, as is his choice of which figures, texts, and issues on which to concentrate. At no point does Moroney condescend to his interlocutors; he is careful to give a charitable reading to all involved, even those with whom he disagrees. For example, in most cases Moroney proffers the merits of each approach before he mentions its pitfalls. So not only in his faithfulness to his sources but also in the charity with which he conveys those sources, Moroney's exposition is solid. One cannot accuse Moroney of neglecting the biblical material, as the narrative of the book's genesis in the Preface displays Moroney's sincere desire to understand the Bible's teaching about love and justice through several cover-to-cover readings of the written Word.

Perhaps the great strength of Moroney's approach—his faithfulness to the Scriptures—also signals what is lacking in this book. It may be the case that those who prioritize love or judgment do so because they are drawing on sources other than the biblical witness. In the case of liberal theologies, for instance, experience figures heavily; in legalistic theologies, one might argue that tradition predominates (deviation from the perceived norm warrants judgment, according to some). Otherwise expressed, giving those outside the fold of a consciously biblical worldview cognizance of the love/judgment integration may require more extra-biblical argumentation. That is, as some contemporary doctrines of revelation, even in evangelical circles, are elevating other avenues of revelation, one might suspect that the love/judgment conversation requires

a defense of one's methodology and sources if it is to be of the greatest benefit to those who disagree.

What is for certain, however, is that if one assumes—as most of us do—that the Bible is the preeminent form of revelation, this book's argument succeeds brilliantly at showing the integration of divine love and judgment. And, in both Jesus' and Moroney's words, "what is joined together in God (his love and judgment), let no one separate" (p. 143).

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God's Word in Human Words: An Evangelical Appropriation of Critical Biblical Scholarship. By Kenton L. Sparks. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008. 416 pp., \$28.00 paper.

Among those who identify themselves as evangelicals, an ongoing debate persists whether the doctrine of inerrancy is a bulwark or a shibboleth. With *God's Word in Human Words*, Kenton Sparks comes down firmly in the shibboleth camp. More to the point, Sparks, professor of biblical studies at Eastern University, considers the usual understanding of the doctrine of inerrancy to be an albatross that has hung around evangelical necks long enough. He argues that the time has come for evangelicals to accept historical criticism as a valid way to study Scripture and to face the theological implications of such an approach (p. 23). Sparks rejects inerrancy as understood by the Chicago Statement on Inerrancy, but he does not want to abandon the term. He states, "Perhaps what we need is a way of understanding Scripture that paradoxically affirms inerrancy while admitting the human errors in Scripture" (p. 138). Sparks argues for an inerrancy of divine purpose.

Sparks begins by dividing hermeneutical and epistemological approaches to Scripture into premodern, modern, and postmodern stages. Sparks contrasts his postmodern position, which he calls "practical realism," with that of traditional evangelicalism (p. 42). He argues that the evangelical understanding of the Bible is thoroughly modern and is lashed to a Cartesian demand for absolute certainty (he sees presuppositionalism as also committed to foundationalism). The evangelical quest for an inerrant Bible is a misguided and quixotic search for what is neither possible nor necessary. Not only is the Bible not inerrant, it is not possible for it to be inerrant. But since human capacity for understanding is limited, a fallible Bible poses no problem. Sparks seems to argue that since an infallible interpretation is not possible, an inerrant Scripture is not needed.

In chapters two and three, Sparks surveys the use of historical criticism in ancient Near Eastern studies (chap. 2) and the problems that arise when these methods are applied to the biblical record (chap. 3). He presents the standard critical conclusions: the Pentateuch is a compilation of conflicting narratives and theological traditions; the predictions of Isaiah and Daniel are *ex eventu* pseudo-prophecies; many of the predictions found in Ezekiel, Daniel, and Revelation failed to come to pass; John's Gospel is theological fiction; and so on. Sparks weighs the traditional evangelical approaches to biblical criticism and finds them wanting (chap. 4). He examines the typical conservative response to biblical criticism and concludes it "not only fails, but fails badly" (p. 170). Evangelicals need a theological paradigm that appropriates with integrity the findings of the historical-critical method.

In chapter four, Sparks reserves special criticism for many current evangelical scholars. As evangelical academics, particularly those in biblical studies, have become more comfortable with the results of historical criticism, they also have become more

circumspect in how they communicate their own conclusions. In other words, Sparks accuses many evangelical biblical scholars of dishonestly hiding what they really believe about the Scriptures (pp. 166–68). Fear of institutional backlash causes some to employ “rhetorical ambiguity,” and fear of alienating their market causes others to mask their true opinions from conservative readers.

After surveying constructive approaches to biblical criticism (chap. 5), Sparks presents a “progressive evangelical” formulation that views the Bible as a truly human book that nonetheless has divine authority (chaps. 6–9). Four points to this formulation can be discerned. First, evangelicals must recognize the human genres within Scripture, including the genres of myth, legend, saga, fiction, and allegory. When we do, Sparks argues, many biblical difficulties disappear (p. 202). In Genesis, “bad science” becomes “true myth”; in Daniel, “failed prophecies” become “apocalyptic literature”; and in Samuel-Kings, “flawed history” becomes “history-like theologies.” Second, Sparks argues for a doctrine of accommodated Scripture that recognizes that “the Bible sometimes accommodates the errant views of its human authors” (p. 288). The divine process of accommodation is understood in adoptionist terms: God adopts certain human writings as his own and determines to accomplish his will through them, errors and all. Therefore, the Bible “does not contain a single coherent theology but rather numerous theologies that sometimes stand in tension or even in contradiction with one another” (p. 301). We should not expect the Bible to speak with one voice nor should we engage in hermeneutical gymnastics to try to force it into doing so.

How, then, do the people of God discern the mind of the Lord? This question brings Sparks to the third point of his progressive agenda: he calls for a trajectory approach to interpreting Scripture. One cannot simply determine what the Bible teaches; one must look to where the Bible is headed. The church must go beyond the written word to listen to “God’s living voice” (p. 299). In the end, Sparks’s approach views the Bible as one authority among several. God’s Word is the final authority, but “Scripture is not the only word that God has spoken” (p. 326). The Word of the Lord is the aggregate of what we hear of Christ, creation, the church, and the world. This comes to us in a “series of disparate and sometimes contradictory installments” (p. 327). Sparks concludes that “by reason and spiritual wisdom, the church is able to discover from these diverse voices the unique voice of God for us today” (p. 327). This means that rather than viewing the Bible as a lens by which we are to interpret reality, the Bible should be understood as a “good virus” that infects our understanding with wisdom. He suspects “some evangelicals will be alarmed by this approach to theology” (p. 328), a suspicion that is well-founded.

A conservative evangelical would have no problem agreeing with Sparks on a number of points. First, Sparks correctly argues that evangelicals must engage with biblical criticism with integrity and with a fearless confidence in the truth. A second point of agreement is corollary to the first point: the theological implications of historical-critical conclusions must be addressed. The question, of course, is where evangelicals should place the boundaries. Daniel Treier makes this point in his discussion of the role of critical studies in biblical theology (*Introducing Theological Interpretation of Scripture* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008] 103). Are we to plunder the Egyptians or are we to walk like them? A third point of agreement is the acknowledgement that all evangelical positions, such as those mapped out by the Chicago Statement on Inerrancy, must periodically be examined to see if they have become dated. In fact, the Chicago Statement itself was the product of the desire to distance evangelicalism from the dictation theory that was advocated by some seventeenth-century divines. However, I have a confidence in the continued viability of the Chicago Statement that Sparks does not possess. And fourth, evangelicals need to be open to a hermeneutic of critical realism (what Sparks calls “practical realism”). Though perfect understanding is accessible only to the

One who is omniscient, humans do have genuine contact with reality and truth. Therefore, an adequate, sufficient knowledge is available to us. For the people of God, this should result in a reasonable, humble confidence about our understanding of spiritual truth—an understanding that we will always need to further refine and correct.

Despite the areas of agreement listed in the previous paragraph, inerrantists will find much more about Sparks's project with which to disagree. First, inerrantists would reject the notion that the doctrine of inerrancy derives merely from a modern (or Enlightenment or Cartesian or call it what you will) desire for absolute certainty. The issue is not absolute certainty but final authority. Nor does the inability of humans to achieve absolute certainty render moot the issue of the Bible's truthfulness.

Conservative evangelicals would strongly take issue with Sparks's contention that they have operated in bad faith. I have mixed feelings about his denunciations of evangelical scholarship. The reader can appreciate his clarity and candor; one does not have to wonder where Sparks is coming from. However, some of his statements are inflammatory and very unfair. Sparks disparages evangelicals who take the "safe" route of earning a terminal degree either from a conservative Jewish or British university rather than facing the challenges of an American doctoral program (Sparks graduated from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill). He views the work of many conservatives with contempt: "It seems to me that serious scholarship does not sell among conservatives" (p. 166). Such *ad hominem* statements make a calm, measured response difficult. As for those evangelical scholars whom Sparks singles out by name, I leave to them the decision of whether or not his criticisms merit a rejoinder.

Moving away from Sparks's personal attacks and back to his main argument, I will note that many disagree with him (including some non-inerrantists) about whether the conclusions of historical criticism are all that conclusive. In addition, many will not find the examples he gives of the benefits of historical criticism to be as compelling as he makes them out to be. As for trajectory theology, Kevin Vanhoozer seems to have it right: the approach "lords over" the text (I. H. Marshall, *New Testament Theology* [Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2004], appendix). In fact, the examples Sparks gives to illustrate how trajectory theology would be employed seem to work against him. Some examples confirm concerns about the "slippery slope" (e.g. his openness to gay and lesbian theologies), while others border on the naïve (e.g. his solution to the Calvinism-Arminianism debate).

Sparks calls upon evangelicalism to consider the theological implications of embracing his progressive-evangelical approach to Scripture, and he is right to do so. What are the results of his proposal? A few can be listed. First, the inerrancy of Scripture is gone. One would think this is obvious, but Sparks wants to retain the term while jettisoning its meaning. I disagree that abandoning the doctrine of inerrancy as typically understood can be done with few repercussions.

Second, according to Sparks's proposal, the analogy of faith is gone. Adherence to the theological unity of Scripture did not arrive with post-Reformation scholars or the Enlightenment. Attacks on the Bible's coherence (and responses) are as old as Marcion and Tertullian. One finds the principle of the rule of faith to be frequent in the writings of the early Fathers, such as when Irenaeus likens the Scripture to a mosaic that, when assembled correctly, presents a beautiful image of the King (*Adv. Haer.* 1.1.8; cf. 1.1.10). Yes, understanding how Psalm 137 and the Sermon on the Mount fit together is challenging. And it is possible that we will not be able to answer every objection to everyone's satisfaction this side of the veil. The prophets do not sing in unison. They are, however, in harmony. Sparks, on the other hand, argues that the biblical authors are not even singing the same song.

The fragmentation of Scripture in the hand of historical critics is a much bigger problem than Sparks seems to acknowledge. His approach offers no remedy for the

theological Balkanization which plagues the church. One does not have to wonder how the effects of the historical-critical method play out; he simply needs to look at what is happening to theology outside of evangelical circles. Many non-evangelical communities have abandoned the attempt to formulate a comprehensive, systematic theology in favor of niche theologies: liberation theology, black theology, feminist theology, and so on. The differences within conservative evangelicalism are substantial, but they pale into insignificance compared to the bazaar that is postmodern theology.

Finally, according to Sparks's model, the authority of Scripture is gone. He calls on evangelicals to search for a canon within a canon, which is an approach evangelicals have consistently opposed. In effect, he argues for a new priesthood made up of historical-critical scholars. Sparks provides no convincing rationale for holding to his particular model of appropriating the historical-critical over the more radical approach of others. He admits that a substantial portion of the academic community takes a minimalist approach. Other than a sentimental affinity for one's roots, what in Sparks's model provides any type of anchor to evangelical distinctives? In 2008, at the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, a symposium met to discuss *God's Word in Human Words*. A number of the presenters called on Sparks to admit that he had abandoned inerrancy. I would suggest that Sparks needs to be even more candid. Can someone who forsakes the historicity of the Passover and the Exodus (p. 100) still honestly go by the label of evangelical?

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The Color of Church: A Biblical and Practical Paradigm for Multiracial Churches. By Rodney Woo. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2009, 304 pp., \$24.99, paper.

Sunday mornings are some of the most segregated times in the United States. Even though the country has been through the Civil War and the civil rights movement, racism still exists in the place where it should be practiced the least: the church. Pastor Rodney Woo addresses the issue of racism and ethnic reconciliation in his book, *The Color of Church*. He recounts some of the motivation for writing on the topic at the beginning of the book. He grew up the son of a half-Chinese father and white mother. Because of his father's Asian ancestry, his parents could not get married in 1948 in their home state of Virginia, but had to cross the state line to Maryland. Woo grew up in all-African-American elementary and middle schools in Texas as his father served as a missionary to minorities in Port Arthur, Texas. He tells the story of how in his middle school of fifteen hundred students, only twenty were not African-American. Woo would later marry his Hispanic wife, Sasha, who learned English in his father's inner-city ministry. Even in his early years of ministry in a small Texas town, Woo recalls how the whites lived on one side of the railroad tracks and the African-Americans lived on the other. He comments, "For eight years, I could not completely understand why God called a pastor by the name of 'Woo' and his Hispanic wife to an all-white rural congregation" (p. 6). With such a background, Woo became no stranger to interracial ministry.

The Color of Church weaves together not only biblical and theological insights of racial reconciliation, but also real-world practice. Woo became pastor of a church in Houston in 1992 that was in a transitional neighborhood where Caucasians were increasingly becoming the minority. He gave the church the vision for creating a multi-ethnic community of worship that was not limited by race or socio-economic boundaries. Today, his church has five hundred and fifty regular attendees on Sunday morning

from forty-four different nations. Woo earned his Ph.D. in New Testament studies from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and teaches adjunctively at Southwestern's Houston campus as well as at Houston Baptist University.

Woo divides the book into four sections. Part 1 gives the biblical foundation for multi-racial and multiethnic churches. Woo states that beginning with creation, God has placed the *imago Dei* in every person. Nevertheless, humans, as world history has progressed, have continually built barriers between persons based upon skin color, language, and culture. Woo points to the Trinity as an illustration of the unity within diversity that should be exemplified in the church as well. Though there is no distinction concerning being within the Trinity, there is diversity with how the persons of the Trinity relate to each other and the world: "Consequently, the Godhead reveals why God desires to have a diverse humanity live in deep relational unity together" (p. 10).

Throughout the book, a recurring center to Woo's theology of racial reconciliation is the vision of the heavenly tribe in Rev 7:9–10. This portrayal of every race, nation, tongue, and tribe gathered in heaven giving praise to God becomes a powerful theological as well as a practical motivation: "It is not the differences among the believers that are the primary emphasis, but the salvation that all of them share in Jesus Christ that brings them together" (p. 13). This vision prompts Woo to wonder why in this "in between" world the church is so divided by race and ethnicity. He also points to Ephesians 2, where Paul speaks of the "mystery" of the gospel and ultimately defines that mystery as being not only for the Jews, but also for the Gentiles. Woo explains that the power of the gospel for reconciling humanity to God by forgiving sin also means people can be reconciled to each other by forgiving the sin of racism. The reconciliation that Christ provides for believers to God is the same reconciliation that can provide unity with each other for believers. When people, especially believers, of today maintain racial divisions, they are merely taking part in the same sin that plagued the Jewish nation for most of its existence. Woo emphasizes how the Jews created cultural, social, and ethnic barriers that, from the beginning of their being called out as a holy nation, God wanted brought down. It was not until NT times that Christ showed the Jews specifically how the gospel was meant to cross such boundaries, a development that Woo explains through an examination of several key passages in the next part of the book.

In part 2, Woo surveys various passages to address the current reality of racism in churches. A central passage is John 4:1–45, where Jesus addresses the Samaritan woman at the well. Normally, this passage is used to speak of how Jesus brought equality to women, or even how Christians should be willing to minister to those different than themselves. But Woo highlights the intense racial tension that was present in that particular scene with Jesus traveling through Samaritan territory and interacting with the Samaritan woman. The power of the gospel should motivate Christians to unity, especially in the area of worship, which was a central part of the conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman. Woo also concentrates on several key passages in the book of Acts showing how the gospel broke through racial and cultural barriers, such as in Acts 2 at Pentecost and in Acts 10 with Peter and Cornelius. Noting that after Cornelius was saved, Peter was welcomed into his home, Woo underscores what a breakthrough this was for Christianity: "The conversion of Cornelius represented an enormous breakthrough as Christianity began to spread. . . . In spite of Peter's initial resistance, God's activity to move Peter's heart proves God's patience with the majority racial group and His passion for the incoming minority group. What may not be visible on one side of the racial divide is that the God of all nations will prepare the hearts of both Jews and Gentiles" (p. 86).

Woo is critical of some aspects of the church growth movement, such as the homogeneous unit principle. This principle states that maximum church growth will occur

when people reach other people like themselves. Though people may be more naturally inclined to reach people who are like them culturally, socially, and economically, Woo asks the question if this is really a true picture of how a church should operate under the gospel mandate. He briefly looks into the background of the church growth movement that began at Fuller Theological Seminary, often quoting C. Peter Wagner, one of the proponents of the homogeneous unit principle. Nevertheless, offering constructive criticism of this movement, Woo explains that "the multiracial congregation . . . is racially diverse by design but drawn together by a factor other than the common color of skin, the person of Christ" (p. 148). Relying on statistics, he shows how more progressive and liberal denominations have taken up the call for racial reconciliation in churches. Denominations, however, that consider themselves more evangelical actually have half the number of multiracial churches than do these more progressive and liberal denominations.

Part 3 of the book examines several practical issues such as transitioning a worship service, creating equitable leadership among the various races, and creating a biblical paradigm for multi-racial missions. Perhaps the core of the practical section of the book is found in the five rules of engagement that Woo lists for multiracial congregations. The remainder of the book is an explanation of how these five rules can be applied in worship, leadership, and missions in a church. Giving scriptural and practical support for each of the five rules, Woo lists the following (chap. 9). (1) Make Scripture the sole authority in determining the common ground. Appealing to the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15), Woo shows how the early church dealt scripturally with a cultural and religious crisis. (2) Make the necessary adjustments when the needs of the congregation change. Woo examines the case of the general Joab (2 Samuel 10) and concludes that skillful strategic adjustments need to be made sometimes. (3) Empower representatives of each racial group to be integral voices in the decision-making process to find a solution. Woo notes that the apostles appointed deacons to help solve the problem of a racial and cultural divide in the early church (Acts 6:1–7). (4) Do not be afraid to take risks that may result in learning benefits to accomplish the mission. Woo points to the apostle Paul and his readiness to be a faithful minister of the gospel, whatever the costs may have been (2 Cor 1:15–22). (5) Treat seriously any racial or cultural division that threatens church unity. Woo notes that though Paul was Peter's guest in Jerusalem during their initial meeting, Paul was not afraid to confront Peter later with regard to racial, cultural, and theological divisions (Gal 1:18–20; 2:7–11).

Woo closes out part 3 with practical advice regarding worship, church leadership, and missions involvement. His answer to many of the questions that arise with regard to such issues is consistently a gospel-driven answer. When the church gets the gospel correct, the more practical questions tend to answer themselves with regard to these issues. Nevertheless, Woo does offer practical advice, along with sound theological support, for anyone addressing these aforementioned issues in church.

Woo's background in NT Greek and his practical experience combine to provide helpful material for pastors. He offers no new paradigm-shifting insights into theology or biblical studies, but rather provides solid exegesis of biblical texts that informs how to handle many of the complicated issues that may arise in multi-racial churches. I found it quite refreshing to read a rich, biblical theology that informed practical pastoral ministry. This approach sets Woo's book apart from other books on multi-racial churches that tend to be high on practical advice but low on biblical exegesis. Some may criticize Woo's book for foisting a particular hermeneutic on the Bible. However, the gospel itself is reconciling in nature, and Woo does a fair treatment of drawing out this theme in his survey of the biblical material. Readers should be aware that Woo does not address planting multi-racial churches but focuses on transitioning established churches. By

the admission of Woo's own testimony and my own personal experience, most churches adopting a multi-racial approach are starting as church plants. Therefore, multi-racial church planting may be an area Woo would want to address in future publications.

Personally, as the father of two adopted multi-racial children, I desire to see different races worshiping and ministering together in churches. Woo's book is a "voice in the wilderness" to contemporary American churches that may find multi-racial and multi-cultural ministry a necessity. There are several reasons for this. First, metropolitan populations are growing, and such growth often occurs in neighborhoods that have traditionally been racially homogenous. Second, immigration has brought more nationalities into cities, resulting in large populations of those from other religious traditions. Third, gentrification has brought about racial changes in local neighborhoods. Churches in such neighborhoods have often been left behind, not knowing how to minister to the local neighborhood due to racial changes. Last, several denominations, ministerial organizations, and church planting networks pride themselves on doing ministry among gentrified neighborhoods or among immigrant populations. Yet, the result is often merely homogeneous churches or church plants and not a true integration of races and cultures. Woo's book is a welcome call to advancing the gospel into the next great area of the gospel frontier: racial reconciliation.

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A Dictionary of Jewish-Christian Relations. Edited by Edward Kessler and Neil Wenborn. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, xxix + 507 pp., \$252.00.

Edward Kessler and Neil Wenborn are to be commended for their superb efforts in producing a useful reference volume delineating the points of contact (and disagreement) between Jews and Christians, and Judaism and Christianity. Kessler, the Founder and Executive Director of the Cambridge Centre for the Study of Jewish-Christian Relations, is well positioned to lead the project, and Wenborn's extensive writing and publishing experience serves to make the *Dictionary* reader-friendly. The editors explain their endeavor as one that takes account of not only the religious nature of the encounters between the two faiths, but also the social, political, and philosophical dimensions of their interactions. The *Dictionary* is a timely, interdisciplinary work that brings together important strands of modern discussion, past historical events, and theological and philosophical reflections that enable the reader to gain perspective on the sweeping history of relations between Christians and Jews.

Investigating the whole of Christian history as it relates to Judaism, the *Dictionary* also includes numerous entries related to biblical Israel and the Bible, Second Temple Judaism, Rabbinic Judaism, and various modern expressions of Judaism as these topics relate to Christianity. The project takes as its starting point the twentieth century's rapprochement between Jews and Christians that was prompted by reflections on the Holocaust and Christian anti-Semitism, as well as Vatican II and the creation of the state of Israel. Entries range from *Adversus Judaeos* literature and Apostolic Fathers to Zealotry and Zionism. Established scholars, including Judith Lieu, Lee I. Levine, Morna D. Hooker, Amy-Jill Levine, Robin M. Jensen, Peter Ochs, Mary C. Boys, and William Horbury, contribute well written articles detailing the range of historical material in a clear and concise manner. The *Dictionary's* entries are further enhanced through a cross-reference system wherein terms defined elsewhere in the *Dictionary* are written in bold print.

Dipping into a few articles will highlight the *Dictionary's* impressive contribution to the emerging field of Jewish-Christian relations. David M. Neuhaus offers a well-organized and informative entry on the "Suffering Servant" that, in two full columns, covers the differing views of this figure in Isa 52:13–53:12. After explaining both rabbinic and patristic interpretations, Neuhaus notes that modern exegesis has opened the door for both sides to grasp the value of the other's interpretation. Specifically, Christians are more apt to appreciate the factor of collective identity that operates in the biblical text, and Jews to recognize the redemptive atonement theology infusing the passage. Philip Alexander's entry on "Prophecy" (three and one-half columns) likewise offers a historical survey of the material from both the Jewish and Christian perspectives. He notes that traditional Judaism and Christianity understand the OT/Tanakh as prophecy in that God inspired the writers through the Holy Spirit. He adds that a key prophetic figure for Christians is the "Suffering Servant." Alexander's entry on "Targum" (two columns) explains the history of the Aramaic translation as it relates both to Jewish and Christian history, and observes that the Targums understand the Suffering Servant in Isaiah 53 as a messianic figure, over against rabbinic interpretation. The three examples highlighted above demonstrate how the *Dictionary* articles "talk" to each other, as the "Prophecy" and "Targum" articles mention the "Suffering Servant" entry. This conversation allows the reader to form a more detailed and coherent picture of Jewish-Christian relations.

Morna Hooker's lengthy entry on the Apostle Paul (five columns) provides a thorough discussion of Paul's thought, including that the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ was a fulfillment of God's promises to Israel, emphasizing continuity with Judaism. She stresses that Paul's theology was solidly Jewish, and that he viewed Christ's work as fulfilling the Law. She rejects the claim that Paul is the real founder of Christianity, arguing that Paul's teaching matches that proclaimed by other early Christians. She argues that the Protestant critique of Roman Catholicism included a reading of Paul that wrongly interpreted Judaism as legalistic. Pointing to Sanders's work, she mentions the "new perspective" that understands Judaism as having at its center a doctrine of grace and views Paul's writings in light of that reconstruction.

While the *Dictionary* has numerous strengths, it also carries a few weaknesses. Most prominent among them is an assumption that first-century Christianity shared a close relationship with Judaism, which was then lost in the patristic period. The editors speak of restoring and rediscovering the close relationship that once existed between the two groups, although this claim to an ancient friendly past is given little specific support. Additionally, some entries speak of Christianity and Judaism as monolithic entities; this assumption is understandable given the *Dictionary's* project, but is unfortunate as it distorts the reality of the variety of Christian and Jewish views both in the past and today. For example, in the Preface, the editors claim that Christians agree that the Jewish interpretation of Scripture is both possible and not replaced by Christian interpretation, citing for support the Roman Catholic Church's *The Jewish People and their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible* (2002). Evangelicals would likely nuance such a statement, perhaps falling closer to the Catholic Church's declaration that salvation ultimately comes through Christ (*Dominus Iesus*, September 2000).

The *Dictionary* presents itself as a historical survey, but it is also theologically prescriptive in places. Both postures can be helpful, but at times history is molded to fit the overarching theological or ideological conviction that at Christianity's inception, the two faiths co-existed in harmony. It was later Christian theologians who instigated the parting of the ways. The issue of supercessionism or replacement theology highlights this tension. In several entries, the claim is made that some Christians in the first few centuries held a double-covenant position or "recognition theology," wherein Christians acknowledged the continuance of Judaism's covenant relationship with God through

the Law, while Christians enjoyed a relationship with God through Christ. Evidence for this claim, however, is sparse and ambiguous; moreover, reading history through a rose-colored lens does a disservice to the *Dictionary's* larger enterprise of sponsoring careful dialogue between Jews and Christians. Indeed, the lack of a recognition theology within Christianity historically should not, in itself, rule out such a position being put forth today, but the history of Christian theology should be faced squarely and candidly.

The emphasis on prescriptive theology is evident in John Pawlikowski's lengthy entry on "Christology" (seven columns). He describes traditional Christology as a "theological framework [that] attempted to explain the redemptive impact of Jesus the Christ on all creation" (p. 85) and argues that this approach has the major weakness of excluding Jews from God's saving covenant. He links the fact of Jesus' Jewishness to an implied conclusion that NT authors and first century (Jewish) believers in Jesus would have agreed with the wider Jewish claim that Jews are in relationship with God outside of Christ. Tellingly, he does not speak of NT Christology, most likely because he sees Christology as an inherently anti-Jewish development of the Church Fathers. He argues that the break between Jews and Christians occurred in the second century when Christology was joined with anti-Jewish positions such as the belief that Jews, in rejecting Christ, were excluded from a covenant relationship with God and the related conviction that Christians replaced Jews as the community in relationship with God. Pawlikowski argues further that even during the Patristic period, many Christians were practicing certain Jewish rites, thereby revealing both an attachment to Judaism and by implication a Christology that did not exclude Jews who denied Jesus as the Christ from a covenant relationship to God. However, Christians who practice particular Jewish rites need not necessarily or even logically hold to an "inclusive" Christology, and no literary evidence survives from the ancient world which supports unambiguously his historical recreation.

Pawlikowski spends the bulk of his essay discussing the challenges to traditional Christology that have come to the fore in the last sixty years. He correctly notes that covenant stands at the heart of Christology, and highlights several new approaches to Christology. For example, the traditional reading of Romans 9–11 is overturned, replaced with the interpretation that Paul speaks of both Jews and Christians as covenant members of God's household. He cites the double-covenant viewpoint, which argues for the Jews having a saving relationship with God apart from the work of Christ, as a way forward in Jewish-Christian relations. He also notes new theories of covenant that operate less on a linear model but stress the parallel growth of both Judaism and Christianity from the common parent of Second Temple Judaism. In discussing these new theories, Pawlikowski fulfills the task of the *Dictionary*, which is to highlight new developments in the relationship between Jews and Christians. Yet his claim that "the church was finally picking up in the second half of the twentieth century a process that had been short-circuited since the latter stages of St Paul's life," (p. 87) perhaps goes beyond the evidence produced in his essay.

An example of reconstructing history to fit with prevailing modern interpretive positions is found in the entry on the "Targums" noted above. Alexander argues that the rabbinic texts understand the suffering servant as the corporate body of Israel, and cautions Christian readers against using the evidence from the Targums to conclude that the rabbis silenced this interpretation. Yet in both the Babylonian Talmud (*Sanh.* 98b) and *Ruth Rabbah* 5.6 (which comments upon Ruth 2:14), the Isaiah 53 passage is applied to the Messiah. The Talmud offers other interpretive options for the suffering servant's identity, but the point is that rabbinic sources from late antiquity considered it a valid option to identify the servant of Isaiah 53 as a messianic figure. Modern Jewish interpretation could still argue that the best interpretation of the suffering

servant in Isaiah 53 is as corporate Israel, but it goes beyond historical evidence to say that this interpretation has always been authoritative in rabbinic circles.

Surprisingly, Edward Kessler's entry on "Messianic Judaism" is only one-half column in length. Yet this topic is arguably one of the most contentious issues facing Jewish-Christian dialogue. He notes that most Jews and Christians alike reject Messianic Judaism as syncretistic and view it as a stumbling block to dialogue and mutual respect. Often underneath this rejection is the assessment that missional activity by Christians toward Jews is unacceptable, a stance that surfaces in a few places within the *Dictionary*. Kessler notes that Messianic Jews feel misunderstood and disregarded by both Christianity and Judaism, but perhaps more discussion about the various positions taken on Messianic Jews, and even a defense of their position by a Messianic Jew would have filled out the entry.

The weaknesses noted above, however, do not detract from the overall contribution made by the *Dictionary*. Readers will appreciate the extensive bibliography arranged under the categories of Bible, Theology, and History. A list of Institutional Documents on Jewish-Christian Relations as well as an Index of Names and a List of Contributors are also included. The *Dictionary* contains black and white maps of ancient Palestine, the Roman, Byzantine, Ottoman, Russian, and British Empires, and the modern state of Israel.

Scholars and students alike will benefit from the useful information the *Dictionary* provides about the emerging dialogue between Jews and Christians. Pastors and professors will find the entries accessible, insightful, and often challenging. The added value of this sort of dictionary is that it goes beyond merely defining a term or describing a person to exploring how that figure or idea speaks to the broader concern of Christians and Jews relating to and for each other. The *Dictionary* attests to the complex history of Christianity and Judaism and looks forward by laying out contemporary constructive dialogue. The sheer magnitude of the enterprise is daunting, but Kessler and Wenborn do a masterful job of including key figures, events, and ideas spanning the two thousand years of Jewish-Christian history.

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American Christians and Islam: Evangelical Culture and Muslims from the Colonial Period to the Age of Terrorism. By Thomas S. Kidd. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009, xx + 201 pp., \$29.95.

In an October 2001 interview with NBC, Franklin Graham famously and incautiously called Islam "a very evil and wicked religion." Unsurprisingly, his words caused a stir in religious and political circles at home and abroad. However, the basic sentiment was not an entirely new one, prompted only by post-September 11 fear and indignation. In fact, American Christians since the early days of colonization have seen Islam as a threat to their religion and culture. As Thomas Kidd endeavors to demonstrate in *American Christians and Islam*, such views "usually divulge more about American Christians than about any actual Muslims" (p. xii). In this book, he explores how American Christians' impressions of Islam—and especially those of evangelicals—shaped their desire to see Muslims convert to Christianity, fueled their ambition to develop an effective missionary presence in Islamic territories, and influenced their views on eschatology and Middle Eastern geopolitics.

Kidd traces the chronology of American Christian thought on Islam through these key themes, which he helpfully summarizes near the conclusion of the book as “conversionism, missions, religion and politics, and eschatology” (p. 166). He offers an intriguing interpretation of the relationships between these concepts from the colonial era to the present day. The study begins with the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, where Kidd explores the ways in which American Christians used Islam for political and religious ends. Early opinions of Muslims were shaped by tales (both true and fantastic) of seafarers captured by the vicious Barbary pirates of North Africa, and polemical books and sermons. New England’s eminent Cotton Mather accurately articulated the general sentiment in 1703 after the release of several North American captives when he praised God for freeing them from the hands of the “Filthy Disciples of Mahomet” (p. 6). Kidd demonstrates how growing political concerns over the threat of Barbary piracy, culminating in the Barbary wars of the early nineteenth century, and other accounts of Muslim “savagery” contributed to both the continued demonization of Islam and theological questions over the role of the religion in Christian eschatology. Many American Protestants attempted to set their minds at rest by pairing Islam with Roman Catholicism and held out eschatological hope that they would be destroyed together with the return of Christ.

Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century and extending roughly until World War I, American Christians made concerted efforts to convert their contempt for Islam into productive efforts to evangelize Muslims. Kidd argues that Evangelicals warily viewed Muslims, adherents of the other great proselytizing religion of the world, as “serious evangelistic competitors” (p. 47). Throughout the nineteenth century, however, missions to Muslims failed, not only because of the limited number of missionaries in Islamic territories, but also because the same eschatology that triumphantly predicted the removal of all opposition to Christ’s kingdom disposed Evangelicals to expect Muslims to welcome the Christian message. As Kidd observes, the situation demonstrated that “eschatology might make for effective fundraising, but it also bred terribly unrealistic anticipation of how easily Muslims and others would be won to Christ” (p. 57). By the first decade of the twentieth century, the negligence or inability of American Christians to successfully evangelize Muslims compelled several progressive missionaries to adopt a new strategy.

Kidd argues that a 1906 conference on Muslim evangelization in Cairo, Egypt marked one of the first attempts to orchestrate a more effective plan. Samuel Zwemer (1867–1952), the organizer and American-born missionary of the Reformed Church in Arabia, appropriated (with modification) the Student Volunteer Movement’s watchword when he called for “The Evangelization of the Moslem World in this Generation” (p. 58). He advocated the development of a strategy along the lines of his own approach to missions, which Kidd explains as a successful integration of humanitarian aid with evangelism. Missionaries and missions agents left the conference assured that systematic organization and a better, more charitable knowledge of Islam would prove effective. The negative impact of World War I on the Ottoman Empire fueled postmillennial hopes that political Islam was on the decline. According to Kidd, Zwemer “believed that history was moving inexorably toward Islam’s destruction” and that this was “divine preparation” for the advancement of Christianity among its adherents (p. 71). Nevertheless, few individual missionaries actually pursued Muslim evangelization and fewer experienced any notable success.

The early to mid-twentieth century witnessed the American fundamentalist-modernist controversy and the split between liberal and conservative missions. Kidd argues that the result was the evangelical takeover of Muslim evangelization. Scholar-missionaries such as Zwemer and Kenneth Cragg (b. 1913), an Anglican bishop who served in Jerusalem and Cairo, sided with conservatives while endeavoring to respect

and sympathetically understand Islam. However, Kidd shows how the establishment of the nation state of Israel stirred up many conservative American Christians' eschatological fervor, enabling them to reorganize their dispensational prophecy calendars. Eschatological interpretations of the subsequent tensions in Arab-Israeli relations (especially the view that it represented a spiritual struggle between the descendants of Ishmael and Isaac) led to another clash between dispensationalism and Muslim missions. As Kidd notes, "the pressure of an increasingly polarized Middle East crisis . . . worked against a charitable evaluation of Islam by many conservative American Christians" (p. 95).

Kidd argues that conservative American Protestants in the mid- to late twentieth century continued to dominate the missionary efforts among Muslims and, at the same time, were increasingly immersed in dispensational theology. Evangelicals began to adopt with new resolve the ambition Zwemer inhabited more than a generation earlier for organized Muslim missions. The Lausanne Congress of 1974 and the identification of a "10/40 window" for focused evangelization are only two examples in the litany of "new evangelical missions" stratagems that Kidd examines (p. 129). Ongoing concerns over the Middle East contributed to the craze over popular eschatology and an upsurge in prophecy books and conferences. From Hal Lindsey's *The Late Great Planet Earth* (1970) and John Walvoord's *Armageddon, Oil, and the Middle East Crisis* (1974) to Tim LaHaye and Jerry Jenkins's fictional *Left Behind* series in the 1990s, and hundreds of others in between, premillennial dispensationalism significantly shaped conservative American Christians' eschatology and views on Middle Eastern politics. Kidd highlights Walvoord's book in particular for the "new centrality" it gave to "Muslim states in conservative American eschatology" in the 1970s (p. 130). By the end of the twentieth century, American evangelicals, not unlike previous eras, were torn between the optimistic evangelization of Muslims and growing suspicion about Islam's place in biblical prophecy.

Kidd's study ends on a discomfiting note. While acknowledging that any attempt to trace the thought of American Christians since September 11, 2001 is more speculative than concrete, he nonetheless offers some suggestions regarding emerging (or sustaining) trends. Specifically, Kidd observes that the relevant American evangelical literature "is new in its abundance, but not its essential topics, including the 'real' nature of Islam . . . , the prospects of Muslim conversion to Christianity . . . , and the place of Islam in the last days" (p. 144). At the same time, some American evangelicals—Kidd puts forward Timothy George of Beeson Divinity School as an exemplary representative—have exercised careful restraint in their efforts to maintain conservative theological positions congruent with exclusive religious beliefs while intentionally emphasizing Christian charity. In spite of these calm voices, however, Kidd notes that Islam continues to be perceived with more hostility by American evangelicals than by the rest of the American population. As he remarks at the conclusion of his Epilogue, the "history of American Christian thought about Islam, sadly, has demonstrated precious little courtesy and understanding" (p. 169).

American Christians and Islam is an important and timely study. A remarkable breadth of research is evident throughout. Kidd's argument builds on a diverse collection of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century captivity and conversion narratives in books, sermons, and pamphlets; a plethora of twentieth-century works on popular eschatology (for which he especially deserves to be congratulated); and missionary memoirs scattered throughout these periods. This range is particularly outstanding given the shortage of secondary literature related to the subject across such a far-reaching span of American history. Kidd has also discerned valuable themes and relationships, especially relating to the tensions that have consistently vexed evangelical missions to Muslims since the nineteenth-century: political Islam and dispensational eschatology. Additionally, the

study has exposed previously overlooked figures, such as scholar-missionary Samuel Zwemer, and the influence they exerted on the direction of missions and American Christian thought about Islam as a whole. In subject matter and insight, this book explores new territory and offers a valuable springboard from which to conduct more concentrated study.

At the same time, the book lacks certain qualities of clarity, the absences of which detract from its overall effectiveness. First, Kidd has chronologically organized the book while endeavoring to thematically treat many of the periods. This results in several repetitious conclusions, especially with respect to the tension between dispensationalism and evangelization. Likewise, this approach occasionally clouds the relationship connecting themes from one era to the next, such as how American evangelicals' desire for Muslims to convert to Christianity changed from the postmillennial context of the late eighteenth century to that of the nineteenth century. Second, the book offers little by way of contextualizing the story of American Christians and Islam within broader American and world history. For example, Kidd makes much of the fact that missions to Muslims were an abysmal failure through most of the nineteenth century without acknowledging that American evangelical missions in general were substantially ineffective during the same period. Similarly, Islam is consistently described as a major evangelistic competitor from the Christian perspective and yet, with the exception of an illuminating chapter on American Muslims, few examples are offered from the world scene to elucidate this perceived threat. These organizational decisions and omissions distract somewhat from what is otherwise a compelling narrative.

The criticisms should not be seen to diminish the general excellence of the book. *American Christians and Islam* skillfully navigates through a vast literature and an equally extensive array of personalities, making mature and often persuasive interpretations. Kidd not only offers a fascinating story of how American Christians have thought about Islam, but for those who identify as evangelicals, he also issues a sobering reminder that the history of their behavior toward Muslims has seldom resembled much that is Christian.

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