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BOOK REVIEWS

The Biblical Canon Lists from Early Christianity: Texts and Analysis. By Edmon L. Gallagher and John D. Meade. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017, xxii + 337 pp., $45.00.

Scholarly interest in the canonical history of the Bible has increased noticeably during the last quarter century, a development evidenced by the recent publication of several monographs and scholarly articles that address various aspects of the formation and early circulation of the biblical writings. Few published works, however, are designed to serve as a resource for those engaged in the study of the primary sources. Fortunately, Edmon Gallagher and John Meade have collaborated to produce *The Biblical Canon Lists from Early Christianity: Texts and Analysis*, a resource designed to "present the evidence of the early Christian canon lists in an accessible form for the benefit of students and scholars" (p. xii). While the extant canonical lists are certainly not the only significant witnesses to the formation of the biblical canon, they are of unique importance. As Gallagher and Meade observe, "The canon lists do not answer all of our questions about which religious books early Christians considered important and worthy of reading, or how and why the biblical canon developed the way it did. But the lists are the best sources for telling us specifically which books early Christians considered canonical" (p. xviii).

The first chapter provides an overview of the canonical development of both the OT and NT canons. Those with a more limited background in the field of canonical studies will find this chapter to be especially helpful. It would also make for excellent supplemental reading in graduate-level NT introduction courses. With respect to the OT canon, the authors examine the earliest possible evidence for the tripartite arrangement of the Hebrew Bible (e.g. the works of Josephus and the prologue to Sirach), the probable extent of the Hebrew Bible during various stages of its history, the manner in which the writings may have been divided and arranged, and evidence that the core books of the Hebrew Bible were regarded as authoritative. Based on their survey of a variety of witnesses, the authors observe, "In this period before lists, we can still be confident about the reception of the core books—the Torah, the Prophets, the Psalter—but the books at the fringe of the canon remain in uncertain territory" (p. 25).

In their discussion of the development of the NT canon, the authors conclude that prior to the well-known 39th Festal Letter of Athanasius (c. AD 367), "All of the lists include the four Gospels, Acts, and at least thirteen Pauline letters, along with some Catholic Epistles and other books" (p. 32). In other words, the foundational components of the NT appear to have been recognized quite early, though various witnesses reveal that debate about certain writings, particularly Hebrews, some of the Catholic Epistles, and Revelation, persisted for some time. Following an overview of the canonical history of the major units of the NT canon (i.e. the Gospels, Acts, Catholic Epistles, Pauline Epistles, and Revelation), the chapter

provides an appendix that contains a summary of the early canonical history of several non-canonical works that were often read by early Christians (pp. 53–54).

Chapters 2–5 examine a number of canonical lists from a variety of extant witnesses. Each chapter provides a brief introduction to what is known of the historical background and content of each list along with the extant portion of the text of the passage in the original language placed alongside an English translation. In most cases, the sources included in these chapters derive from the first four centuries of the Christian era. Chapter 2 (Jewish Lists) examines the earliest available witnesses to the state of the Hebrew Bible (e.g. the works of Josephus and the Babylonian Talmud). Chapters 3–5 introduce several notable canonical lists from early Christian sources. The material is divided between the Greek (chap. 3), Latin (chap. 4), and Syriac (chap. 5) sources.

Finally, Chapter 6 includes a brief overview of the content included in notable biblical manuscripts. The authors limit their discussion to the Greek, Syriac, Latin, and Hebrew manuscripts produced prior to AD 1000 that contain the whole of the OT and/or the whole of the NT. Several charts are included in this chapter that cite the specific writings contained in each manuscript.

Following the survey of the extant lists of the canonical writings, the volume includes a valuable 24-page appendix containing the "basic information regarding certain disputed writings, whether writings that eventually did become canonical (e.g. Ecclesiastes, Esther, Hebrews) or writings that did not (e.g. Epistle of Barnabas, Apocalypse of Peter), or writings that became canonical for only some Christian traditions (e.g. Tobit, Jubilees)" (p. 261). This helpful supplement to the main text enables readers of the volume to explore what a particular witness reveals about the OT and/or NT canon (information contained in chaps. 2–6) as well as what may be known of the early circulation and reception of individual writings (information contained in the appendix).

Readers will appreciate the volume's usefulness as a guide to the extant lists of canonical works. It should be kept in mind, of course, that because the authors focus specifically on canonical lists, several witnesses to the early state of the biblical canon receive only limited attention or are not discussed. What might be known, for example, of the state of the NT canon from the testimony of several notable church fathers such as Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and Tertullian receives only scant treatment given that their extant writings do not contain explicit reference to the content of either the OT or NT in the form of a list. In addition, only passing reference is given to the second-century heretic Marcion (pp. 41–44). From the writings of Marcion's critics, most notably Tertullian, it may be deduced that he either devised or inherited an edition of NT writings that contained an edited and abridged version of the Gospel of Luke (the *Apostolikon*) as well as 10 Pauline epistles (the *Evangelikon*), the latter of which followed a unique order that placed Galatians at the head of the collection. Given that the biblical canon known to Marcion has been at the center of considerable scholarly discussion in recent years, some readers may have preferred a more substantive treatment.

With respect to the biblical manuscripts, some important witnesses are not examined simply because they do not contain the entirety of either the OT or NT.

Although it is understandable that the authors could not examine a large body of manuscripts, some notable textual witnesses were not examined simply because they do not contain the entirety of either the OT or NT. Absent from the volume, for example, was a treatment of several early Greek papyri such as the Chester Beatty Papyrus ($\mathfrak{P}^{46}$), witnesses that often contain valuable insight into the early state of the NT canon.

In sum, *The Biblical Canon Lists from Early Christianity* is a unique, well-written, and clearly presented volume that provides both students and scholars with a valuable resource for the study of the canonical history of the biblical writings. Gallagher and Meade are to be commended for producing a definitive and up-to-date study of the early canon lists in an accessible format. The value of the book is apparent in the fact that the greatest disappointment many readers may have is that it is not wider in scope.

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Known by God: A Biblical Theology of Personal Identity. By Brian S. Rosner. Biblical Theology for Life. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017, 272 pp., $29.99 paper.

The question of identity is one of the prevailing inquiries of our day. Gender identity continues to dominate political and social conversation. New and competing theories of self-verification and self-enhancement prevail within psychological discourse. The question of identity is also central to the biblical narrative, but in an unprecedented way. Identity is not based on self-perceived notions seeking verification from society, but on God-derived knowledge of individuals grounded in both his character and the description of his redemptive work found in holy Scripture. *Known by God*, a new work by Brian Rosner of Ridley College in Melbourne, Australia, presents the simple yet profound case that personal identity is grounded primarily in God's knowledge of us. Rosner presents this not only as a biblical theological survey of the question at hand, but as a personally relevant and culturally sensitive text. Hence, it is a timely biblical theological exploration of our current cultural moment.

Part 1, "Queuing the Questions," establishes the personal and cultural relevance of this work. In Part 2, Rosner presents the myriad of biblical evidence regarding identity. In the final section of the book, Rosner maps out his argument for a proper response given the biblical story of identity.

Part 2 begins with the premise that though teaching on personal identity and humanity is suffuse throughout Scripture, "It is rarely the main focus" (p. 33). Therefore, à la Vanhoozer, theological anthropology is "implicit and derivative" (p. 33). In chapter 2, Rosner addresses typical identity markers such as race, gender, and religion, and frames them in light of the biblical witness—ultimate human identity is grounded in something more fundamental and eternal. Such markers "collapse under their own weight" as they eventually lead to idolatry (p. 61). In chapter 3, Rosner summarizes identity markers and explains their relevance. The

strength of this chapter (and much of the book) is Rosner's skillful weaving of academic as well as practical and devotional works. This helps lend the credibility necessary as an academic work while giving readers answers to their "So what?" questions.

The crux of human identity, posits Rosner, is that we are known by God and belong to God. The proper question is not "Who am I?" but "*Whose* am I?" The truth of being known by God, displayed in the biblical testimony, provides the identity coordinates necessary to relieve any identity anxiety. Related to this central theme is the notion of sonship in Scripture. Adoption is a consistent biblical theme, both with Israel's adoption in the Exodus narrative and with the adoption of God's people through the redemptive work of Jesus. Rosner highlights the structure of belonging, election, and adoption as the basic framework for human identity in God's economy. He draws each of these facets out in a skillful balance of depth while maintaining an eye towards summary.

Chapter 10 focuses on the corporate nature and promises connected to identity in Christ. These have temporal effects (in Christ we are dead to sin and live a new life, Rom 6:3–10), as well as eternal benefits (participation in the resurrection with bodies like Christ, 1 John 3:1–3, 1 Corinthians 15). This, Rosner asserts, relates to our collective memory as children of God—our memories are reframed in the story of Jesus Christ. This story "forms the template of our own life" and provides us with "the essential backstory and critical story arc" (p. 191).

In Part 3, Rosner provides reflections on the practical relevance of identity grounded in God's knowledge of us. Along with security and lasting significance, being known by God instills the virtues of humility (life is not all about yourself) and gratitude (you have been given a new life/identity/security). Personal identity grounded in God's knowledge instills comfort and provides direction in a chaotic and directionless world. In the final chapter, Rosner demonstrates how the church can practically engage in and encourage personal identity through its corporate acts. Rosner asserts that this is not a "how to" book but that the church is still tasked with the ministry of identity, instilling in believers how being known by God affects our daily experience. The chapter is immensely beneficial and demonstrates how the liturgical life of the church is one of the key ways in which identity is affirmed and encouraged.

Though there is much to commend in *Known by God*, there is a noticeable lack of discussion on hamartiology. Though Rosner deals with specific sins (e.g. idolatry, pride, and lust), he neglects to explain how the nature of sin greatly impacts questions and issues of identity. An explicit discussion seems warranted if the full thematic thrust of biblical identity is to be understood. Along with discussing how sin impacts every major area of our identity, it would seem appropriate to have included, if nowhere else, such a discussion in the introductory chapter, which is entitled "Identity Angst." Our *Angst* arises from a sin nature that has caused us to seek our identity in created things rather than the creator. Sin is the original rupture that permeates every identity-related question. It also greatly informs our understanding of our union with Christ and the sanctifying power of the Spirit. While believers are no longer defined by sin, its effects continue to plague identity-related questions

until the final culmination of God's redemptive plans in Christ. Though Rosner deals with small portions of this in various places, a concentrated discussion of sin and identity is noticeably absent.

Despite this oversight, *Known by God* greatly aids readers by framing modern identity questions in light of Scripture. Rosner demonstrates that the Bible has always spoken about identity and can readily address modern identity questions. Rosner's text precedes a recent release on the same topic by Klyne Snodgrass, *Who God Says You Are: A Christian Understanding of Identity* (Eerdmans, 2018). Initial comparison indicates that Rosner's text serves more as a biblical overview (as the title suggests), while Snodgrass dives deeper into philosophical and theological discussions. A comparison of the texts is beyond the scope of this review but should be noted for readers concerned with this area of inquiry. That said, *Known by God* will serve just as well in a course on biblical anthropology or biblical counseling as it will in a church small group study.

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Israel Matters: Why Christians Must Think Differently about the People and the Land. By Gerald R. McDermott. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2017, 135 pp., $17.99 paper.

Beeson Divinity School's Anglican Chair of Divinity Gerald R. McDermott offers this compact volume so readers can explore an alternative to the sharp polarities that exist regarding the longstanding debate about how Israel fits within the larger corpus of Christian theology. The book is a primer on McDermott's thoughts which he began to flesh out in an earlier anthology entitled *The New Christian Zionism* (IVP, 2016). What readers discover is that McDermott believes the Jewish people not only had a distinct identity within redemptive history; they also retain unique roles in the present. Their existence today is indicative of God's faithfulness to preserve them as his chosen people. And Jews who embrace Jesus as Messiah now are part of a remnant that will one day enter the eschatological future to inherit a Christocentric political kingdom in the land of promise.

Previously, McDermott affirmed a supersessionist position that saw true Israel as being subsumed into the church. Then, for a time he considered the viability of certain versions of dispensationalism but was uncomfortable with some of its theological extremes. After much soul-searching and study, he decided that an Israel-centric position that eschewed supersessionism and avoided the perils of dispensational sensationalism was the best option.

McDermott explains the basic ideas of his position in nine concise chapters. The first surveys how supersessionism permeated the history of Christian thought beginning with the early church, continuing throughout the Reformation, and taking more extreme turns after the Enlightenment. Subsequently, in chapter 2, McDermott argues against the popular idea that the NT equates true Israel with the church. Chapter 3 then highlights points in Christian history where concern for the theological relevance of Israel actually gained noticeable attention. Next, McDer-

mott uses chapter 4 to discuss how Israel is central to the storyline of the OT. This discussion sets the stage for chapter 5, where he contends that all of Israel's earthly, physical, and territorial hopes which were encapsulated in the biblical covenants carry over into the teachings of Jesus and the apostles.

From here, McDermott shifts gears, so he can respond to controversial questions about Israel as a modern state. Chapter 6 addresses political inquiries about the ongoing Palestinian conflicts and contemporary objections to all forms of Zionism. Chapter 7 answers questions concerning the ways in which features of the old covenant should be interpreted against the theological backdrop of the new covenant in Christ. Finally, McDermott uses chapters 8 and 9 to discuss how he believes his views about Israel can improve how one understands theology, hermeneutics, foreign policies in the Middle East, intercultural relationships with Jewish people, and even one's Christian faith as a whole.

In retrospect, the most important contribution McDermott provides in this work is his claim that the redemptive storyline of Scripture begins with the particular (i.e. a person, a people) and then eventually moves to the universal (i.e. the nations, the world; pp. 46–47). His point is that creation and the nations cannot be blessed salvifically unless Israel is healed first. This is indeed a crucial point in McDermott's argument. But that being said, those who are familiar with this topic will constantly experience moments of consternation because of serious questions being left unanswered. To be fair, no book can answer every concern, especially one this short. Nevertheless, many of McDermott's claims beg for further clarification.

This can be seen, for example, in his claims that some level of Torah-compliance is permissible, perhaps even preferred for Jewish believers, whereas Gentile believers are not obligated. Does this mean some followers of Christ are under different covenantal expectations or is this simply an arbitrary choice? Another concern readers will have is how McDermott would interpret certain texts that link Jewish identity with believing Gentiles. For instance, in Acts 4 the early church applied Psalm 2's reference to raging Gentile nations who opposed God's anointed to Jewish leaders who rejected the gospel. The same dynamic occurs in Philippians 3:2–3 where Paul applies a Gentile label, "dogs," to Judaizers and ascribes the title, "the circumcision," to all believers who have the Spirit. Such concerns surface because of arguments McDermott makes such as his reading of Jesus's point in the Beatitudes that the meek shall inherit the earth. He contends that Jesus actually meant they will inherit the "land" (pp. 29–30). The question, though, is who exactly are the meek? Did Jesus mean only the *Jewish* meek would inherit the land or could Gentiles who were meek receive it, too? One could go on with other knotty conundrums such as whether the modern state of Israel is a fulfillment of biblical prophecy or what criteria must be met to be considered Jewish. Yet in the end, evangelicals will find McDermott's work intriguing as well as frustrating since it tries to walk such a delicate theological tightrope.

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God's Mediators: A Biblical Theology of Priesthood. By Andrew S. Malone. New Studies in Biblical Theology 43. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2017, xvii + 230 pp., $25.00 paper.

Many Christians, particularly those belonging to a congregationalist rather than an Episcopal context, probably give little attention to the notion of priesthood in their thinking about Scripture. Yet, the Bible's many references to priests suggest priesthood deserves a place in biblical theology. Thankfully, *God's Mediators: A Biblical Theology of Priesthood* by Andrew Malone, Lecturer in Biblical Studies and Dean of Ridley Online at Ridley College, provides a valuable corrective to Christians' neglect of this important biblical theological theme.

Malone's primary thesis is that the Bible speaks of two kinds of priests: individual priests and corporate priesthoods. He argues that both have at their core a mediating role in that they serve as God's recognized ambassadors. Malone convincingly demonstrates this thesis by means of the book's two major parts.

In the first part, "God's Individual Priests," Malone examines individuals singled out within a community to serve as priests. Malone naturally focuses most of his attention on the Levitical priesthood as detailed in the Pentateuch. According to Malone, the Levitical priesthood's primary purpose is to reduce the gap between God and humanity, both through representation (e.g. by teaching the Israelites God's expectations) and reconciliation (e.g. by offering sacrifices). Through these tasks, Israel's priests serve as God's mediators.

Malone argues that a prominent role for individual priests in Scripture appears only in Exodus through Numbers. He contends that before Sinai there are only hints that certain individuals (e.g. Adam) have a priestly role and that after Sinai the Levitical priests fade into the background due to a general failure to carry out their calling properly. The priesthood's failure anticipates future renewal as expressed by the prophets, yet most priests in the NT largely follow in the footsteps of their OT predecessors. The one and significant exception is Jesus, who as described in the book of Hebrews, perfectly serves as God's mediator and initiates a better priesthood according to the order of Melchizedek.

In the book's second part, "God's Corporate Priesthoods," Malone examines how both Israel and the church were commissioned to serve as God's corporate mediators. He argues on the basis of Exod 19:5–6 that God gave the Israelite nation a privileged status at Mt. Sinai. Israel's special status did not exist for its own advantage but entailed "a special role within God's wider world for the nations' benefit" (p. 128). Like its individual priests, Israel as a nation largely failed to carry out its priestly task but through the prophets God provided assurance that his intentions would one day be met. This eschatological trajectory paves the way for the NT's application of Israel's privileged status to all believers, both Jew and Gentile, as described in 1 Pet 2:4–10 and the book of Revelation.

Thus, Malone argues that there are parallel relationships between the corporate priesthoods of Israel and the church and between the individual priesthoods of Aaron and Christ: in the unfolding of God's grand plan, Aaron's individual role as a priest is taken up by Jesus, and Israel's corporate priesthood is taken up by the

church. But, according to Malone, the relationships between the Bible's corporate and individual priesthoods exhibit asymmetry. Whereas the Levitical priests were to lead the nation in mediating God to others, modeling individually what the nation was to do at the corporate level, Malone contends there is little basis for directly connecting the church's corporate priesthood with Jesus's priestly functions. Rather, Jesus's priestly role—again, especially as expressed in the book of Hebrews—is of a different nature qualitatively than that of the church.

God's Mediators fills a significant lacuna within scholarship in that it offers a full-length canonical treatment of priesthood, a topic that has largely been neglected. In and of itself, Malone's survey of the biblical data on priesthood serves as a masterful summary of Scripture's teachings on this topic. However, even more masterful than this survey is Malone's synthesis of the information he presents. Throughout *God's Mediators*, Malone ably synthesizes Scripture's various teachings on priesthood and explores their implications for biblical theology. Particularly thought-provoking is Malone's investigation of the relationships between the priestly offices of Aaron and Christ and the corporate priesthoods of Israel and the church.

There are a few places, however, where additional synthesis would have been beneficial. This is especially true regarding the Melchizedekian priesthood. Malone does discuss how Melchizedek seems to anticipate later Levitical practices, and in his discussion of the book of Hebrews, Malone briefly compares and contrasts the Levitical and Melchizedekian priesthoods. However, more attention might have been devoted to the Melchizedekian priesthood and its place within a biblical theology of priesthood. Psalm 110, an important biblical passage for understanding the Melchizedekian priesthood, is not even treated in any substantial detail by Malone.

Another matter that readers may take issue with is Malone's minimalist hermeneutic. Malone remains hesitant to identify priestly themes in certain portions of Scripture when others are quite willing to do so. For example, Malone is sympathetic to seeing Adam and the patriarchs as priests but does not elevate their priestly status much because he thinks the evidence is inconclusive. Similarly, Malone does not think the Gospels have much to say regarding Jesus's priestly role or that the book of Hebrews speaks significantly to the church's corporate priesthood. Malone's minimalist hermeneutic could be frustrating for some because it leads him to omit potential data from his synthesis. However, hopefully Malone's caution ensures his biblical theology of priesthood remains true to Scripture and does not say more than it should.

In conclusion, *God's Mediators* offers a valuable exploration of Scripture's teachings on priesthood. Particularly thought-provoking is Malone's investigation of the relationship between the Bible's individual and corporate priesthoods. Malone might have explored some issues in more depth and incorporated additional data into his conclusions; however, on the whole, *God's Mediators* succeeds masterfully in what it seeks to accomplish. This book should be carefully read and

considered by all those interested in what the Bible has to say about priests and priesthood.

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Exodus. By T. Desmond Alexander. Apollos OT Commentary 2. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2017, xx + 764 pp., $45.00.

The Apollos Commentary series provides a translation, exegesis, exposition, and explanation of the Hebrew text. In the explanation of the translation, the commentary provides notes to the text, a discussion of form and structure, comment on each verse, and a brief discussion of the import of the section under review. The translation of Exodus provided by T. Desmond Alexander is dedicated to directing the English reader back to features of the Hebrew rather than to providing a natural English equivalent. The notes include a variety of exegetical issues. Occasionally, these involve questions of textual variation, such as the well-known numerical difference of the number of descendants that went to Egypt (Exod 1:5; cf. Acts 7:14), but the greater part of the notes discuss syntax, lexical questions, or matters of intended sense.

The section on form and structure deals with critical questions of composition, including hypotheses of traditional sources, but always provide an explanation for how individual units function within the larger narrative. Questions of genre are addressed, such as the patterns of theophany in relation to the scene of the burning bush.

The most comprehensive part of the commentary is the comment provided on the text. The comments include a diversity of perspectives in dealing with questions of meaning. Historical-critical questions are always addressed in detail. The reader comes away with the sense that the meaning of the text has been thought through from numerous perspectives. The commentary abounds in quotations of many kinds of sources. The explanation sections are generally not more than a couple of paragraphs, usually dedicated to providing information contributed by the social and historical context or by the flow of the narrative.

The Apollos series deals with questions of history related by the text and the history of the composition of the text, since these have been a primary occupation of biblical studies since the nineteenth century. At the same time, its goal is to provide a well-articulated understanding of the meaning of the text as it has been received. This meaning is to a very limited extent dependent on any theory of the process of composition that has led to its present form. Alexander particularly cautions against such an approach (p. 12), but this does not deter him from discussing in detail both literary and historical theories involving the book of Exodus. A somewhat lengthy section outlines the questions of the exodus and conquest, including the evidence for a fifteenth-century-BC or thirteenth-century-BC Moses. In this case, either the date of 1 Kgs 6:1 must be taken as representative of twelve generations or the reference to Rameses must be regarded as anachronistic. Such

questions do not bear directly on the exposition of the text, but they are of substantial interest for understanding the way Scriptures report history, especially for events so profound as the exodus and the entrance into Canaan. No better contemporary summary is available than all the citations Alexander provides in the explanation of positions taken on these questions. Alexander does not seek to identify the author or date of the composition of Exodus, since it is an anonymous narrative except for those sections in which direct speech is attributed to Moses. He does note that the exodus traditions permeate the OT and that the concept of an exodus from Egypt and a covenant at Sinai have every appearance of being a longstanding tradition.

While the commentary has detailed information on matters of history and critical thought and provides a solid defense of conservative positions on these questions, it is not strong on biblical theology. Theology is not the aim of the commentary, but in a book that has such profound revelatory significance as Exodus, a reader might have expected a little more. The summary comment of the extensively discussed phrase "I am who I am" (Exod 6:4) is to say that this "most likely conveys the idea that God will be true to his own nature" (p. 89). But it is not explained how the narrative itself would lead to this being the most substantial aspect of divine character the Israelites would need to know. The narrative has its emphasis on divine presence with the Israelites, particularly to be confirmed by the making of a covenant. In response to the reluctance of Moses to follow God's call (Exod 3:11), God replies that he will be with the people (the essence of the name) and that they will worship at this mountain (v. 12). In a quotation given in a comment on Exod 6:7 where covenant is central to the significance of the name, the topic of 6:2–8, the point is made that the covenant relationship is "the essential meaning of the entire Book of Exodus" (p. 128) but that is hardly the impression one would get as the message in the commentary. The meaning of the name is emphatically stated as the central theological lesson to be learned in the idolatry of the golden calf (Exodus 32–34). The unequivocal answer that solves the problem for how Moses can lead this people is that God will be gracious (Exod 33:19; 34:5–5), repeated as the real import of knowing the name. This becomes a central theological affirmation in the confession of Israel's God revealed in the exodus (e.g. Ps 103:6–8; Jonah 4:2). Given the powerful impact of this revelation for all later Israel, the lack of any such reference in three short paragraphs of explanation on this critical section seems to leave the commentary anemic on the theological contribution of the exodus narrative.

Tabernacle and temple are an important part of Scripture; the importance of tabernacle to the confession of the covenant may be seen in that it takes up almost a quarter of the text of Exodus. The commentary on the passage on instructions for building the tabernacle eloquently lays out how it divides between the sanctuary as a dwelling place and a meeting place (pp. 259, 265). There is a brief discussion, containing lengthy quotes, of how temples are a microcosm (pp. 266–68) and that the tabernacle points to rest and the eventual return to Eden. There is a lack of explanation as to how the tabernacle structure or its ritual gives testimony to this hope of the covenant and very little discussion on the role of the concluding sec-

tion on Sabbath (Exod 31:12–17), which makes the practice of Sabbath an essential way Israel must live according to the covenant, constituting them as holy people whose actions show the purposes of God in redemption.

This is the commentary to use if the reader is looking for a review of historical critical discussion on the modernist questions of the Pentateuch as they affect the book of Exodus. The bibliography is 50 pages; Alexander is familiar with much of this bibliography as seen in the quotations, but fortunately the commentary is not cluttered with footnotes, making it very accessible reading. It is a most valuable resource for matters of literary form and exposition, containing a massive amount of information that has accumulated in the last century of studies in Exodus.

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Judges and Ruth: An Introduction and Commentary. By Mary J. Evans. Tyndale OT Commentaries 7. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2017, 273 pp., $21.00 paper.

In one of the latest volumes of the TOTC series, Mary J. Evans was tasked with giving an introduction and general commentary on the books of Judges and Ruth. The introductions include discussions about such items as literary issues; canonical context; historical, political, and geographical background concerns; theological themes; and ethical issues facing twenty-first-century readers, though not all these issues are covered for both Judges and Ruth. The layout of the commentary on the biblical text covers three main areas for each of the particular sections of the author's structural outline: (1) the literary and historical *context* of the section; (2) the general exegetical *comments* on the block; and (3) the overall theological and contextual *meaning* of the section in light of the whole.

Due to the nature of the TOTC series, the commentary does not include the actual scriptural text or text-critical notes other than what may be needed to explain a difficult concept. As such, Evans does not get bogged down in higher-critical matters. Instead, she addresses the main interpretive issues of each book in an overview manner. It is clear that the brevity of her commentary is due to the word/page restrictions placed upon her by the editorial staff (pp. 23, 27 n. 4). Despite these restrictions, Evans has done a commendable job of giving the reader a solid analysis of both books. The book of Judges alone has numerous interpretive hurdles to get over, something Evans navigates well.

Evans's writing style is fluid and her commentary engaging. Throughout, Evans gives helpful insights on issues such as geographical concerns (pp. 95, 107, 117–18, 127 n. 62, 142–43, 150, 241) and concepts related to the ancient context (e.g., p. 199). Moreover, her concise notes on canonical connections are very helpful, especially for those at the layman and pastoral level (e.g., pp. 11–15).

The general perspective of the author is in keeping with the more traditional stance of InterVarsity Press (pp. xii–xiii). This is evidenced by Evans's presentation on the unity of these books and the issues related to their date of composition. Evans handles these thorny issues in a fair and even-handed manner while remain-

ing open to either early or late dates for the authorship (pp. 4–5, 183, 195–96) and settings of the books (pp. 219–20, 231–32). A good example of Evans's balanced approach to the more difficult aspects of these books is exemplified by her treatment of the third chapter of Ruth (pp. 256–64). Evans offers a solid and lucid rebuttal of the oft-touted sexual encounter between Ruth and Boaz during their late-night meeting on the threshing room floor.

There are only a few points of concern I have to offer. First, there are a few typographical and factual errors. In her comments on page 27, Evans says that Simeon and Gad are not mentioned in Judges; however, Simeon appears in the opening chapter three times (Judg 1:3 [2x], 17). If Evans meant that there are no *judges* from the tribe of Simeon (p. 61), then this could have been made clearer. Next, on page 120, it appears the locations of Sidon and Aram have been reversed in relation to the nation of Israel. Sidon is to the northwest and Aram is to the northeast, not vice versa.

Second, a quick review of Evans's bibliographies reveals that for Judges there is only one entry from 2012 and the rest are from 2009 and before. For the book of Ruth, there is only one entry from 2014 and the rest are before this date. On the face of it, this makes a 2017 publication already somewhat dated. Of course, there may be a good explanation for this problem. The fact that these are "select" bibliographies may account for the exclusion of more recent material, although I did not see any of these more recent sources directly noted in the commentary itself. Another possible reason for this may be due to the time lag between Evans's writing of the manuscript and the actual publication date. In this case, the author is not to be faulted.

Third, Evans could have been clearer in her interpretive method in places. For example, Evans seems to vacillate between reading the book of Judges as being anti-monarchy (pp. 9–10, 181, 186, 216, 229) or pro-monarchy (pp. 204–7, 213, 215). Evans proposes her anti-monarchy assertions based upon the failures of the later monarchy. However, this could be viewed as circular reasoning related to the dating of the book of Judges. Evans asserts that because the authors of Samuel and Kings appear to give a negative assessment of the monarchy therefore the author of Judges may be doing the same thing. However, if Judges is in fact written early in the monarchy (i.e. in the period of David, c. 1000 BC) then the presentation of Judges, especially chapters 17–21, could be an apologia for the right *kind* of kingship, namely, Davidic (Robert O'Connell, *The Rhetoric of the Book of Judges* [VTSup 63; Leiden: Brill, 1996]).

Finally, Evans seems to adopt the position that the author of Judges is anti-Judah. While Evans qualifies her position early in the commentary (p. 9), by the end she seems to endorse it wholeheartedly (p. 211). To be sure, some may take issue with this position, especially in light of the combined rhetorical and structural features of Judges that seem to point in the exact opposite direction.

Despite these few interpretive and editing concerns, Evans still has done a fine job in unpacking these two biblical books in a concise manner and has added to

our understanding in the process. Indeed, Evans's work fits nicely within the tradition of the TOTC series.

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Interpreting the Wisdom Books: An Exegetical Handbook. By Edward M. Curtis. Handbooks for OT Exegesis. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2017, 204 pp., $21.99 paper.

This exegetical handbook by Edward Curtis covers Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs. According to the series preface, the "volumes are primarily intended to serve as textbooks for graduate-level exegesis courses that assume a basic knowledge of Hebrew" (p. 15). Each volume moves through six steps.

In the first section that introduces the wisdom genre, Curtis places biblical wisdom within general revelation. He suggests biblical references to wisdom in other cultures recognizes their wisdom as legitimate (p. 24). Several other statements support this notion, including the following: "Wisdom literature reflects the human struggle to understand how things work in the world that God created, and the search generally proceeds without special revelation" (p. 26). Their "inclusion … in the canon … likely affirms the importance of the enterprise that led to these observations" (p. 27). "Biblical wisdom, in contrast to that of Israel's neighbors, reflects Yahwistic theology" (p. 27). The sages provide answers to their students but also challenge them to find the answers themselves, and "the most important contribution of … Ecclesiastes lies in the questions it raises rather than the answers it provides" (p. 32). The introductory section also provides insight on how poetry, parallelism, and figures of speech work.

The second section, "Primary Themes in the Wisdom Books" (pp. 57–86), starts with an "at a glance summary" (pp. 87–88). The primary themes of three books are listed, whereas those for the Song of Songs were found "difficult because of ambiguities and uncertainties related to every aspect of the book" (p. 78). These, however, are presented later (pp. 82–86).

The third section, "Preparing for Interpretation" (87–113), presents the importance of ancient near Eastern backgrounds in interpreting wisdom literature, as well as the role of textual criticism. Resources for both and a couple examples of handling textual variants are presented.

The fourth section (pp. 115–39) presents the task of exegesis as an interplay between genre, context, and word meaning. Grammar and syntax, the Achilles' heel of many would-be interpreters, are not considered. Grammar was touched on in an earlier comment that "multiple readings of the text will allow the interpreter … to recognize grammatical and syntactical peculiarities" (p. 106). That "wisdom focuses on tiny slices of life" (p. 118) is a pointer for all four books, although one wonders if that applies to Job or Ecclesiastes. Guidelines for individual books are given (pp. 119–39), although several of these seem applicable to all. According to Curtis, the "lack of coherent structure" in Ecclesiastes is by design (p. 70, 133–34).

The fifth section (pp. 141–66) provides guidelines for sermon preparation. A few of these may seem obvious, but the reader is taken through working examples illustrating each. This section stops short of being a full guide to the homiletical task, although several useful things are noted. Specific directives for individual books are also given.

The sixth section on synthesis illustrates "focusing on the topic," "recognizing genre and exegetical details," "organizing the material," and "applying the text" using the topic of friendship in Proverbs, and Job 4–6.

There is an appendix entitled "Computers and Internet Resources" (pp. 187–97) and a glossary of terms (pp. 199–204). The discussion of software omits information about significant grammatical resources included with basic packages such as of BibleWorks.

The strength of the book is in its presentation of genre-specific matters. In my opinion, Curtis's distinction of general revelation from special is not the typical understanding of these terms. His view would make almost all of the Bible, except where God reveals things unobservable to man, to be general revelation. He views biblical wisdom literature to be the reflections of humans of Yahwistic ideology. It would have been simpler to speak of biblical thinking, and leave it ultimately to the divine author, rather than this culturally nuanced term (not to mention confusion with source-critical terminology). Another significant issue is the disregard of biblical (OT) theology in the exegetical process. The handbook leaps from the book context to the ANE as if the canonical context of the Hebrew Bible is irrelevant. In addition, attention to grammar and syntax is essential in the exegetical process, although many scholarly commentaries set a bad example by being fixated on word studies with minimal concern for syntax. One would have hoped a handbook on exegesis would remedy this problem. Despite these reservations, a student should find significant value in the book.

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Job: The Mystery of Suffering and God's Sovereignty. By Richard P. Belcher Jr. Focus on the Bible. Scotland: Christian Focus, 2017, 352 pp., $17.99 paper.

In a world governed by the sovereign God, why do humans suffer, and more specifically, why do righteous individuals like Job suffer? The latter question and responses to it inform Richard Belcher Jr.'s recent commentary on the book of Job in the Focus on the Bible series (which also includes Belcher's commentary on Genesis, 2012). His commentary on Job is a practical addition to these popular-level commentaries and functions as a preaching and teaching aid for pastors and small group leaders as well as being useful for personal devotions. The series fills a similar niche to the OT for Everyone series and the exegetically-based thematic study by Craig Bartholomew (*When You Want to Yell at God: The Book of Job* [Transformative Word Series; Lexham, 2014]). Belcher's approach to writing his Job commentary is to "try and explain the text simply and clearly… and to make clear

the argument of each passage of the book … how it relates to life, and how it fits into the broader view of redemptive history" (p. 9). He frequently draws on John Hartley's 1988 Job commentary (NICNT).

The outline of Job is straightforward: Prologue (1–2); Job's Lament (3); The Cycle of Speeches (4–27); The Wisdom Poem (28); Job's Last Speech (29–31); Elihu's Speeches (32–37); God's Speeches and Job's Responses (38–42:6); and Epilogue (42:7–17). Belcher stays close to this outline in his commentary. Each chapter ends with study questions and installments of a story ("About Pierce") that show a contemporary example of a Christian response to suffering. Included at the end of the commentary is a brief section summarizing theological issues (the sovereignty of God, suffering and sin, responses to suffering) discussed in the commentary (pp. 323–34).

In his Introduction, Belcher initiates a discussion of preliminary matters of the book of Job as well as its major themes. He briefly addresses issues of setting, authorship, date, genre, and structure, placing himself with scholars that favor an earlier dating of the book (pp. 13–14). He does not, however, discuss at length the function of Job as wisdom literature (pp. 12, 13); he treats the subject more concisely in the Wisdom Poem section (pp. 187–92). Less discussion of dating (pp. 13–14) and a more expansive treatment of Job within the wisdom literature tradition may have proven useful for pastors and small group leaders. Belcher also briefly notes here (p. 15) and elsewhere in the commentary (pp. 16, 33) the alternation between narrative and poetry in Job. A more thorough interaction with scholarship on the effects of poetry on meaning in the text, such as the treatment of the subject by Robert Alter (*The Art of Biblical Poetry*, chap. 4), to preface the poetic section of the commentary (p. 293) may have strengthened readers' appreciation of the nuance, mystery, and depth of the subject actualized through poetic portrayal, especially as it is exemplified in Job's Wisdom Poem (chap. 28) and in the poetic mastery of the responses of the Creator and Sustainer of the world (38:1–40:2; 40:6–41:34).

The Introduction also treats the thematic content of the book of Job. Belcher notes that it addresses the experience of human suffering, as well as the possible causes and effects of this suffering. He emphasizes that in studying the reasons for suffering presented in the book of Job, it is important to assess the connections between sin and suffering: did Job suffer because he or his family had sinned, and/or did he sin while suffering (pp. 17, 317–20)? Belcher posits that another critical issue in Job is the human response to suffering and whether God is worthy of our worship even if he brings us unimaginable suffering. The relevance of Job lies in its engagement with the suffering of God's people and our choice of whether to continue to hope and wait for the renewal of all things (pp. 11, 14) amidst suffering.

The rest of the commentary follows the order of the book of Job. In the section dealing with Job's health (2:1–8), Belcher skillfully directs the reader to God's sovereignty even though there is much we don't understand concerning it. He affirms "that God is not the author of sin (James 1:13, 17) and that He uses secondary causes to accomplish His purposes (WCF 3.1)" (p. 26). Belcher then analyzes

the arguments of Job's friends, Job's responses, God's responses, and Job's reactions.

In his "Theological Reflections," Belcher reiterates his position regarding causes and responses to human suffering and gives suggestions for aiding suffering Christians. He concludes that as Job did not, as his "comforters" supposed, suffer because of sin, we cannot attribute all suffering to the sufferer's sin. However, the sufferer should respond to suffering "with faith and trust" and prayer, but not with finding fault with God (pp. 326–28). Belcher here agrees with some scholars who interpret the ambiguous Hebrew words of Job 42:6 as Job's repentance of sin committed during the suffering. This differs from scholars who emphasize Job's turn from his limited knowledge and frailty to a profoundly expanded experience and knowledge of God and his wise work in the world. I think a theological reflection on the value of divine wisdom as it is demonstrated in the life of Job would have been valuable.

The contemporary story of Pierce Franks at the end of each chapter serves as an exemplary response to suffering, as the family maintains faith, trust, and commitment to Christ in their suffering. The section also aims to encourage those who are suffering (pp. 18–19). Because of its applicability and relatability, it could function as a springboard for discussion and thought in small group or devotional settings. It offers a practical perspective on divine wisdom demonstrated in the lives of the Franks.

A caveat on technicalities: a more thorough bibliography and careful editing would improve the book by eliminating the few but distracting typographical and bibliographic reference errors, and omissions (e.g. pp. 16, 336–37, 141).

In sum, Belcher's short commentary on Job is not meant to serve as an academic resource, but as a helpful guide for those who are preaching or teaching the book of Job. His faithfulness in addressing each chapter of the text provides a valuable starting point for focus and meditation on this often overlooked, but consistently relevant biblical narrative. He aptly deals with textual ambiguities and hulls out rich theological reflections that come from a rigorous academic and deeply pastoral experience.

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Daniel. By Wendy L. Widder. The Story of God Bible Commentary. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016, xviii + 264 pp., $29.99.

Wendy Widder teaches courses on the OT at the University of the Free State in South Africa. She defends a minority view among evangelicals of the interpretation of Daniel's prophecies. The four empires represented by the statue of Nebuchadnezzar's dream in chapter 2 are understood by her to be Babylon, followed by Media, then Persia, and finally by Greece as the fourth empire represented there. In league with Tremper Longman, she justifies this from the record of Jewish post-exilic intertestamental history and Daniel's prophecies of chapters 7 and 8. That

justification is primarily due to a textual identification of the goat in chapter 8 with Greece (8:21), which makes Antiochus IV the most conspicuous candidate for the little horn of that chapter (8:9–14), and which has similarities with the little horn of the fourth beast of chapter 7. She therefore concludes the fourth beast of chapter 7 must also be Greece and does not treat the dominant view that portrays Rome as the fourth empire.

While that criticism may deter some from taking this book very seriously, I, for one, am glad for the opportunity to have read it. That is not because I find her arguments persuasive with regard to Rome's role or lack thereof, but because she does shed some light on how intertestamental Jews would have interpreted and been encouraged from the book of Daniel. It is also because I believe OT prophecy normally has at least two and often multiple reference points—fulfillments in proximity to the original audience as well as to those temporally more distant ones. This is something that enables all of Scripture to have such an amazing capacity to be so relevant to whomsoever they are made available, and in whatsoever period of time readers may be living.

Second, this commentary does not attempt to be exegetical as much as it is expositional. It looks at each chapter separately until it reaches chapter 10, the discussion of which is combined with chapters 11 and 12. As such, it can be helpful to ministers who are trying to find encouragement for their flocks. And while not offering much in the way of exegetical analysis, it does relate a good part of chapter 11, for instance, to what we know about the intertestamental history of the warring factions between which postexilic Judah found herself sandwiched. Novice readers of Scripture may well wonder how such accounts in its canon are of any profit (2 Tim 3:16) for a contemporaneous soul. The knowledge of God's sovereignty, however, over what could appear for those living at that time otherwise to be a very hapless situation, may actually serve to strengthen their faith and encourage their perseverance. If Daniel 11 has ever been a puzzle to you, Widder's explanation may make the book's purchase worthwhile.

Furthermore, Widder retells the narrative sections of the book of Daniel with an engaging style that does not fail to glean the humor often lost in translation. An example would be the way in which the image of Nebuchadnezzar's face was said to "change" as he burned in his furious rage over the defiance of the three Hebrews Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego when they refused to bow before the image he had set up. The play on the word used for "image" in that chapter, at least 12 times, carries an obviously intentional pun in the Aramaic, but not seen in most English versions. Widder makes no reference there, however, to our knowledge of the smelting practices of Nebuchadnezzar's day, although several finds have indicated kilns in existence then several meters in length, while being two to three meters in both width and height, that operated well above 1,000 degrees F. That would affirm, at least, the very real possibility of their having the capacity to hold four adult male occupants capable of walking around freely within them if necessary, a point often challenged by more skeptical readers.

I was disappointed in Widder's missing chapter 5's inference of the writing on the wall to the impending nature of God's coming judgment on sinners so naïvely

oblivious of their fast-approaching doom. From an expositional point of view, this may have been one of the most emphatic points the book of Daniel is so intent on providing. It is also perhaps one of the most essential aspects this generation so desperately needs.

A treatment of chapter 9's prophecy regarding the timing of the Messiah's arrival adhering to the traditional interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's statue dream where Babylon, Media/Persia, Greece, and Rome are the human empires inferred would have added immeasurable value. This, per the assumption of multiple fulfilments, would not undermine or disqualify the validity of her alternative treatment of these prophecies. Otherwise, her treatment overlooks the interpretation that sees in Daniel 9 an astoundingly precise prediction of the Messiah's arrival and death. Hence, although it provides a much-needed addition to our understanding of Daniel, I recommend using it alongside a thorough commentary that also contains an *exposé* of Rome ultimately as the fourth beast of chapter 7 and the final human empire of chapter 2.

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Obadiah: The Kingship Belongs to YHWH. Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the OT: A Discourse Analysis of the Hebrew Bible. 2nd ed. By Daniel I. Block. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013, 135 pp., $19.99 paper.

The Zondervan Exegetical Commentary is a series written for pastors and scholars looking for a more textually-based engagement of the Scriptures, especially attentive to the flow of the argument of each book. There are now ten volumes available for the NT, and three on the OT: Ruth (also by Daniel Block), Jonah (Ron Youngblood), and this now-revised volume on Obadiah by Daniel Block. The Series Introduction (Block is also the OT general editor) states that the commentaries are concerned with three questions: (1) What are the principal theological points the biblical writers are making? (2) How do biblical writers make those points? (3) What significance does the message of the present text have for understanding the message of the biblical book within which it is embedded and the message of the Scriptures as a whole? (p. 10).

Looking beyond the micro-level of clause and sentence grammar, rhetorical and discourse analyses observe syntactical function at the levels of paragraph, unit, and entire text. Six issues are dealt with in these commentaries: (1) the main idea of the passage; (2) the literary context; (3) independent translation and exegetical outline; (4) structure and literary form; (5) explanation of the text; and (6) canonical and practical significance, including both how later biblical authors have adapted and reused the motifs and how the message relates to contemporary readers (p. 11).

Unfortunately, there is no preface to the second edition, and without this, readers are not apprised of the extent or the nature of the changes made, nor the rationale for why a second edition was deemed necessary a mere four years after the first edition.

Despite the emergence of numerous studies done in the past few decades on the Book of the Twelve, Block dismisses the value of looking for a flow of argument within this larger corpus in a single, short paragraph (pp. 21–22), pointing to manuscript variance without engaging any of the arguments based on lexical and thematic links, *Leitwörter*, shared perspectives, conceptual development, and so forth. For a series devoted to examination of the text at supra-clausal levels, this is disappointing.

Aside from this important demur, the commentary otherwise is successful at achieving its aims, offering valuable insights into the "big picture" of this, the shortest book of the OT. Judah's excessive pride stemmed from its presumption on the promises regarding land, covenant, Zion, and David (p. 34). In light of these, the people thought themselves unassailable, so their defeat and devastation at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar challenged to the core their sense of identity and ability to trust Yahweh. In this context, Block maintains that "Obadiah's rhetorical aim was to rebuild his audience's hope in the eternal promises of God" (p. 35).

The author acknowledges that the structure of Obadiah is challenging, identifying its literary character as essentially "a collage of prophetic announcements" that "is difficult to outline" (p. 42). Despite this caveat, the chart/outline he provides is clear and convincing (p. 44), with the main idea of the book concisely stated as "The Dominion belongs to YHWH."

Graphically, the book is easy on the eyes, with charts, numbered points, diagrams, and visual aids that are intuitively clear and keep the reader oriented at all times. In this regard, this book is a benchmark for all who write commentaries.

Occasionally Block makes odd comments. For example, on the structure and literary form of verses 19–21, he states, "The entire book is written in terse elevated prose, the style being chosen for maximum rhetorical effect." But he goes on to conclude, "Stylistically and syntactically this paragraph is extremely rough and has the appearance of a first draft" (p. 99). Given his high regard for God's Word, this observation is unexpected and of dubious benefit. Another example is in his final chapter, titled "Canonical and Practical Significance." He devotes a half-page discussion (p. 110) to Egyptian and neo-Assyrian records that are centuries removed from the circumstances of the book's composition. This material is neither canonical nor practical, and its "significance" is arguable at best (significant for what, and for whom?).

However, immediately following this latter discussion, Block provides what the chapter title promises. Canonically, "Edom functions as a representative of all the nations arrayed against YHWH and his people" (p. 110). Practically, "Edom's demise is paradigmatic of YHWH's ultimate vindication of his people and his triumph over all who oppose him" (p. 112). He shows restraint in rightly pointing out that there is no mention of a Davidic Messiah but does conclude that "in Christ not only the prophecy of Obadiah, but all of God's promises to Israel are fulfilled" (p. 120).

Despite certain shortcomings, this is now a must-read tool for those seeking insight into the often-overlooked but powerful book of Obadiah and should also

serve as a model for those who write commentaries on any biblical book.

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The Books of Haggai and Malachi. By Mignon R. Jacobs. New International Commentary on the OT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017, xlv + 377 pp., $48.00.

The Books of Haggai and Malachi is the most recent addition to Eerdmans's series The New International Commentary on the OT (NICOT), edited by Robert L. Hubbard Jr. Author Mignon Jacobs, Dean and Chief Academic Officer at Ashland Theological Seminary, does a superb job of continuing the NICOT tradition of excellent scholarship within an evangelical perspective. According to the preface, the commentary is intended for pastors and students, and her approach is to "inquire about the significance of the text for both the ancient and the modern audience" (p. xiii) and to draw the reader "into additional reading and discussion of the biblical text" with "a commitment to understanding God's work" (p. xiv). To this end, Jacobs makes a prodigious contribution to the study of these two prophetic books.

The overall structure of *The Books of Haggai and Malachi* is as follows: prefatory material, including a comprehensive bibliography on both books covered in the volume; a commentary on Haggai; a commentary on Malachi; and a set of indices. The commentaries on the books of Haggai and Malachi both open with a variety of introductory materials. These introductory materials begin by covering the author and date of each book followed by a discussion of the historical context of the book, which includes sections such as "Chronological Indicators," "Sociopolitical Context," and "Conceptual Framework." She also includes a discussion of the text and intertextual indicators followed by a structural analysis with a detailed outline. Her introductory comments on Haggai and Malachi conclude with an overview of the message of each prophet. The commentary proper follows this introductory discussion and includes the author's translation of each pericope from the Hebrew, complete with annotations, and a detailed commentary for each pericope, broken down verse-by-verse and organized by her detailed outline of the book. Three indices then follow the commentary on Malachi: an Index of Authors, an Index of Subjects, and an Index of Scripture and Other Ancient Sources.

The strength of Jacobs's work is in her attention to details. The translation, notes, and commentary include great depth and present helpful information and discussion on every verse in each book. In the commentary on Malachi particularly, Jacobs divides each pericope into very small units, providing detailed commentary on only a quarter of a verse at a time in some places. She demonstrates her strong research and analytical skills as she focuses on translation, translation notes, textual variants, word studies, and interpretive options, and as she addresses cross-references and intertextuality. For example, Jacobs's translation of Hag 1:5–11 includes eight substantial notes on the translation, covering almost two pages in the commentary. In another example from the verse-by-verse commentary, Jacobs

discusses Mal 2:10 over the course of four pages and includes no fewer than five word studies plus multiple Scripture references for comparison and cross-reference as part of the discussion. Her detailed focus on the text, textual variants, and translation options will assist the inquisitive and diligent student of the Bible. Her many word studies and discussion of cross-references will assist pastors and teachers in their preparation. Moreover, the author presents a variety of views on the interpretation of many of the passages, demonstrating thorough research and familiarity with the range of interpretive options, while maintaining respect for the authority of the Scriptures. As noted in the preface, she discusses "intertextual variations on the various interpretive options and allow[s] these options to coexist" (p. xiii), allowing the reader to come to his or her own conclusions regarding the best interpretive option in most cases.

While Jacobs's commentary is thoroughly researched and full of insightful details and discussions, the weakness of her commentary is in her discussion of the big picture, including theological themes and the contribution of each prophetic book to the broader witness of Scripture. This is especially true in the introductory material for each book. The information she presents in these sections is accurate and helpful but seems to lack the synthesis necessary for a robust theological discussion of the books included in the study. On a related note, on the rare occasion when Jacobs does present her opinion on the best interpretation of a given passage, the discussion lacks synthesis. For example, in her discussion of Mal 4:5, she presents the competing views of the relationship between "my messenger" of Mal 3:1 and Elijah mentioned in 4:5. After presenting the various perspectives, she simply states, "This is my interpretation: the messenger and Elijah are the same; both anticipate and prepare for Yahweh's coming" (p. 330), leaving the reader wondering what evidence beyond this short statement compelled her to come to that conclusion. Finally, her ability to communicate "the significance of the text for … the modern audience" (p. xiii) is also a bit weak. While she is clearly able to identify and discuss the significance of the text for the ancient audience, there is little discussion regarding how the text might be understood and applied in the modern context.

In spite of the shortcomings noted above, this commentary on Haggai and Malachi by Jacobs is a useful and valuable tool for students, pastors, and those who wish to gain a deeper understanding of these two important prophetic books. Jacobs's understanding of Hebrew, intertextuality, and the details of the text combine to give us an insightful and beneficial study of these two prophetic books. This commentary should be included in the library of anyone interested in a serious, in-depth study of Haggai and Malachi.

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A Syntax of Septuagint Greek. By Takamitsu Muraoka. Louvain: Peeters, 2016, lxxiii + 904 pp., €105.00.

My assessment of Takamitsu Muraoka's *Greek-English Lexicon to the Septuagint* (Louvain: Peeters, 2009) in the *Midwestern Journal of Theology* ended on this wistful tone: "One can only hope that in the not too distant future a new Greek Grammar of the Septuagint, to match the excellence of this Lexicon, will be added to the mix." It took less than a decade for that hope to become a reality. With the publication of the present volume on the syntax of Septuagint Greek, the legacy of Professor Muraoka both in advancing the study of the LXX and in equipping the tool chest of Septuagintalists, scholars, and students alike, has made a quantum leap forward. Alongside the aforementioned *Lexicon* and the invaluable *Greek-Hebrew/Aramaic Two-Way Index* (Louvain: Peeters, 2010), the *Syntax* now completes a book triumvirate that any library devoted to biblical studies must own.

The publication of this work could not have come at a better time. These are the days of unprecedented interest and research in the area of Septuagint studies. For proof of this trend, see the two new series of commentaries devoted to the Septuagint (the Brill Septuagint Commentary Series based on Codex Vaticanus, already in progress, and the forthcoming SBL/IOSCS Commentary on the Septuagint), the steady flow of monographs in the SBLSCS series, the burgeoning number of dissertations focusing on the Septuagint both as a religious textual witness of the Jewish Scriptures as well as a prime theological influence on the authors and the writings of the NT, and the numerous translation projects of the Septuagint in various modern languages. All along, however, the one missing element in the mix has been a reference grammar devoted to Septuagint Greek. The notable precursors in English, Conybeare and Stock's *Grammar of Septuagint Greek* (Boston: Ginn, 1905) and Thackeray's *A Grammar of the Old Testament in Greek according to the Septuagint* (Cambridge: University Press, 1909), are not only a century old but also limited in what they were able to accomplish. Barely sufficient for the endeavor were also the reference grammars devoted to NT Greek, such as that of Blass, Debrunner, and Funk or the four-volume work of Moulton, Howard, and Turner. With the publication of Muraoka's volume on the syntax of Septuagint Greek, the wait for that quintessential reference work is now over, a sentiment captured by the author's own assessment in the Foreword to the volume: "It is an immense pleasure to be able to present herewith what H. St. J. Thackeray proposed, but God did not dispose for a reason that is known to Him alone" (p. xxxv).

It must be said that the magnitude of Muraoka's achievement with this volume could be rightly assessed only within the boundaries of a review article. Regardless of the effort, an ordinary review cannot do justice to the massive volume of information incorporated in this work; it would be impossible to offer even a fair presentation of its content, let alone to engage critically with it. Such review articles will no doubt be forthcoming, allowing for better and more substantive assessments of this epoch-making work.

Right from the start, a word about the volume's physical dimensions is in order. Not unlike the contents, they are impressive in their own right. The hardback

edition follows a similar pattern to the earlier volumes (the *Lexicon* and the *Index*) in terms of size, a bit shy of the letter-size 8.5 x 11 inches and a whopping 5.2 pounds. As far as its contents are concerned, the thoroughness of the work is reflected in the six layers of headings, with part 1 on morphosyntax (pp. 1–422) and part 2 on syntax (pp. 425–815) as the two main sections of the book. The 27-page table of contents is available for download at http://www.peeters-leuven.be/toc/9789042933163.pdf. The introductory matters (Foreword, Introduction, Abbreviations, Symbols, and Literature) offer a useful guide into the project, its presuppositions, limits, philosophy, and goals. As in the case of the *Lexicon*, the language under scrutiny is the Greek of the Septuagint which "reflects the pre-Christian Hellenistic Greek, not a peculiar jargon which was current in the Alexandrian Jewish community" (p. xxxvii). Allowance is made, however, for the distinctive features in vocabulary, phraseology, and syntax that emerged during the translation process. With regard to the translation philosophies behind the Septuagint, a complex work comprising both translation texts and texts originally composed in Greek, Muraoka advocates for a balanced approach between the two main schools of thought, translator-centered and reader-centered ones, which "do not have to be mutually contradictory, but complementing each other" (p. xl). The approach taken by the author is synchronic, without any attempt to undertake either a diachronic or a comparative analysis to adjacent phases in the development of the Greek language (p. xlii). Two potential criticisms are preemptively answered. First, given the author's age when the project commenced (by his own admission), the volume could not have taken the path of a thoroughly systematic study of the subject, even though some diachronic material is incorporated in the present analysis. The volume engages in significant comparisons with various Greek texts from the Classical period to the Hellenistic-Roman, as well as the NT. Second, the input from the translation technique school of Septuagint studies has been deferred to either future editions or endeavors (p. xli). The complexities involved would have made the work untenable.

Part 1, the morphosyntax, defined by the book's own glossary as the "study of values of inflectional categories and word classes" (p. 818), sets aside one section for each major part of speech. The article, the pronoun, and the interrogative words open the list. The section on Gender, Number, Case is predominantly devoted to nouns, alongside relevant issues pertaining to other inflected parts of speech, pronouns, and adjectives. Adjectives and adverbs are coupled for the following section, distinct from the one devoted to numerals. One further section is allotted to prepositions and conjunctions. The last section, by far the longest one covering almost half of the discussion on morphosyntax, is set aside for the verb. Part 2, the syntax proper, examines how various parts of speech, primarily nouns and verbs, are expanded syntactically by other constituents. It also deals with other macro-syntactic questions, including various cases of elision, concord, coordination, word order, direct speech, relative clauses, conditional clauses, and circumstantial clauses, to name only a few. Commendation must be given to the author for deciding to include his translation of many of the texts, passages, and phrases discussed, a most helpful feature given the broad spectrum of examples examined. As with

the *Lexicon* the Greek texts are given in Greek fonts while the Hebrew and Aramaic texts are transliterated. The detailed 20-page bibliography, with entries in English, German, French, Italian, and Spanish, permits a glimpse into the boundaries of research invested in this project. The appendices, consisting of a two-page glossary of frequently used technical terms, a passage index (pp. 819–89), and a subject index (pp. 891–904), allow for an effortless examination and use of the volume.

In light of the intense debates of the last decades over the issues surrounding the syntax of the Greek verb, especially as it relates to temporal and aspectual categories, the urge to read the relevant sections in this work proved irresistible for me. As someone who has followed with keen interest the dispute between the old and new schools of thought, nothing was more enticing than finding out where a scholar of Muraoka's erudition stands on these matters. While a thorough presentation of this particular issue is not possible here, a brief mention of some pertinent matters might be illustrative. The best way to proceed would be to let the master speak for himself. The tone is set by the statement: "We believe that is not unreasonable to adopt here as the basic framework the traditional formulation of Aktionsarten as found in KG [Koine Greek]" (p. 252). This opening stance is defended by plenty of examples and keen observations on passages in which Muraoka takes issue with more recent approaches. The following is only a sample: "To deny, as McKay and Porter do, the feature of temporal reference altogether is going too far and does not do justice to the Greek verbal system" (p. 250); "With due respect to much valuable work done in the area of aspectology in the past decennia, to assert that Greek 'tenses' have nothing to do with an indication of relative time is going a little too far" (p. 250). In discussing the future tense, which, in Muraoka's assessment, is devoid of aspect while always displaying a temporal feature, he charges Campbell's work with being simplistic and unsupported by textual evidence when it asserts that "the future is perfective in aspect just as the aorist" (p. 251 n. 5). Similarly, in discussing the historic present, Muraoka states that the "punctiliar or one-off action is contradictory to its basically imperfective aspect" (p. 252), a contradiction ignored by Campbell (p. 252 n. 4). Some of Porter's conclusions fall under similar discontent: "A reductionistic approach which defines the future as a category expressing expectation [Porter] or intention [McKay] is too simplistic to do justice to diverse values which we believe can be identified in SG" (p. 284 n. 1), or "The notion of 'omnitemporal' future invoked by Porter … does not convince, sounding like an ad hoc idea" (p. 284 n. 4). Similar criticism of the new school, if perhaps sharper in tone, has already appeared in print in C. Caragounis's monograph *The Development of Greek and the New Testament* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004). For the exegete of Biblical Greek, whether Septuagint or NT Greek, who cannot boast professional competency in linguistics but often finds the new school unnecessarily complex and often unconvincing, it is refreshing to see scholars of Muraoka's and Caragounis's caliber still giving credence to a more traditional approach.

As the study of the Septuagint has increasingly become an area of research in its own right, the need for a definitive syntax of Septuagint Greek was arguably the most acutely felt need over the last decades. Muraoka's *Syntax* has finally and successfully filled the lacuna. The author has provided an outstanding research and

reference tool that puts all biblical scholars, especially Septuagintalists, in his debt. The enthusiasm generated by the publication of this volume will most likely be dampened only by its price tag. Steep as it is, however, for an exceptional reference tool such as this *Syntax*, pecuniary considerations ought not prevent an investment that will provide long-term dividends. This grammar will prove to be indispensable for the study of Septuagint and Koine Greek, with significant consequences for philological and theological research conducted in OT and NT studies alike, as well as studies in Hellenistic Judaism and early Christianity.

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The Origin of Divine Christology. By Andrew Ter Ern Loke. Society for NT Studies Monograph Series 169. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017, xvi + 249 pp., $99.99.

Andrew Ter Ern Loke is currently an Assistant Professor in the Department of Religion and Philosophy at Hong Kong Baptist University. He first had the idea for this book when he was working on his Ph.D. on the notion of incarnation and its historical basis and coherence. At that time, he noticed the lack of disagreement among the earliest Christians concerning Jesus's divinity. Alister McGrath and Richard Burridge encouraged him to develop his ideas further, and he has done so in this book in conversation with numerous leading scholars, including James Dunn, Larry Hurtado, Darrell Bock, Paul Trebilco, and Simon Gathercole.

In this book, Loke uses a historical-critical method in combination with insights from philosophy, theology, and comparative religion to argue that "Jesus was regarded as truly divine in earliest Christianity because its leaders thought that God demanded them to do so" (p. 1). He aims to synthesize the strengths and avoid the weaknesses of the scholars who have contributed their efforts to answering the question of how Jesus could be regarded as "truly divine" (e.g. Bauckham, Hurtado) and to defend his position against those who reject that the earliest Christology was already the highest Christology (e.g. Ehrman). Thus, Loke seeks to provide a "more holistic response compared to what is currently available in the literature" (p. 2) and therefore to contribute to the scholarly literature by bridging "the divide between biblical, theological and religious studies" (p. 3). He accomplishes what he sets out to do.

In chapter 1, Loke introduces the argument and surveys different types of theories concerning the origin of divine Christology. Although he acknowledges that these theories differ from one another in detail, he divides them into three groups in the following way: (1) theories that suggest that the worship of Jesus as divine started fairly early among the Gentile Christians influenced by their pagan traditions; (2) theories that postulate that the full deification of Jesus took place by the end of the first century; (3) theories that propose that the recognition of Jesus as divine occurred already in the Palestinian Christian community, at the beginning of the Christian movement. Loke recognizes that the third group of theories, which

he calls "Explosion Theories," reflects a growing consensus among scholars in the recent years. He also recognizes that only some of the theories within this group trace the origin of divine Christology back to Jesus. Finally, he recognizes that the traditional view that Jesus viewed himself as divine has been challenged by many scholars on the basis that the details of the Gospels in regard to Jesus might have been distorted. Regardless of this, however, Loke notes that in light of the criteria put forward by historians in determining authenticity of records, there is a possibility that certain details of the Gospels are historically rooted in the perceptions and conviction of the earliest Christians that Jesus was divine. The rest of the chapter is dedicated to clarifying terms that will be used in the book to avoid confusion.

The main contents of the book can be divided into two sections. In the first section, Loke explores whether or not the earliest Christians regarded Jesus as "truly divine," namely, on the Creator side of the Creator-creature divide (pp. 53–66). In chapter 2, he starts by examining 1 Cor 8:6 and Phil 2:6–11, because they provide the earliest witness for Jesus's true divinity. Then, he provides a detailed reflection on the arguments made by Larry Hurtado concerning worship offered to Jesus and by Chris Tilling concerning personal and relational devotion to Jesus, namely, spiritual desire for Jesus as for YHWH. In chapters 3 and 4, he addresses objections that could be raised to the conclusions of chapter 2: (1) that Jesus might have been worshipped as an exalted figure of Second Temple Judaism; (2) that he might have been venerated rather than worshipped; and (3) that he might have gone through ontological enhancement (i.e. adopted/deified).

In the second section of the book, Loke explores what caused the early Christians to perceive Jesus as "truly divine." In chapter 5, he examines evidence in Pauline literature for his claim that there was a widespread conviction concerning Jesus as "truly divine." As Loke notes, Paul disagreed with others on numerous occasions, but he does not seem to argue for a divine Christology, which implies that there were no disagreements in regard to Jesus's divine nature, just as Dunn and Hurtado both acknowledge. In chapter 6, he explores the difficulty of articulating and defending the notion that Jesus was "truly divine" against the background of Second Temple Jewish monotheism. He doubts that the earliest Christians could have identified Jesus as "truly divine" if they did not perceive that Jesus regarded himself as such and did not perceive Jesus's resurrection as the Father's confirmation of his "truly divine" identity. In chapter 7, he examines the evidence in the Gospels that points toward Jesus regarding himself as "truly divine."

Loke concludes his study by briefly summarizing his main arguments and criticisms (addressed by and large at Ehrman) and by listing fourteen historical considerations established in the book that one should consider when deciding whether Jesus claimed to be "truly divine" (pp. 200–201). Loke concludes his study with a discussion of two somewhat contemporary cases of deifications of two human figures, the Ethiopian emperor Haile Selassie (1892–1975) and Menachem Mendel Schneersohn (1902–1994), within Christian and Jewish traditions respectively. In both cases, the human figures did not claim to be divine, which led to serious controversies among their followers. Moreover, the groups that chose to proclaim those figures as divine, did not uphold the Creator-creature divide that the earliest

Christians seemed to uphold. These examples serve well to illustrate Loke's overall argument: namely, if many of the earliest Christians were willing to proclaim Jesus as being on the Creator side of the Creator-creature divide in the context where this divide was upheld with much commitment, their devotion must have had roots in the words and deeds of Jesus, not just in their charismatic or visionary experiences.

Loke should be commended for his highly-nuanced book for a number of reasons. First, Loke is aware of the dominant views in the field of divine Christology and able to assess their strengths and weaknesses with precision and sophistication. He is also aware that his study can be criticized, which is why he is careful to clarify all the claims he is making against possible criticisms. Second, he does not assume that all of his readers are aware of significant terms pertaining to the study of divine Christology or use them in the same way he does (pp. 12–21). Providing clarification for these terms at the beginning of his study creates a consistent background against which his readers can assess his claims. His nuanced reflection on the publications in the field of divine Christology is his main contribution to the field. Third, Loke allows for diversity within earliest Christianity and Judaism (p. 57) and does not claim that all followers of Jesus perceived him as "truly divine" (p. 21). Moreover, he speaks of the followers' "perception" of Jesus as "truly divine" in order to allow for the diversity of reflections on the common experiences Jesus's followers had with Jesus and to avoid the "pitfall of naive realism" (p. 2). Finally, he is aware of the bias that any interpreter might have in studying Jesus's self-understanding and proposes to overcome his personal bias by accounting for all the evidence he finds, even the "'uncomfortable facts'" (p. 11).

Although Loke has produced a good study, a few points of criticism might be offered. First, it would be helpful if Loke were to devote more time to exegesis of the texts crucial to his arguments. Of course, it is possible that, because he was examining the origins of divine Christology in the entire NT, he had no choice but to rely on exegesis done by others. Second, Loke makes a helpful distinction—God includes the Father and Jesus, but Jesus does not exhaust the concept of God, nor does the Father (pp. 19, 30–31). However, what he says about Jesus being equal to the Father ontologically but subordinate to the Father functionally is problematic because this creates inequality within God (pp. 16–17, 80–83, 158–59). This is a widely-held position among scholars but should not be accepted uncritically. Just because the language used of Jesus and the Father is hierarchical does not mean that Jesus alone is subordinate to the Father. I wonder if it might be useful to speak of the mutual submission/subordination of the Father and Jesus, since their relationship is that of mutuality. Jesus is obedient to the Father, but the Father obediently vindicates Jesus by raising him from the dead and submits to Jesus as he allows Jesus to put the divine salvific plan into action. Third, Loke's main opponent is Ehrman (p. 2), but Ehrman's views have been critiqued already in much detail, for example, in *How God Became Jesus* (ed. Michael F. Bird; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014). Loke references the book but does not acknowledge its significance.

I want to thank Andrew Ter Ern Loke for his carefully-researched, well-argued, and properly-nuanced contribution to the dialogue concerning the nature

of the earliest Christian views about Jesus, although it might not be entirely convincing to scholars who do not subscribe to "Explosion Theories." The book is accessible to scholars, graduate students, and anyone who is interested and willing to work their way through scholarly arguments. Since this book attempts to use a transdisciplinary approach, it will be beneficial to biblical scholars, theologians, philosophers, and historians who are interested in the study of the NT and Christian origins in general and divine Christology in particular.

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The Death of Jesus in Matthew: Innocent Blood and the End of Exile. By Catherine Sider Hamilton. Society for NT Studies Monograph Series 167. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017, xv + 272 pp., $99.99.

This volume opens (chap. 1) with one of the thorniest passages in the Gospel of Matthew (27:25), which is often rendered in English, "His blood be upon us and on our children." Is this a cry of judgment? Or a plea for salvation? Hamilton argues that the tension between judgment and salvation in Matthew, underscored by Matt 27:25, is found in the theme of "innocent blood," which invokes "the paradigm of bloodguilt and purgation, purity and pollution" (p. 28). This further "raises the question of the life of the holy people in the presence of the holy God" (p. 29). Her method is to look both to narrative criticism and to the scriptural echoes of Matthew (e.g. Deut 27:25) and interpretive traditions from the ancient world. To this end, she considers Matthew's passion narrative in conversation with traditions about Cain and Abel, which result in flood and judgment, and traditions relating to the murder of Zechariah in the temple (Matt 23:35; cf. 2 Chr 24:20–21). These traditions are often associated with the destruction of Jerusalem, which she argues is also the case in Matthew. However, Hamilton also argues that Matthew is distinctive in the way he focuses these in Jesus whose resurrection entails a more hopeful element as well (e.g., pp. 30–31, 234–35).

Chapter 2 is devoted to a narrative reading of innocent blood in Matthew, with particular attention to verbal and thematic parallels between Matt 2:16–18; 23:34–39; 27:3–10, 24–25. Hamilton argues that the theme of shedding innocent blood ties these passages together, along with its lingering effects in each case. She admits that the phrase "innocent blood" is not found in Matt 2:16–18—traditionally called "the slaughter of the *innocents*"—but she adduces other verbal parallels to tie this passage together with the other stated passages. Hamilton concludes, "Innocent blood frames the Gospel narrative and stands at its climax, and the death of Jesus is at its center" (p. 44). The most convincing verbal and thematic parallels in this chapter relate to Matthew 23 and 27; it is debatable whether "innocent blood" serves as a framing device for the entire Gospel.

Chapters 3–5 (part 2) shift to consider interpretive traditions that inform the context of Matthew. Chapter 3 focuses on *1 Enoch* and what it has to say about Cain, innocent blood, flood, and judgment. Hamilton argues that *1 Enoch* "deline-

ates a sequence [which proves to be influential]: from Cain and bloodshed to flood and judgment, and finally to new creation" (p. 47). She suggests that this pattern helps explain Matthew's allusion to the blood of Abel along with his larger interest in innocent blood. In *1 Enoch*, blood defiles the land and must be washed away, which is said to draw upon the story of Cain and Abel. Key for Hamilton is the notion that judgment is also restoration (pp. 63–65). In chapter 4, Hamilton considers similar themes among a range of other literature, including *Jubilees*, the *Damascus Document*, *Sibylline Oracles*, Susanna, Pseudo-Philo, and the letter of Jude. Though these are not all alike, Hamilton nonetheless holds that an identifiable—if fluid—interpretive tradition is found that relates the sin of Cain and blood of Abel to the flood and judgment. Hamilton argues for the pervasive influence of *1 Enoch* in this regard. Chapter 5 provides a helpful discussion of traditions surrounding the blood of Zechariah, which she argues manifest a shared way of reading in the historical context of Matthew, though she does not point to direct influence on Matthew. Hamilton contends that in every case the traditions relating to Zechariah's blood are related to Israel's defeat (p. 140).

Part 3 ties innocent blood traditions more specifically to Matthew. In chapter 6, Hamilton relates these common traditions regarding Zechariah to Matt 23:35, which mentions the blood of Zechariah. Though Matthew identifies Zechariah as "son of Barachiah," Hamilton assumes that Matthew has in view the figure from 2 Chronicles 24 and that Matthew's wording reflects a common tradition (see pp. 24 n. 63; 152 n. 4). Whereas many see the blood of Abel and Zechariah in Matt 23:35 as a reference to the first and last murders of the OT (in Genesis and 2 Chronicles), Hamilton instead argues that the "commonalities between Matthew and the Cain/blood-flood/judgment and Zechariah traditions" reveal a shared perspective: a "world of innocent blood, of purity and pollution, in which the blood of the innocent or righteous defiles the earth and the earth must be cleansed" (pp. 152, 180). The land thus faces both destruction and a new beginning. Here she argues for likely use of a Greek version of *1 Enoch* by Matthew (pp. 174–75). In chapter 7, she considers the meaning of innocent blood in Matthew. According to Hamilton, Matthew introduces a new element into the equation of innocent blood and judgment, namely, that the blood of Jesus not only defiles but also cleanses the land. The study rounds out with a conclusion (chap. 8) that gives further attention to the role of Israel in Matthew's theology. Hamilton concludes that the narrative of salvation in Matthew retains Israel at its center.

This is a well-written volume; the prose is lively and engaging. Hamilton shines when she brings together strands of tradition and seeks to make connections among a range of writings. She has done readers a service by drawing attention to the prevalence of the wickedness of shedding innocent blood in the ancient world and by suggesting its impact on the interpretation of Matthew. Students of Matthew will find much here that is helpful, especially relating to the traditions concerning the blood of Zechariah. Hamilton makes an admirable case for the influence of *1 Enoch* in the ancient world and in recreating some of the pockets of interpretive tradition that would likely have been in the interpretive air around the first century.

Even so, I remain unconvinced that Matthew has followed *1 Enoch* as closely as she suggests. To be sure, there are a few particularly suggestive parallels, but when it comes to the story of the defilement of the land, it is not clear that Matthew would have agreed with the (admittedly widespread) Enochic perspective on Genesis 6 (see, e.g., pp. 47, 51–52, 69, 169–70). Though she has made a compelling case that the shedding of innocent blood is a tragedy of the highest order, I would not go so far as to say that it sums up the understanding of sin, exile, and restoration in Matthew (see pp. 204–5, 224).

In places, particularly in relation to her key texts, the discussion needs more exegetical and textual detail; this is also related to the structure of the book. Part 1 of the book includes an introductory engagement with Matthew, but many foundational questions readers may have at this stage are left unaddressed until part 3. For example, does Matt 27:9 not actually quote Jeremiah? Early in the book the answer seems to be "no" (p. 39 n. 14), whereas later in the book (p. 188 n. 16) she admits that Matthew is at least consistent with Jeremiah. The later footnote would be helpful earlier. Likewise, a key text for Hamilton is Matt 27:25. Yet several aspects of this text remain unaddressed. For example, what should we make of the lack of a verb? Further, is it certain that "all the people" refers to all Israel (e.g., p. 43)? Despite the popularity of this view, it has been challenged in recent years (e.g. by Matthias Konradt). Though one cannot interact with all the literature, I would have liked to see more interaction with a wider array of discussion partners. Along these same lines, more attention to textual variants in key texts would have strengthened the argument. For example, Matt 27:4 could read αἷμα ἀθῷον or αἷμα δίκαιον, but this issue is first addressed deep in the book (p. 183) in a note. Further, her explanation might also be affected by another variant in 27:24 that is not addressed at all. To be sure, this may not matter too much for Hamilton, because she views "innocent" and "righteous" as synonymous when bloodshed is in view (see pp. 24 n. 64; 32 n. 1). Also, she does helpfully discuss variants at more length for some of the non-canonical literature.

Hamilton has succeeded in drawing attention to the theme of innocent blood in the interpretive world surrounding Matthew, and her argument deserves a hearing. More remains to be said about how both judgment and cleansing/restoration might somehow coalesce, but that would be the topic for another volume. Even where I have not been entirely convinced, I have been informed, stimulated, and challenged.

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Luke the Historian of Israel's Legacy, Theologian of Israel's 'Christ': A New Reading of the 'Gospel Acts' of Luke. By David Paul Moessner. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft 182. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2016, xiii + 373 pp., €121.45.

David Moessner, now Professor of Religion at Texas Christian University, is a luminary among North American interpreters of Luke-Acts. This volume gathers together and updates some of his most important essays over the past thirty or so years. This collection of essays is unified in that the essays represent some of Moessner's consistent concerns: to read Luke-Acts (hence, the "Gospel-Acts") as a unified whole, to situate Luke as a Hellenistic historian who employs Greco-Roman historical conventions, and to illuminate Luke's engagement with the Jewish Scriptures. Moessner suggests that his primary thesis "is that Luke's literary intentions emerge clearly when his two volumes are viewed through the narrative-rhetorical lenses of Greco-Roman literary theory and practice … [and that Acts is] an intended continuation of the *presence* and *impact* of Jesus of Nazareth of the Gospel volume" (p. 3; emphasis original). Luke is a Hellenistic historian, but he has also produced "the first 'biblical' theology precisely through his historiographical order of the overarching 'plan/counsel/will of God' now decisively fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth, Israel's 'Christ'" (p. 7).

The essays are divided into five parts. In part 1 ("Luke's 'Gospel Acts' and the Genre of the Gospels"), Moessner sets forth his argument that Luke's writings should be read together and that their genre is history not ancient biography. In his essay "How Luke Writes," he examines a variety of Lukan features that are characteristic of Hellenistic historiography, including mimicking biblical historiography, synchronisms, and an emphasis on the divine plan. He notes that the Gospel and Acts are separated canonically, and yet he suggests that there are inescapable features of the Gospel that point forward to Acts, such that "Church and Christ are inseparable; thus Acts is the only book of the New Testament that 'narrates' the ongoing presence of Christ in God's church and world" (p. 38).

In part 2 ("Luke's Prologues and Hellenistic Narrative Hermeneutics"), the reader is treated to two technical essays that examine Luke's prologue in the context of Hellenistic historiography. Two primary claims are advanced. First, Luke's use of the participle form of παρακολουθέω should not be understood as an assertion of having acquired knowledge but rather as an assertion that the author of the Gospel and of Acts "has the credentialed, authenticated knowledge to offer his own version of these 'matters' of consequence" (p. 67). Second, Luke's reference to καθεξῆς (e.g. Luke 1:3–4; Acts 11:4) is an attempt to portray himself as a narrative composer who rightly orders the larger plan of God. "In short, to read Luke's two-volumes καθεξῆς is to become narrato-logically informed or 'gain a firmer grasp of the true significance of those events of which you have been instructed' (Luke 1:4)" (pp. 122–23).

In part 3 ("Luke among Hellenistic Historians"), Moessner situates Luke among three Hellenistic historians (Polybius, Diodorus Siculus, and Dionysius of Halicarnassus) to illumine Luke's narrative poetics and the way he arranges his ma-

terial in order to emphasize his central concerns. For example, Moessner shows that both Polybius and Luke arrange their material in such a way that the reader can grasp the divine plan. For the former, this centers upon how the gods have ordained Rome to rule over the nations, whereas Luke leads "his readers to see how both the great power of the nations as well as the leaders of Messiah's own people cluster in historically unique ways to produce the crucifixion of Jesus" (p. 152). Moessner also notes how speeches function in Hellenistic historiography as a means of creating a harmonious and unified narrative for the reader. Luke's speeches provide a unity for the overarching plot. Moessner argues that Luke reworks the traditions he received by expanding upon them with his sequel, and this draws together "the world of Jesus' public words and deeds into the world of his followers by reframing the actions and teachings of his followers through the continuing acting and speaking of Jesus in their presence in the church" (p. 199). As a result, all of the discrete episodes of Acts are to be read through the lens of the suffering, crucified, and now enthroned Christ who rules over the church and world.

In part 4 ("Luke's *Theologia Crucis*. The Suffering Servant(s) of the Lord: Moses, David, the Suffering Righteous, and Jesus and 'All the Prophets'"), Moessner argues that the Gospel Acts conform to a basic plot, found in Israel's Scriptures, whereby God's plan is to accomplish his purposes through messengers/prophets/rulers who suffer, are rejected, and then vindicated. With reference to Jesus, this plot centers upon four movements working together to portray Jesus as a rejected prophet like Moses: (1) the current generation is stiff-necked and rebellious; (2) God has sent Jesus to bring his people to repentance; (3) the current generation rejects Jesus the prophet and kills him; and (4) God will bring judgment upon the people. A similar pattern makes sense of the well-known parallels in the characterization of Jesus, Peter, Stephen, and Paul. What is true for Jesus holds true for those who are his authentic witnesses; hence, the parallels should be understood as a Christological claim that brings further unity to Luke's writings. In addition, Moessner suggests that Luke's understanding of God's plan and the ensuing pattern (described above) are fleshed out by Luke from the Greek Psalter. Luke draws upon Psalms 15 and 109, as well as Joel 3, as a means of demonstrating the necessity of the Messiah's rejection and resurrection.

Finally, in part 5 ("Luke, the Church, and Israel's Legacy") Moessner turns to Luke's ecclesiology and suggests that Luke does not argue for a true or new Israel but rather an Israel that is split apart by the surprising work of the Messiah. In his words, "What we demonstrate … is that this very dynamic of growing opposition to Israel's Christ by Israel itself *is itself the means and modulation* of the very 'counsel of God'" (p. 289; emphasis original). This plan of God draws non-Jews into the people of God, while simultaneously holding out hope to unrepentant Jews, and this is consistent with Israel's prophetic traditions.

Moessner's volume ends with a substantive and updated reflection upon his broader argument that Luke is both a Hellenistic historian of Israel's history as well as a biblical theologian of Israel's Messiah. Students and scholars aware of some of Moessner's contributions will appreciate this conclusion for its substantive and

pithy summary of much of his life work. To summarize, Moessner emphasizes that Luke was well-versed with the literary and narrative techniques of Hellenistic historians, and he should take his rightful place with them as a premier Hellenistic historian whose topic is the history of Israel. However, he is also the first biblical theologian of Israel's Messiah, and his legacy is further found in his creative and clear arrangement of his traditions according to an overarching plan of God, a unified arrangement of plot, and an articulation of the central characters as suffering prophets.

I am greatly appreciative for the efforts of making Moessner's collected essays on Luke-Acts available in one volume. I have read many of Moessner's writings with profit, but I was unaware of a variety of his essays and reading them in one volume allows one to discern his particular contribution to NT scholarship. The technicality of the essays makes reading and digesting his careful work a challenging venture even for Lukan specialists. Yet I came away with a deeper understanding of Moessner's significant contribution to our understanding of the Lukan writings as Hellenistic historiography, the historical and rhetorical techniques that shape his material, as well as Luke's creative and reflective understanding of God's plan for Israel, his Messiah, and the church.

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A Commentary on the Gospel of John. By Johannes Beutler. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017, xv + 623 pp., $90.00.

The author (b. 1933) has been a major player in Johannine exegesis in recent decades. He was also a signatory of "Kirche 2011: Ein notwendiger Aufbruch [Church 2011: A Necessary Departure]," a document signed by over 300 German-speaking Roman Catholic leaders, demanding reforms in the Catholic church. The reforms called for include the end of mandatory celibacy for priests, admission of women to the priesthood, and affirmation of same-sex relations for practicing Catholics. This suggests a progressive hermeneutic for the book at hand. So does the index of names, which reveals that the major discussion partners are Jürgen Becker, Raymond Brown, Rudolf Bultmann, Michael Labahn, Francis Moloney, Rudolf Schnackenburg, Michael Theobald, Hartwig Thyen, and Jean Zumstein. Commentaries and viewpoints from outside this circle of research and conviction leave little to no footprint in the commentary. For example, while there is a single reference (on p. 544) to Richard Bauckham's *The Testimony of the Beloved Disciple* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), there is no mention of Bauckham's *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), much less to Craig Blomberg's extensive work on John's historicity (e.g. *The Historical Reliability of John's Gospel* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001]). Nor is there any reference to Charles Hill's groundbreaking study of Fourth Gospel historiography, *The Johannine Corpus in the Early Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

The historic church's understanding of the Fourth Gospel has viewed it as the apostle John's unique and unified recollection of who Jesus was, what he said and did, and who (as the risen Christ) he remains (pp. 21, 521). This commentary offers a reading that relates to the historic one at a considerable distance. "John" may be "an ideal figure" who did not exist as "a historical personality" at all (p. 544).

A sympathetic, indeed laudatory, account of the commentary is furnished by Francis Moloney (pp. ix–xii). Referring to a "Beutler-Schule," Moloney implies that Beutler is the doyen of European Johannine studies over the last fifty years. This commentary affords a valuable window into that era of Johannine scholarship in that vein.

In Beutler's view, the narrative structure of the Fourth Gospel follows certain journeys that the author chooses (or authors choose) to depict. This results in a sixfold division: "The Divine Word Enters the World" (1:1–4:54); "Jesus Reveals Himself to His People" (5:1–10:42); "Jesus on the Way to His Passion" (11:1–12:50); "Jesus Bids Farewell" (13:1–17:26); "Jesus's 'Hour': Passion, Death, and Resurrection" (18:1–20:31); and "Epilogue: Jesus, Peter, and the Beloved Disciple" (21:1–25).

Beutler disagrees with D. A. Carson's view that the purpose of John (see 20:31) is to elicit saving faith. It is rather "to encourage the readers to remain in their faith in Jesus" (p. 518). In choosing the present-tense variant (πιστεύητε) against Carson's preference for the aorist, Beutler claims to have "the majority of recent authors" on his side, and "Gordon D. Fee … now as well." Reference here is to an essay by Fee published in 1992. Terming 1992 "now" is a reminder that this commentary is a transcript of decades of research and reflection, not necessarily the fruit of interaction with the most recent publications and trends.

Following many commentators today, Beutler thinks the Fourth Gospel originally ended with chapter 20. He disagrees with Carson's view that "the content of the faith" that the Fourth Gospel calls for is "the fact that Jesus is the Messiah and Son of God. Among all the pretenders to the messianic and divine dignity, Jesus is the only man who deserves this title" (p. 518). In contrast, Beutler holds that "Jesus is Messiah/Christ," but only "in the sense that has already been developed" earlier in the Fourth Gospel, and especially in John 11:27 with Martha's words: "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world." Beutler's understanding of the redemption Jesus brought as depicted in the Fourth Gospel does not seem to be a propitiatory sacrifice to atone for sin sealed by his bodily resurrection (see, e.g., p. 479 on "the kernel of the message of Jesus": it is that he "brings news from the heart of God"). It is rather existential in nature: "True help for life is only possible when people are able to disengage themselves from fixation on the past and on what could have been" (p. 303). Reference here is to Lazarus's death and "what could have been" if Jesus had prevented it. Johannine salvation arrives when "the word and work of Jesus free people for life in the present moment" (p. 303). What about Jesus's storied pronouncement from the cross, "It is finished" (John 19:30)? Amazingly, Beutler offers no comment on what these words signify (p. 489). Instead, he immediately discusses what "he gave up the ghost/spirit" means and how the Fourth Gospel, here as often throughout the

narrative, is not recounting apostolic conviction but offering merely "a Johannine *relecture* of the Synoptic tradition" (p. 490).

Moloney explains (p. xi) that "*relecture* is not tradition-focused," which might leave room for apostolic or eyewitness recollection, "but text-focused." (*Relecture* may also be termed *Neulesung*, or "fresh reading" [p. 406]). Unknown (to us) readers of the Synoptics (or in some cases of earlier parts of the Fourth Gospel), perhaps ca. AD 100, reflected on the Synoptic or Fourth Gospel texts (not traditions) and compiled the account we know as the Gospel of John. For example, John 3:31–36 is a *relecture* of 3:22–30 (p. 108). We do not know the author(s), the time, the location, the audience, or much else about these re-readings (pp. 21–24). What we can say is that "any certainty must be eschewed" (p. 24). Presumably, that excludes the certainty that enables Beutler to eliminate the universal testimony to the apostle John's authorship that prevailed before the rise of Enlightenment skepticism.

The ties in this scenario between historical realities and events (highlighted in the Fourth Gospel) and the message of the Fourth Gospel are potentially quite meager. Not to worry: in a "literary-critical treatment of John's Gospel" like Beutler's, "the question of its message is more important than that of its author" (p. 23). This, of course, violates the author's repeated insistence (e.g. 1:14; 19:35; 21:24) that the message he bears grows out of the observed events and discourses to which he testifies. The Fourth Gospel narrative is replete with the author's depiction of others making the same realist claims: John the Baptizer, Jesus himself, the works Jesus performs, the Father, the Scriptures, the crowd who witnessed Lazarus's raising, and others.

It is possible to read the Fourth Gospel and gain the impression that the document confronts the reader with these numerous testimonies of facts and deeds in which inhere the cumulatively redemptive truth of Jesus's person and work, culminating in his redemptive death and resurrection. Yet Beutler holds that in the Fourth Gospel, "'testimony' refers not simply to the external deeds of a life" (as if the 'external deeds' to which the Fourth Gospel testifies like incarnation, Jesus's oneness with the Father, resurrection from the dead, and other astonishing claims were relatively minor matters) "but more to the dimension of revelation expressed in those external deeds" (p. 544). This facile separation of the kernel from the presumed husk would seem a perfect recipe for misconstruing the arresting and indeed often miraculous claims that the Fourth Gospel seems intent on presenting. In the Fourth Gospel, the external deeds (like the divine Word becoming observed flesh and dwelling among humans; 1:14) *are* the revelation. In Beutler's commentary, this is often diluted. For example, the Johannine prologue is the result of literary creativity (*relecture*; p. 49), not testimony to an event (the incarnation) vouchsafed by the prophet John the Baptizer (as John 1 insists) and by apostles like John son of Zebedee whom Jesus called, taught, and entrusted with a saving message enhanced by the ministry of the Paraclete (ESV "Helper": John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7).

To Beutler's credit, at junctures he conveys the Fourth Gospel's conviction that "seeing leads to believing" (p. 307). He does not outright dismiss the historicity of Lazarus's resuscitation: behind the account "could stand a healing miracle that was interpreted as the raising of a dead man, or a similar act of Jesus that was con-

sidered as such" (p. 308). Beutler is less inclined to favor a Greco-Roman history-of-religions background and more likely to look for OT parallels to explain Fourth Gospel emphases. For example, he connects Jesus's "lifting" and "glorification" in John 12 to Isa 52:13 LXX (p. 337). Yet the mutual indwelling of Jesus in his disciples and vice versa is paralleled in Philo's Hellenistic Judaism and has "no direct biblical precedents" (p. 400). "The death of Jesus is not described as a cosmic event" (p. 490), Beutler concludes, because in the Fourth Gospel, unlike in Matthew, there is no earthquake, the temple veil is not rent, and previously departed saints do not leave their tombs and appear in Jerusalem. Is it sound historical method to read the Fourth Gospel as denying the occurrence of everything the other Gospels depict in a different manner?

This erudite commentary will be of greatest value to scholars without access to the German original and to others desiring to track analysis of the Fourth Gospel by the academic community committed to the methods and assumptions Beutler's reading showcases.

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Johannine Ethics: The Moral World of the Gospel and Epistles of John. Edited by Sherri Brown and Christopher W. Skinner. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2017, xxxvi + 319 pp., $79.00.

This collection of essays is a welcomed contribution to Johannine studies, especially for those who have long disagreed with scholarship that denies ethical material to the Fourth Gospel. The contributors of thirteen chapters, a preface, introduction, and conclusion are: Cornelis Bennema, Sherri Brown, Jaime Clark-Soles, Raymond F. Collins, R. Alan Culpepper, Toan Do, Michael J. Gorman, Dorothy A. Lee, Francis J. Moloney, Alicia D. Myers, Adele Reinhartz, Christopher W. Skinner, and Lindsey Trozzo. These contributors take a refreshingly new approach to John's ethics, recognizing faith in Jesus Christ as the fundamental basis of John's moral worldview.

For decades there has been a consensus in Johannine scholarship that John's writings are devoid of ethical material beyond the too general command to love one another. This has been accompanied by a view that these writings are too sectarian, presuming an exclusive, negative, or oppositional stance toward all outside the Johannine communities (p. xxi). In the introduction, Christopher Skinner suggests that this stage of scholarship resulted from a "restricted definition" of what constitutes ethical material—a wrong-headed definition based exclusively on the letters of Paul and on Jesus's teaching in Matthew and Luke—as well as "limited imagination" (p. xviii) in reading the Fourth Gospel. This volume examines John's writings from the perspective that, "The ethics of the Johannine literature are broad, inclusive, or valuable for the construction of Christian ethics or moral theology" (p. xxv). This perspective recognizes the evangelist's understanding of the broad scope

of creation, the decalogue, and the trajectory of the covenant that informs his worldview.

A common theme among the essays is the unity of the Father and the Son as the basis of ethical definition along with belief in Christ as the essential Johannine ethical act from which other ethical imperatives flow. There are essays that engage in detail with the Johannine imperatives of believing, loving, and following, as well as a number of essays on the implied ethics of the Fourth Gospel.

In the first part of three in the book, entitled "The Johannine Imperatives," Sherri Brown views John's ethics through the imperative of becoming children of God, which invokes a thoroughgoing transformation of life and character. Christopher Skinner discusses the love command as found in the Farewell Discourse, showing that "John's vision of love is both local and universal" (p. 42). Raymond F. Collins sees Jesus's invitation to "follow me" as a life-giving ethical imperative "to walk the path of discipleship" marked by at least five points: to avoid evil; to accept Jesus as the source of a new way of life; to adopt the ethos of the flock of Jesus; to serve Jesus and others; and to feed the hungry (p. 62).

Part 2, "Implied Ethics in the Johannine Literature," leads off with senior Johannine scholar Alan Culpepper discussing the creation ethics of John's Gospel, based on the model of Jesus and "rooted in the work of the Logos in creation" (p. 89). This essay is not about stewardship of the earth but about how God's creation through Christ of all that there is informs John's ethical understanding. Jaime Clark-Soles reflects on love as embodied action from the perspective of ethics and incarnation, noting, "our ethical selves are inextricably intertwined with our embodied selves" (p. 91). This leads to an examination of John's Gospel from the perspective of disability studies and a warning that nondisabled readers need to see those impaired in the Gospel as nonetheless agents in the plot and not just morality lessons. Senior Johannine scholar Adele Reinhartz offers a provocative discussion of "The Lyin' King: Deception and Christology in the Gospel of John," as she explores the contradiction between Jesus's words to his brothers in John 7:8 about whether or not he will go to Jerusalem for Sukkoth and his later departure for the festival in 7:10. She admits her "rather contrarian contribution" to this collection of essays and insists that readers not become distracted by the ethical question this incident raises but see it instead as part of the author's rhetorically constructed Christological agenda. She observes, "By deceiving his brothers, John's Jesus draws attention to the christological controversy that took place at the feast, and underscores the truth: that he fulfills all Jewish messianic criteria, including that of the *hidden* messiah" (p. 132; emphasis added).

Part 2 continues with Michael Gorman presenting John's implicit ethic of enemy-love, even in the absence of any explicit command to love your enemies such as is found in the Synoptics. Rather, this command is implied in the Fourth Gospel's "presentation of God, the activity of Jesus, the love command, and the Spirit-empowered mission of the disciples" (p. 157). Alicia Myers instructively handles the age-old issue of "the Jews" from the perspective of ambiguity and empathy in John's Gospel, pointing out that the Johannine Jews "both believe and disbelieve Jesus's claims simultaneously" (p. 176). Using a narrative-critical approach, Toan

Do considers the invitation to "come and see" as fulfilled only by an ethic of love for Jesus with attendant ethical entailments. Senior Johannine scholar Francis Moloney offers his thoughts on God, eschatology, and "this world" ethics in John, showing that John's realized eschatology in the "in-between time" of life in this world is to be a life of loving one another "in actions that reflect … trust in the ultimate victory of God in and through the death and resurrection of Jesus" (p. 217).

The third part of the book, "Moving Forward" (pp. 221–86), presents Lindsey Trozzo's work on Johannine ethics in light of John's literary genre, comparing it to the *bios* genre of Plutarch's *Lives* and inviting us to consider the ethics implied "by attending to the rhetorical exchange between the author [of John's Gospel] and the audience" (p. 238). She explains "how the [original] audience might have appropriated the ethical presentation within the story," being familiar with similar contemporary literary genres of their day (p. 239). After discussing the theological framework of creation invoked by John 1:1, Dorothy Lee discusses an ethics of creation with stewardship implications, arguing that the material world is to be taken seriously by virtue of its creation by God (p. 254). She interprets the incarnation of the Word who became flesh more broadly than assumption of human flesh, arguing it forges "a vital connection between the Word and all living creatures" (p. 255). She reads the theological underpinnings of John's Gospel and John's frequent use of the neuter rather than the generic masculine to widen the scope of salvation to all creation (p. 255–56). Cornelis Bennema employs Greco-Roman virtue ethics heuristically as "a useful framework for understanding Johannine virtue ethics" (p. 262), which are primarily modeled through the personal example of Jesus and other characters such as Mary and Martha. His discussion is organized by the moral virtues that direct virtuous behavior (love, humility, loyalty, truthfulness, obedience, and courage; p. 280) and the intellectual virtues that inform virtuous thinking (perception, knowledge/understanding, remembrance, and belief; p. 281). The book concludes with an essay by Christopher Skinner and Sherri Brown entitled, "Moving the Conversation Forward—Johannine Ethics in Prospect." They suggest four areas of further research for those interested in pursuing the moral world of the Johannine literature: (1) Johannine ethics and the rhetoric of characterization in Greco-Roman biography (p. 283); (2) Johannine ethics and reception history (p. 284); (3) Johannine ethics, the history of the Johannine community, and social memory (p. 285); and (4) Johannine ethics versus other ethical systems in the thought world of early Christianity (p. 286). The book ends with an extensive bibliography and author index.

This book will be of greatest interest for those teaching or writing about Johannine literature, but the essays are also accessible for any serious and educated Bible reader. This volume represents a new generation of Johannine studies, moving beyond the decades-long focus on redactional history, reconstructed theories of the Johannine communities, and a narrowly sectarian evaluation of the Fourth

Gospel. As such, it is a stimulating and refreshing contribution to Johannine scholarship.

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Commentary on Romans. By David G. Peterson. Biblical Theology for Christian Proclamation. Nashville: Holman Reference, 2017, xxiii + 613 pp., $39.99.

This volume belongs to an ambitious new commentary series from B&H that will eventually cover the entire Protestant canon. The series title, "Biblical Theology for Christian Proclamation," encapsulates its three primary concerns. First, it seeks to understand each biblical book within its individual historical setting and in terms of its particular literary features. Second, it highlights each book's contributions to the larger theology of the Bible. In other words, the series works to negotiate the well-known tension within biblical theology between the particulars of individual writings and the synthesizing task of constructive biblical theology. Finally, the series aims to serve the needs of Christian proclamation and the life of the church. The base text for the series is the Christian Standard Bible (CSB). In this volume on Romans, Peterson occasionally provides his own translation and makes frequent reference to the Greek text. All quotations from Greek are followed by translations of that text into English.

A 29-page introduction discusses matters of character, structure and argument, purpose, continuing relevance, and outline. Peterson views Romans as a genuine letter to Christians in Rome, though one in which Paul brings substantive theological argumentation to bear upon divisions among followers of Christ from Jewish and Gentile backgrounds. Healing those divisions would not only serve Paul's apostolic ministry but would also enable him to gain the necessary support from Roman Christians for a future mission to Spain (Rom 15:28–29).

Peterson follows the introduction with a 49-page treatment of biblical and theological themes in Romans, setting the stage for his discussion of matters of biblical theology within the commentary proper. He strengthens this opening theological section by locating Paul's argument in Romans within an overarching narrative framework of Scripture as a whole. Rightly noting Paul's deep interaction with the OT, he states that Paul "wants to situate his readers within the unfolding story of God's engagement with humanity" (p. 31).

The commentary proper (pp. 81–554) breaks the letter down into fourteen major sub-units. The discussion of each sub-unit is prefaced by general introductory remarks, a reprint of the CSB text, and then comments on its context within Paul's argument and an explanation of its structure. The commentary itself proceeds along a verse-by-verse format, concluding with a brief "Bridge" component that summarizes theological findings regarding that section of text.

No one can write a commentary on Romans without stepping on someone's sensitive theological toe. So as with all commentaries on this letter, there will be points of agreement at which we commend the author and matters of disagreement

at which we scratch our heads in bewilderment. Rather than recount my own occasions for commendations and bewilderments, I offer a few brief comments about the tone of Peterson's exegesis.

First, Peterson refuses to be boxed in to one side of many interpretive debates. For example, he understands Paul's use of the first person singular in 7:7–11 as a rhetorical device whereby he speaks as Adam or as a representative of humanity in Adam's line. Yet he believes Paul senses the reality that what he says about humanity in Adam is true of him personally as well. In other words, the rhetorical function is primary, but it is not without personal overtones. Furthermore, Peterson nuances his understanding of the critical term "righteousness" depending on context rather than trying to find a singular referent throughout. Overall, as anyone familiar with Peterson's extensive work in biblical theology would expect, this is a Reformed reading of the letter. Yet Peterson remains his own exegete.

Second, I am pleased to see Peterson make good use of Steven E. Runge's *Discourse Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2010). Runge and others working in the field of cognitive linguists and NT Greek are making helpful advances in our understanding of how the language functions. Other commentators would benefit by following Peterson's lead in this regard.

Finally, Peterson argues for his conclusions carefully, consistently discussing opposing arguments along the way. Yet in dealing with positions other than his own, he remains generous to those with whom he disagrees. The care with which he articulates his understanding of the theological argument of the letter plus the fairness and grace with which he treats those who disagree with him will make this a volume scholars and pastors will want on their shelf.

The major contribution of this volume lies in Peterson's understanding of the letter's argumentative structure. In the introduction (pp. 10–19), Peterson describes an approach articulated in an unpublished paper by Grant S. Nichols and Richard J. Gibson. Nichols and Gibson depend in part upon Thomas H. Tobin, *Paul's Rhetoric in Its Contexts: The Argument of Romans* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2004). Fundamentally, this approach works on the basis of four literary factors in the letter: *alternation, refrain, progression/digression*, and *recursion*. Its ability to explain Paul's argument in its entirety in non-customary ways warrants an extended description.

Alternation refers to Paul's pattern of moving back and forth between confirming his gospel and then defending his gospel in the face of challenges based on concerns from Jews. The defensive/argumentative sections rely heavily upon quotations from Jewish Scriptures; the expository/confirming sections do not. This explains the puzzling feature of Romans whereby some sections of the letter contain dense clusters of quotations from the OT while other portions have few quotations if any.

Refrain concerns the repeated phrase "through our Lord Jesus Christ" or simply "in Christ Jesus our Lord." These phrases function as formal boundary markers from 5:1 to 15:6, separating confirmatory from defensive sections of Paul's argument. Reading Romans in this manner indicates that the alternation continues beyond the traditional "theological" argumentation ending at 11:36 into the exhortations dominating 12:1–15:13. Within this pattern, 12:1–13:14 function as part of

Paul's confirmation of his gospel, while in 14:1–15:7 Paul defends his gospel against Jewish objections.

Progression/Digression describes a further pattern working within the *Alternation* framework. *Progression* refers to how Paul develops his confirmation of his gospel in linear fashion. Thus, the second expository section (3:21–26) builds upon and goes beyond his argument in the first (1:18–32). In all, Peterson (and apparently Nichols and Gibson; here they disagree with Tobin) see six confirmation sections, sections that can be read as one continuous whole (1:18–32; 3:21–26; 5:1–11; 6:1–23; 8:1–39; 12:1–13:13). *Digression* describes how each defensive section picks up some aspect of the preceding expository section in order to counter possible objections. For example, 2:1–3:20 takes off from Paul's explanation of God's wrath in 1:18–32 in order to show that Jews and Gentiles alike are subject to this wrath.

Finally, *recursion* describes an overarching chiasm uniting 1:18–13:14. Romans 6 stands at the center of this chiasm. Romans 6:1–11 describes how those "in Christ" have moved from death to life. In doing so, it summarizes the first three expository sections of the letter. Romans 6:15–23 tells of the Christian's freedom from slavery to sin, thus setting the stage for the remaining sections of exposition. Romans 6:12–14 links both parts of the letter within its own mini-chiasm. In this manner, Romans 6 serves as the turning point in Paul's argument, transitioning from his explanation of God's justification of sinful human beings to his description of their justified, renewed position in relation to God.

Thus, Peterson draws the line for the larger contours of Paul's theological argument in Romans in places other than the traditional justification (chaps. 1–4), sanctification (chaps. 5–8), and so on. Furthermore, the customary major division between the argumentative discourse of 1:18–11:36 and the exhortations of 12:1–15:13 becomes displaced. This volume becomes the first commentary to reread the letter within, dare I say, this new perspective on Romans. In doing so it sets the stage for further exploration of Romans along these lines as well as an assessment of this approach as a whole.

In summary, this is a responsible upper mid-level commentary along Reformed lines. Given the difficulties faced by any commentator of Romans plus the aggressive goals for the series, this volume accomplishes its stated purpose well.

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Commentary on 1–2 Timothy and Titus. By Andreas J. Köstenberger. Biblical Theology for Christian Proclamation. Nashville: Holman Reference, 2017, xxviii + 605 pp., $39.99.

First Timothy, Second Timothy, and Titus are frequently, and collectively, referenced as the Pastoral Epistles, because in them Paul gives instructions concerning how Timothy and Titus are to provide spiritual care to their respective churches. So goes the normal preview for the so-called Pastoral Epistles. Yet they

were not always referenced as such. In fact, the "Pastoral Epistles" title is usually attributed to D. N. Berdot and P. Anton Halle, both from the 1700s.

This fact is not lost to Andreas J. Köstenberger, who purposefully references the triad as Paul's Letters to Timothy and Titus at the onset to his *Commentary on 1–2 Timothy and Titus*. His reason for this is subtle and strategic: to view the books as simply and exclusively pastoral "sets off these epistles from the other ten Pauline letters rather than viewing them as part of the Pauline body of writings at large" (pp. 6–7). In many ways, this philosophy leads to his thesis that the Letters to Timothy and Titus "primarily aim to equip individuals who were dispatched by the apostle to establish and maintain proper church governance in conjunction with the false teaching in Ephesus and Crete" (p. 1).

The strengths of this commentary are many, including its organization. At a broad scale, Köstenberger presents his material in three divisions: (1) introductory matters (pp. 1–54); (2) exposition of 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus (pp. 55–356); and (3) themes (pp. 357–544). The final pages of the commentary provide a helpful bibliography and accessible indexes.

Köstenberger opens his introduction by acknowledging that the Letters to Timothy and Titus have recently fallen on hard times due to concerns regarding Pauline authorship. The dominant charge of pseudepigraphy occurs because of the non-Pauline vocabulary occurring in these letters. However, other accusations regarding style, syntax, and advanced ecclesiastical progression have been presented. To these, Köstenberger argues "there is good reason to believe these letters culminate Paul's apostolic ministry, seeking to perpetuate his legacy and to ensure the continuity of faithful gospel ministry to subsequent generations" (p. 1).

In many ways, he establishes his argument for Pauline authorship by addressing distinct areas, the first of which surrounds the NT role of Timothy and Titus (outside the Letters to Timothy and Titus) and the general chronology of Paul's life. This leads him to the traditional position that these letters were written in the time after the conclusion of the events of Acts but before Paul's death. He would propose that the Letters to Timothy and Titus were written between AD 62–65.

He then addresses the historical context of these letters. He concludes that one must understand both the false teachers and the emissaries (Timothy and Titus) to comprehend the purpose for the presented content. The false teachers, in both Ephesus and Crete, are familiar with the law, and are even referred to as the "circumcision party" (Titus 1:10). Paul's polemic is likely to remind the audience not to associate with such false teachers. Instead, they are encouraged, by insinuation, to follow Timothy and Titus. That is why Köstenberger argues that the Letters to Timothy and Titus "are written to coworkers who hardly need to be told what the false teaching is they're combating" (p. 36).

Köstenberger next turns his attention to literary analysis and structure; specifically, the areas of genre, literary integrity, vocabulary, and preformed traditions. In this section he concludes that the genre and literary integrity demonstrate that each letter is cohesive, displaying careful order, structure, and content. While true, it would have benefited the reader to see each letter's cohesion in relationship to the background audience (i.e. the opponents). It seems that this is at times overlooked.

For example, on occasion he will miss possible, and purposeful, organized content that directly relates to his own thesis (i.e. "contend with false teachers"). In his section addressing the occasion and purpose of 1 Timothy, he states, "While chapters 1 and 4–6 are concerned primarily with the challenge of the false teachers, chapters 2–3 focus on general ecclesiastical matters" (p. 56). It seems likely, or at least plausible, that the content in 1 Timothy 2 (instruction on worship) is directly tied to the dissention sown by the false teachers who promote controversial speculation (1:4). Likewise, 1 Timothy 3 (qualifications for overseers and deacons) is not simply about ecclesiastical matters. Instead, such qualifications are best understood in light of the false teachers, who did not embody such characteristics and thus fail in their quest to be teachers (1:7). However, such oversights are minor. After a succinct analysis of vocabulary, he then articulates the utilization of preformed traditions in the Letters to Timothy and Titus. This topic, an area of great interest to me, demonstrates the importance of traditional material to the purpose of the letter—"an often overlooked element in the debate regarding authenticity of these letters" (p. 54).

The largest section in the commentary constitutes the exposition of the letters themselves. At the beginning of each, Köstenberger identifies a clear argument for the occasion and purpose of the writing, reminds the reader of the lurking "opponents," and also presents the structure (outline) of the letter itself. This coverage of material is often confined to the introduction in most commentaries. It is very helpful to have such material in direct correlation to the exposition of each epistle—another well-thought-out strategy to keep the reader on point in regard to the overall message of each book.

The exposition itself is written in traditional style, with a chapter-and-verse, section-by-section, presentation that adheres to the argued outline of the letter. However, two points are a highlight. First, throughout the course of the commentary Köstenberger instigates a most helpful pattern. Each structured section of the biblical text is followed by a unit entitled "Relation to Surrounding Context." This segment is most helpful to the reader in that it contextualizes the flow of material. After each analysis (commentary), the author employs a section called "Bridge." In essence this material summarizes the previous section, connects it to the larger argumentation, and presents pastoral insights. These nuggets help the reader to avoid becoming bogged down, or even lost, in technical minutiae.

A second strength in the expositional section relates to the sheer attestation and engagement with sources. The commentary is packed full of footnotes that address details, exegetical insights, studies of further interest, and a variety of additional information that will feed the interest of both the serious scholar and the mid-level student. Furthermore, this material is carefully crafted and printed so as to avoid confusing the primary message contained within the commentary proper.

The final section of the book addresses various themes contained within the letters. This is without question a strength of the commentary. Indeed, it is where Köstenberger's years of scholarship shine. For in this work he challenges the reader to reflect on the Letters to Timothy and Titus biblically and theologically. His goal is succinct— to focus "on the theological convictions held by the author (whom I

believe to be the apostle Paul) expressed by his distinctive vocabulary and thematic emphasis in these letters" (p. 358).

This section addresses themes such as mission, teaching, the church, and the Christian life. Not only does it revisit significant texts within the Letters to Timothy and Titus, but it explicitly relates such discussions to the Pauline corpus, the NT, and the Bible as a whole. This portion of the commentary is practical, insightful, and full of grace, in ways that frequently challenge the pastor-scholar to think holistically about ministerial labors. As the concluding section, it is a fitting send-off for a work that will certainly be a go-to source for those serious about studying the Letters to Timothy and Titus.

Köstenberger's presentation coheres with the purpose of the Biblical Theology for Christian Proclamation series—an ambitious project aimed at producing works that use technical skill to connect individual books and collections of letters, with the message of the canon as a whole. The reality is that many commentaries today focus on tangential matters. This leads readers away from the biblical writer's contribution to the Bible's overarching story, the results of which are confusion at best and substitution of peripheral concerns for the primary message at worst. To miss the contribution of any biblical book to redemptive history is tragic. It produces side-street theology. The architects of the series should be applauded for an approach intent on helping the reader stay on the thoroughfare and "connect the dots" regarding why biblical material is in the text, how this material adds to the message of an individual book, and how it relates to the grand message of God's Word. Köstenberger has not failed in helping us to that end. On the contrary, he has excelled at it.

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The Letter to the Hebrews: A Commentary for Preaching, Teaching, and Bible Study. By Jon C. Laansma. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2017, xxi + 353 pp., $44.00 paper.

Jon Laansma is Associate Professor of Greek and NT at Wheaton College and Graduate School. I will first summarize the key points of his commentary and then discuss its strengths and weaknesses and its place in the field. In his discussion of introductory matters (pp. 1–48), Laansma views the genre of Hebrews as a sermon with an epistolary ending. The author, the audience, and the date of Hebrews cannot be determined with certainty, but the author was a highly literate male who probably wrote in the AD 60s to a church in Rome. The author is deeply rooted in the apostolic teaching, which he is faithfully developing. At the same time, he is articulating some important truths that were only implicit in the apostles' teaching (e.g. the high priesthood of Christ; p. 10).

The audience consists of both Jews and Gentiles, and they are experiencing difficulty in their perseverance both in approaching God with confidence and urgency and in maintaining the life of fellowship because of persecution. The preacher's pastoral strategy in addressing the recipients is to help them find themselves in

the salvation story of Israel, which has its culmination in the Son. The overarching theme of Hebrews is the story of the Abrahamic covenant progressing toward the final goal of entering the presence of the God of Israel. There will be a literal fulfillment of the historical promise of God to Abraham, which involves the inheritance of the world and all nations being blessed through him. Since this was the purpose of God's creation, the history of Israel is the history of humanity. God's promise to Abraham was elaborated in the Mosaic covenant, which dramatically enacted the entrance into God's holy presence through its cultic practices in the tabernacle (p. 13).

In the commentary proper (pp. 49–335), there are 37 units, each of which is divided into five parts: (1) context (an outline is frequently provided for the readers to see the logical flow of thought); (2) background; (3) comments on wording (commentary on selected phrases and clauses contained within each unit); (4) comments on theological terms; and (5) helpful guides for teaching Hebrews. I will highlight just a few points from the commentary proper.

Laansma argues that since Jesus is identified with God, whose glory appeared to Moses (cf. 1:3), the Son is what Moses saw when God showed him "the pattern" on the mountain (8:5; p. 90). Therefore, when Moses built the tabernacle, he was visualizing Christ's high priestly work. The Mosaic covenant and all its rituals are not only the copies and shadows of the things to come, but also copies and shadows of what had preceded it—Christ's heavenly high priesthood.

Concerning the warning passages in Hebrews, Laansma feels that there is a "strong assurance of participation in salvation coupled with its equally strong warnings against apostasy" (p. 91). Interpreters are tempted to resolve this tension by emphasizing divine sovereignty and preservation at the expense of human responsibility for perseverance or vice versa. Laansma stresses that Hebrews itself does not attempt to reduce the tension and warns against turning a word of assurance into complacency and a word of warning into fears and sorrow (p. 91). However, he concludes that many who experience genuine salvation will not persevere in their faith to attain final salvation (pp. 144–45).

The resting place that the author of Hebrews exhorts the readers to strive to enter is none other than the presence of the holy God, which is "extensively the Most Holy Place" (p. 108). So, for Laansma, heaven is "coterminous with the Most Holy Place of the heavenly tabernacle (e.g., 8:1–2; 9:24)" (p. 119). Then Laansma remarks that the place where the heavenly atonement takes place is Christ's earthly cross (p. 120).

This commentary has many fresh insights. For example, Laansma portrays Hebrews as presenting a bird's-eye view of the history of humanity from the beginning of creation to the end and drawing the readers into its story. In this story, God makes a promise to Abraham about entering into his resting place, which is his own presence. He fulfills this promise by sending his Son to join humanity and provide atonement for them as their high priest and sacrifice. Moses's covenant was fashioned after the original covenant, which is the promise to Abraham (p. 185).

This commentary also rightly draws attention to the strong emphasis in Hebrews on the centrality and deity of Jesus Christ in Hebrews: "What Hebrews makes clearer than perhaps any NT writing is that the gospel *is* Christ in the OT and the OT in Christ" (p. 68). Laansma is insistent that the divine and eternal Son, Jesus Christ, is not only the center of Hebrews but the origin and the goal of human history. In connection with this, Laansma repeatedly emphasizes that the pattern shown to Moses (8:5) is nothing other than the Son himself. Thus, the Mosaic covenant is not only a copy and shadow of the new covenant, but it is also patterned after (or an antitype of) the type (pre-existent Christ, God the Son). So, the true tabernacle preceded Moses's, casting its shadow down from heaven and back from the Son, and its history overarched the whole of time (9:12, 14, 26; p. 14). Thus, the entire history, focused on the tabernacle, is the history of the Son, and the readers are invited to participate in it. Laansma states that "the covenant is the inner basis of the cosmos and the cosmos the external basis of the covenant" and that "the temple is the center of the world and the world's history is bound up with it" (p. 188).

Laansma is also helpful in pointing out that in Hebrews all of the OT rituals are summed up in the one high priestly sacrifice of the Son, and that is why it frequently conflates OT ritual imagery. For example, Hebrews 9 merges the Day of Atonement rite with various rituals (cf. vv. 12–13) to signify full access (p. 208).

Granted that the commentary has chosen not to include technical discussions and competing views on debated passages, some of his interpretations would have benefited from more explanation, especially when his view is not commonly shared by other commentators. Here are some examples: the church was of mixed ethnic character—the invisibility of the Gentiles is "part of the larger absorption of the audience into the 'heavenly' story of the promise" (p. 9); the heavenly things in need of purification mentioned in 9:23 are the people of God (p. 222); reverting to Judaism is not a concern the author had for the audience: "[Hebrews'] exhortations concentrate altogether on the reluctance of the people to move *forward* in this approach, and not at all on a danger of reverting to anything (the synagogue or temple)" (p. 125). Taking an Arminian interpretation of the warning passages with little refutation of the Reformed view is another example.

This commentary is not highly technical. Rather, it dispenses with technical asides and goes straight to the text in its historical, literary, and theological settings. References to primary and secondary sources are kept to a minimum. It is geared towards pastors, teachers, and students. The intended reader is someone who is a motivated reader who wants a specialist to "get straight to the bottom line with each passage" (p. xiii). It takes a rather unique place among commentaries on Hebrews in its focus on the Christological and covenantal aspects of salvation history instead of exegetical details.

Overall, it is a practical and helpful commentary for ordinary believers including students and pastors in understanding, applying, and teaching the letter to the Hebrews. It helps them to see the big picture of the Bible's entire redemptive history from the creation to the final outcome as drawn by the author of Hebrews. In doing so, it enables readers to see their place in this story, inviting them to partici-

pate in it with a sense of gratitude for what Christ has accomplished for them and a sense of urgency for their need of faithful obedience to God's call to draw near to him.

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Levitical Sacrifice and Heavenly Cult in Hebrews. By Benjamin J. Ribbens. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft 222. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2016, xvii + 297 pp., €93.41.

Of the many recent books written about the atonement and work of Jesus, *Levitical Sacrifice and Heavenly Cult in Hebrews*, a revision of Benjamin J. Ribbens's doctoral dissertation submitted to Wheaton College, stands out as a distinct contribution. Ribbens's work is not about the sacrifice of Christ primarily but instead about the function of the cultic system within the argument of Hebrews.

Ribbens begins his work with a discussion of previous scholarship on the "Efficacy of Levitical Sacrifice Compared to Christ's Sacrifice in Hebrews" (chap. 1). He first recognizes two "tensions" presented in these prior studies: (1) If the author of Hebrews "patterns" the sacrifice of Christ after Levitical sacrifices and yet presents these sacrifices to be insufficient at best and deeply flawed at worst, then the author might be said to "saw off the branch on which [he] is sitting or supported" (p. 3, quoting A. J. M. Wedderburn). (2) If the author of Hebrews relies substantially on the LXX for his argument and yet presents the sacrificial system inconsistently or incorrectly, then the author "either ignored certain parts of the Pentateuch's descriptions of the sacrifices, did not fully understand them, or manipulated them to present a negative view of Judaism and the superiority of Christianity" (p. 5). After presenting these tensions, Ribbens summarizes several previous proposals for alleviating them, which includes an extended discussion of scholarship that claims that the old and new covenants have different types of cleansing in view (e.g. social purity as opposed to cleansing from sins; p. 8). These tensions, though overstated in the work of many, are indeed present in the text, according to Ribbens's evaluation, and thus, in the remainder of this chapter, he presents an outline of the approach to follow.

Chapter 2, "Sacrifice Theology in Second Temple Judaism," describes sacrifice, or more specifically "sacrificial efficacy" (p. 20), in Second Temple literature more broadly, the work of Philo of Alexandria, and Qumran literature. Ribbens examines several trends within this corpus, offering a broader discussion of sacrifice in conjunction with the readings of the Pentateuch and Prophets that they provide. This chapter is presented thematically, which contrasts with the next, "Heavenly Cult in Second Temple Judaism" (chap. 3), which is organized around specific texts from the same era.

The fourth chapter, "Heavenly Tabernacle and Cult in Hebrews," begins by presenting Ribbens's views on typical contextual issues within Hebrews scholarship (e.g. author, date, provenance) and then transitions into a discussion of the major

conceptual background at work in the author's presentation of the heavenly tabernacle. Ribbens first shows his hand revealing his preference for an apocalyptic view that exhibits "pre-*Merkabah* tendencies" (p. 119, quoting Hurst). In the following section, Ribbens argues this point, claiming that the author's background is not Platonic or Philonic, even though some have argued that Hebrews contains *terminus technicus* from these frameworks. As noted, he thinks that the author is likely relying more heavily on Jewish apocalypticism, since in Hebrews and apocalyptic Jewish texts "the heavenly sanctuary is not simply characterized by the spatial distinction between heaven and earth, but it possesses a temporal aspect as well" (p. 94). After further deliberation on the text's background, Ribbens proceeds to a discussion of several key passages in Hebrews where the author describes an aspect of the heavenly cult. Though Ribbens addresses a number of significant matters here, he returns to some of the most salient issues in later portions of the study. In the final sections of this chapter, Ribbens highlights some of the distinctives of Christ's sacrifice, such as its singularity and finality.

Chapter 5, "Old Covenant Sacrifices," offers a discussion of what the old covenant sacrifices were and were not able to accomplish according to Hebrews. Here Ribbens engages with the Pentateuchal sources of the author and evaluates proposals regarding various issues, such as which sacrifices the author references with the Greek terms δῶρα and θυσίαι. As the chapter progresses, he argues that "the author identifies levitical sacrifices as *for sins*, which suggested the effects of atonement and forgiveness" (p. 160, italics his). They likewise "are the model for Christ's sacrifices" and "commanded by God" (p. 161). The author's presentation of Levitical sacrifices with these characteristics leads Ribbens to conclude that they have a "positive function" in Hebrews (p. 163); however, this alone does not account for the full picture presented within the epistle. The next section of this chapter addresses "What the Old Covenant Sacrifices Did Not Accomplish." Ribbens begins by discussing three "salvific goods" not offered: "(1) access to God, (2) perfection, and (3) redemption" (p. 163). For each, he works through a relevant portion of Hebrews 9 and then extends his examination to Hebrews as a whole. In this portion of the chapter, Ribbens summarizes different views of "perfection" and concludes that this language from the τελ- stem also refers to "access to God." In the rest of the chapter, he discusses other "critical statements" made by the author of Hebrews about the Levitical cult—for example, their "inability … to purify the conscience" (p. 193), "annual reminder of sins" (p. 196), and failure to "take away sins"—that is, offer full redemption (p. 202).

Chapter 6, "New Covenant Sacrifices," offers the other side of the coin. Here Ribbens discusses what the new covenant sacrifice of Jesus is said to accomplish. In a sense, this chapter functions as a summary for the book as a whole since Ribbens has already addressed many (most?) of its topics. This is not to say that the chapter does not contribute to the study; instead, it provides readers with explicit observations about the sacrifice of Christ and ultimately gives a remarkably succinct synthesis of Christ's work in Hebrews. The conclusion of this study returns to the proposals presented in the introduction and evaluates them in light of Ribbens's

findings. This brief chapter is followed by an appendix on "Perfection in Second Temple Literature and the New Testament."

Levitical Sacrifice is successful in a number of important ways. Ribbens does indeed offer a comprehensive picture of old covenant sacrifice in Hebrews and provides a convincing argument for that picture being primarily positive. His exegesis is sound, and the writing is clear and engaging. He integrates secondary literature well, attending to previous positions but offering plenty of fresh insights.

Therefore, as it should be with the portrait of sacrifice in Hebrews, the reader should glean a positive function for Ribbens's work, despite the fact that this review will now provide some critical statements. First, the discussion of perfection as "access to God" is not, in my view, entirely convincing. The strengths of this proposal are: (1) the desire to offer a consistent definition of perfection; and (2) the demonstration of clear links between perfection and access to God. However, what Ribbens does not do adequately is demonstrate that these two concepts are one and the same. Further, as Ribbens notes, Heb 9:9 "creates some difficulty." This verse reads, "This is an illustration for the present time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear [τελειῶσαι] the conscience of the worshiper" (NIV). Ribbens argues that the worshiper is given access "with respect to" the conscience (pp. 177–78), but I think this potential objection is not adequately addressed. Rather than equating perfection and access to God, I would argue that perfection enables access to God, which is why these two concepts are so often linked. (I agree with David Moffitt's proposal that perfection refers to "resurrection life"—a proposal not found in Ribbens's discussion; see *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection in the Epistle to the Hebrews* [Leiden: Brill, 2011]).

A second concern is the lack of integration between the Second Temple literature and Hebrews. As mentioned above, chapters 2 and 3 provide excellent summaries of "sacrifice theology" and the "heavenly cult" during this time period, but no connections to Hebrews are made within these chapters. At first read, I anticipated extended connections to this material in chapter 4, but only brief references were made without much to remind the reader of the previous discussion. Some anticipation of the discussion to follow would allow readers to think through the implications for Hebrews. These representative concerns should not dissuade one from engaging thoroughly with the work of Benjamin Ribbens. Though the chapters are highlighted in my critique, Ribbens's work on Second Temple literature provides useful background and introduction as well as thorough examinations of the passages in question. This study is a resource to which I will return often.

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Godly Fear or Ungodly Failure? Hebrews 12 and the Sinai Theophanies. By Michael Harrison Kibbe. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft 216. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2016, xiv + 286 pp., €93.41.

Godly Fear or Ungodly Failure?—Michael Kibbe's Wheaton Ph.D. dissertation—is a fitting addition to de Gruyter's respected BZNW series. This study explores the relationship between Israel's response to the Sinai Theophany in Heb 12:18–22 and the description of that response in Exodus and Deuteronomy.

Kibbe contends that Heb 12:19 has reinterpreted Israel's Sinai request that Moses mediate God's word. That request was an act of rebellion on a par with the golden calf incident or the disobedience at Kadesh. Three main arguments support this assertion: (1) the same Greek word is used for "reject" in Heb 12:25 and for "beg" in Heb 12:19 (παραιτέομαι); (2) Heb 12:18–22 has merged wilderness disobedience (12:25) and standing before Sinai into one reality; and (3) the description of Moses as trembling and afraid in 12:21 is taken from his fear after the golden calf incident in Deut 9:19. Hebrews, however, makes this critique in light of the direct access to God available under the new covenant. Israel's request for Moses to mediate God's word was rebellion not only because it did not lead to subsequent obedience, but especially because it was a request not to enter God's presence, as God had intended.

Do the OT descriptions of Exodus and Sinai provide any basis for this reinterpretation? Kibbe finds a trajectory running from Exodus through Deuteronomy via the new covenant in Jeremiah to fulfillment of that covenant in Hebrews. In Exodus God approves of the people's request for Moses as mediator. It was God's intention to establish Moses in order to sustain their obedience. In Deuteronomy the request is still positive, but the shadow of subsequent disobedience so characterized by what took place with the golden calf and at Kadesh has begun to fall upon that request. Deuteronomy is conscious that the people who stood before Sinai will not keep the commitment to obedience made in conjunction with their request for a mediator, and thus God will ultimately provide a new deliverance for them. Thus, Deuteronomy points to the new covenant.

The use of Exodus and Deuteronomy in 1:1–12:17 prepares for 12:18–29. The expository parts of Hebrews use Exodus to show: (1) how a covenant is established; and (2) the inferiority of the old covenant. The hortatory sections use Deuteronomy to show: (1) how a covenant is maintained through obedience; and (2) how the old covenant was insufficient to maintain obedience. In Deuteronomy, God's people stand both on the threshold of entering their inheritance and before the mountain of God. Deuteronomy's pessimism about perseverance under the old covenant pointed to God's future restoration in the new covenant of Jeremiah now fulfilled, according to Hebrews, in Jesus. "So we may say that where Hebrews stands at odds with the old covenant and its entailments, *it does so alongside Deuteronomy itself*" (p. 135, italics his).

Kibbe then turns to 12:18–29. First, he argues that the hearers "have not come to" Sinai because that covenant was, according to Exodus, inferior and, according to Deuteronomy, inadequate to maintain obedience. They have, however,

come to "Mount Zion and a City of the living God, heavenly Jerusalem" (12:21), because it is another name for the place already described in Hebrews as the site of the Son's enthronement, the "rest" of the people of God, the "City" sought by the faithful, and the sanctuary where our high priest has taken his seat at the right hand of God's throne. Thus, when Hebrews brings the subsequent disobedience of Israel (12:25) into the description of their standing before Sinai in 12:18–21, it is following Deuteronomy's lead. In light of the access to God available through the new covenant, Hebrews goes a step further and brands Israel's request for a mediator as a rebellious rejection of the access to God available for them.

Kibbe is to be commended for a well-written piece of scholarship that contains helpful insights into Hebrews. His integration of the Son's deity into his saving adequacy is to be commended, especially in light of recent studies that have minimized the importance of this subject. His identifying the "inhabited world" in which the Son is enthroned (1:6), the inheritance of God's people (1:14), the "rest" of chapters 3–4, the heavenly sanctuary of chapters 5–10, and the "City" of chapter 11 with the "Zion" of 12:18–29 is well argued. He recognizes the contextual appropriateness of each of these descriptions. His suggestion that "Zion" is not "quite" the ultimate dwelling place of God, that it is the "seed" or the "prototype" that will spill over and encompass a renewed heaven and earth at Christ's return, is worthy of consideration. His surveys of the way OT scholarship has evaluated Israel's request for a mediator in Exodus, Deuteronomy, and Second Temple literature are very helpful.

However, I find his main thesis unconvincing. First, the evidence is insufficient to prove that Hebrews condemns Israel's request for a mediator. It is clear that the people described in 12:18–21 as standing before Sinai are guilty. After all, their rebellion at Kadesh has already been used as the premier example of apostasy. However, the writer does not mention their request for a mediator, only their request that God speak no further. He does this to underscore what 12:18–21 has been emphasizing, the separation of sinful people from a holy God. Second, there is nothing in the context that suggests this request was a rejection of divinely-intended direct intimacy with God. Hebrews makes it clear that the old covenant was inferior because it did *not* provide such intimacy (e.g. 9:1–10). Finally, Hebrews nowhere suggests that Moses's mediation was improper. He is the "steward" over God's house who, by establishing the old covenant, bore witness to what God would reveal in his Son (3:1–6).

Kibbe's exploration of Hebrews as in the Deuteronomic tradition of Sinai reenactments is helpful. By these (often literary) reenactments the people were once again brought before Sinai. He acknowledges that coming to Zion in 12:22–24 cannot be simply another such "reenactment" because the new covenant is now in force. However, it is crucial to realize that 12:22–24 is not a true "reenactment" but a "fulfillment." This "Zion" does not have to be "reenacted" because it is an ever-present reality always available, particularly in worship, to those who "draw near" through their Great High Priest. Kibbe is also too quick to affirm that Christ's sacrifice was the offering of his blood in heaven. Hebrews 10:5–10 identifies his sacri-

fice closely with his incarnate obedience. Nowhere does Hebrews say that Christ "offered" his blood.

The evidence Kibbe presents for the sinful condition of those standing before Sinai in 12:18–21, the same people who are the paradigm of unfaithfulness in chapters 2–4, supports the idea that they represent the situation/destiny of the unfaithful. In 12:18–21 we have the situation/destiny of those who do not persevere; in 12:22–24, of those who do. Christ's fulfilling the Sinai covenant has provided the salvation that it anticipated for the faithful (12:22–24), but it has exacerbated that covenant's condemnation on the unfaithful (12:18–21). Hebrews's pastoral strategy regularly combines warning with encouragement.

The footnotes in this book are insightful. See, for example, note 114 on page 136: "We might say that Exodus hints at the *possibility* of a new covenant and Deuteronomy proclaims the *need* for a new covenant, but only Jeremiah offers the *reality* of a new covenant" (emphasis original). If I might end playfully, note 28 on page 190 reads, "I am certain that the progression of touch-sight-hearing in Heb 12:18–21 was pointed out to me in a commentary, but I have been unable to relocate the source." Perhaps it was Gareth Lee Cockerill, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 647: "With the two participles he [the author of Hebrews] appeals to his hearers' sense of touch; with the three unqualified nouns, to their sense of sight; and with the two final qualified nouns, to their sense of hearing."

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What Christians Ought to Believe: An Introduction to Christian Doctrine Through the Apostles' Creed. By Michael F. Bird. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2016, 239 pp., $24.99.

Michael Bird is an evangelical Anglican and lecturer in theology at Ridley College in Australia. Although his primary area of research is NT studies, Bird has also engaged in systematic theology in his book *Evangelical Theology: A Biblical and Systematic Introduction* (Zondervan, 2013). While his Australian context does come through in the book, Bird also intentionally discusses issues that are relevant to North American and European contexts in order to engage those audiences.

Drawing on the liturgical influence of his Anglican tradition, in *What Christians Ought to Believe*, Bird recommends the Apostles' Creed to evangelical Christians as a means of introducing Christian doctrine. Given this creedal focus, he challenges committed biblicists to consider the role of tradition for informing Christian doctrine. Explicitly, he begins with two chapters that attempt to convince evangelicals of the value of the historic Christian creeds, given those creeds' biblical foundations, their important role in the history of the church, and their value for Christian unity and invigorating one's faith. Bird may have strengthened this book further, particularly as a textbook for introduction to theology courses, if he had included some more discussion of the value of theology in general rather than focusing so much on the value of creeds specifically.

Following the first two chapters, Bird discusses each line of the Apostles' Creed in the succeeding twelve chapters. He excels at communicating a remarkable amount of theological content succinctly and clearly while regularly reminding readers of the significance of these doctrines for the Christian life. At times Bird also relates the doctrines to issues in contemporary theology. For example, while acknowledging the legitimate concerns of feminist theologians, he proposes that it is still relevant to call God "Father," as the Apostles' Creed does, given that the image of God as Father can support the idea that God is an all-powerful comforter. Each chapter ends with a summary of what Bird has covered to that point in the book, along with a list of recommended reading.

For the most part Bird stays away from discussing theological issues of contentious debate, choosing instead to focus on the historical consensus of the Christian church as expressed in the Creed. There are only two chapters where he strays from this focus. First, in his chapter on God as creator, he explicitly argues against a literal, six-day reading of Genesis 1 and, therefore, against young-earth creationism. Second, in his chapter on the resurrection, Bird spends a surprisingly significant amount of space arguing that Christ did descend to Hades.

While Bird writes as a Reformed theologian, which is evident in his *Evangelical Theology*, I did not discern his Reformed preferences in this book (aside from the footnotes). The irenic nature of his evangelical theology does come through, however. As evidenced in both his lists of recommended reading and his footnotes, Bird draws on theologians from different traditions, including Catholics and Lutherans (e.g., p. 27). It is clear, nevertheless, that N. T. Wright is a key influence on Bird's theology and biblical interpretation.

As the subtitle of the book indicates, *What Christians Ought to Believe* is an introduction aimed to outline the basic teachings of the historic Christian faith primarily for evangelical lay people. It is not, however, an introductory overview of systematic theology. As stated above, Bird focusses on expositing the Apostles' Creed, rather than outlining all of the issues one can find in a typical systematic theology. For example, one will not find a comprehensive discussion of the attributes of God because the Creed only explicitly speaks of God as "the Almighty." Following the limitations—if one may call them that—of the Apostles' Creed, Bird also does not cover the doctrine of revelation (including Scripture), providence, humanity, sin, and the sacraments, nor more current issues like a theology of religions and eco-theology. This is not a fault of the book, however.

My main critique of the book concerns its structure. In several chapters Bird covers too much material. For example, chapter 4 discusses God as Trinity, Father, Creator, and Almighty; moreover, the last chapter includes both "the forgiveness of sins" and "the life everlasting." Some condensing of material is necessary, given the introductory nature of the book, but, in contrast to chapter 4 and the last chapter, Bird gives two chapters each to the person of Jesus Christ and to the significance of the cross. My impression is that this decision was largely influenced by Bird's expertise in NT studies and by his desire to communicate the significance of Jesus as Messiah and the cross within the first-century context. Importantly, the other

topics seem to have adequate coverage. Bird includes, for example, a single chapter on the Holy Spirit and another chapter on the church.

Of great benefit to professors, Zondervan has packaged this attractive book with their TextbookPlus+ features such as quizzes and sample syllabi. Even though *What Christians Ought to Believe* is relatively short, it is not light on content. Therefore, while the book is suitable for new Christians, it also serves as an excellent first-year textbook for undergraduate students at Christian post-secondary institutions given that so many enter their studies with limited theological and even biblical knowledge. I am using it as a textbook in just such a setting, and my students have responded well. Pastors will also find this book a helpful resource for teaching or preaching a series on doctrine, as Bird includes practical and spiritual reflections along with his doctrinal summaries.

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T&T Clark Companion to Atonement. Edited by Adam Johnson. New York: T&T Clark, 2017, xii + 859 pp., $167.99.

Adam Johnson has edited a volume of over 850 pages on the atonement that promises to become a standard reference work on the topic. It is arranged so that the earlier essays are more substantive both in size and in depth than the later articles. These shorter articles are intended to offer a quick reference on certain topics ranging from atonement in the Gospels to theology of inseparable operations.

Because the most sizable contributions (both in development and retrieval of doctrine) are found in the first part of the book, I will focus on selected essays from that part. Description and assessment will flow together. In the beginning essay from Johnson himself, he riffs on some methodological concerns that he has already raised in other places (*Atonement: A Guide for the Perplexed,* also published by T&T Clark). According to Johnson, every atonement doctrine needs to be attentive to how the "being, life and will of God are constitutive for every element of the doctrine" (p. 6). Working with a Trinitarian framework, Johnson announces five key elements that need to be present in any account of atonement: (1) How are the Persons and their relations accounted for? (2) Which divine attributes are emphasized? (3) How is sin accounted for? Elements 4 and 5 present how the work of Christ "saves us from this reality of sin (primarily through his death), and how he saves us for a creaturely participation in the reality of divine life (primarily through his resurrection)." In a way, Johnson's essay serves as a cornerstone for the other chapters because much of what follows will address various theories, metaphors, and more. Johnson wants to prepare the way by establishing that we need not put atonement theories in competition with each other. Rather, by coming back to the five key elements, we will be able to observe the work of Christ afresh from different perspectives.

Fred Sanders's "These Three Atone: Trinity and Atonement" discusses two doctrinal movements. The first is "Trinity in Atonement." Taking its cues from a

fear of abstraction, this movement asserts that we can only know God and the things of God from what has been revealed in the work of Christ. Two "mega-doctrines" direct the way for this movement: Trinity and Christology. However, Sanders notes that the work of the late John Webster turned attention to two distributive doctrines that tend to correct the emphasis given in this movement: Trinity and creation. Without a proper doctrine of creation to refer to God's saving action "the existence and history of created things may be assumed as given, quasi-necessary" (p. 26). The second movement discussed by Sanders is "Atonement in Trinity." Discussing the works of Jürgen Moltmann, Nicholas Wolterstorff, and Edward Oakes, Sanders asserts that those who approach the atonement seeking justification in the holy Trinity's immanent life cannot ultimately talk about the Father, the Son, and the Spirit somehow "overcoming estrangement, pacifying hostility, etc."

Ivor Davidson's piece hits several issues related to Christology and atonement. More than the simple repeated phrase "We have to tie person and work together," Davidson starts by unpacking what it means for an ontological account of the incarnation to be fundamental to a theology of atonement. He develops the ontological account of the incarnation through conversations with various kinds of kenotic Christologies, divine becoming as a "sovereign unilateral and irreversible movement *from* God to us" (p. 41), the *extra-calvinisticum,* the sinlessness of Christ, supralapsarian Christology, and other issues. In all these topics Davidson's prose is rich even though compact; every word carries great weight.

Paul Molnar and Christopher Holmes write on Torrance and Barth, respectively. While Molnar's essay focuses on Torrance's emphasis on the resurrection, Holmes dialogues with Barth's theology of the Holy Spirit. Molnar's description of Torrance's theology of resurrection as "the ultimate content and purpose of the atonement and reconciliation" is fair since it goes back to Torrance's emphasis on the personalizing and humanizing principle that the resurrection truly gives to man. A small quibble that has been posited and that can be asserted here against Torrance's view is that it operates with an abstract concept of human nature (cf. Oliver Crisp's *Revisioning Christology*). Holmes's essay demonstrates how for Barth, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit remain God in all that God does. The Spirit's reality is evident in that the Love he is—unity and gift—is displayed in Christ's resurrection. According to Holmes, Barth is most helpful when he sees the correspondence between the Spirit's act in the economy and the Spirit's act in the blessed life of God.

Joel Green's "Theologies of the Atonement in the New Testament" continues his project of identifying the diversity of images as non-competitive and equally valid. In my own Baptist tradition, however, I find Green's arguments unpersuasive in his rejection of penal substitution. The idea that God's justice is not retributive has long been refuted by Morris and others, a point that Green does not even mention.

Thomas Weinandy's piece on Athanasius is divided into four parts. The first two parts emphasize the soteriological significance of the incarnation. The second two parts focus on the Nicene *homoousion* and its relation to the Holy Spirit as an

agent of this same incarnational soteriological principle. While the essay has masterful descriptions and analysis of Athanasius's theology, some of Weinandy's moves—such as the Son's assumption of a corruptible body like our own—are quite controversial. Those familiar with Weinandy's monograph, *In the Likeness of Sinful Flesh,* will certainly find some of the same notes here.

John McGuckin's chapter on Gregory of Nyssa addresses the early church leader's *Great Catechetical Orations* and his alleged ransom to Satan theory. Through careful reading of the sources and broad inquiry into other works, McGuckin showed that Nyssa does not fit neatly into the ransom theory category. At the same time, McGuckin rejects theories of the atonement, especially those that arose in the twentieth century, in general.

Some of the other essays include a chapter on Anselm by Katherine Sonderegger. Exploring the common division of the "theological Anselm" and the "historical Anselm," she concludes that a careful reading of the sources must bring these two schools in convergence. Another chapter by Shannon Nicole Smythe explores Karl Barth's theology of atonement. She underscores Barth's actualism without making the entire essay dependent upon his metaphysics (or lack thereof). A point that might be raised is Smythe's selectiveness (as is often the case in Barth scholarship). Although one could read Barth as avoiding the notion of punishment altogether, he does not completely dismiss penal substitutionary atonement as shown by other scholars (e.g. Donald Macleod, *Christ Crucified*).

Raising five common objections to penal substitution, Stephen Holmes addresses problems relative to violence, trinitarianism, legal fiction, subjection to the law, and a merely negative righteousness. His essay provides a way to avoid such criticisms and has a modest suggestion for a future way in which the doctrine might be articulated. In its place among "many metaphors," penal substitution might speak "powerfully of the cost God is prepared to bear to bring salvation" (p. 314) in a culture that avoids guilt as a category to be dealt with.

In atonement discussions, the categories of metaphors, motifs, doctrine, models, and theories have been used haphazardly. Oliver Crisp's analytical approach to these themes demonstrates how many accounts of atonement "that are often thought to be doctrines or models do not, in fact, rise above motifs of metaphors for atonement, for example, many *Christus victor*/ransom views" (p. 330).

Following on the heels of these substantive essays, the short articles include neglected themes in atonement theology such imagination, prayer, and angels. The focus of this section, however, seems to be historical and is replete with descriptions of theologians. It is an invaluable resource for those interested not only in grasping the particular view held by a historical figure, but also in seeing how atonement, as a derivative doctrine, has many implications beyond itself.

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The Atonement. By William Lane Craig. Cambridge Elements in the Philosophy of Religion. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018, 106 pp., $18.00 paper.

In his brief new book, *The Atonement*, William Lane Craig gives us a delightful work on the doctrine, divided into three sections, each helpful and surprising in its own way.

The first section canvases the biblical material on the atonement. Craig covers an immense amount of material, getting to the point with a conciseness that belies his depth of insight. But the most important contribution is tucked into the first paragraph. Having noted the presence of a multiplicity of biblical metaphors and motifs pertaining to the atonement, he warns: "If any of these go missing from a theory of the atonement, then we know that we do not have a biblical theory of the atonement. We may then be spared the digression of pursuing such a theory further, since it is disqualified as a Christian atonement theory" (p. 7). This is a bold claim, though a refreshing one. Personally, I would like to amend this to say: "If any of these are incompatible with a theory of the atonement, then we know that we do not have a biblical theory of the atonement"—for I do not know of any work on the atonement that has satisfactorily covered all the motifs and metaphors pertaining to the atonement in Scripture.

But the point stands. To construct a Christian doctrine of the atonement, one must not simply choose some aspect or dimension of the biblical witness but embrace it holistically. Anything less is to remake the doctrine according to one's own whims, ignorance, and (perhaps) sin. One would think this would not need saying, but a perusal of recent books on the subject suggests otherwise.

The second section offers a selective overview of the history of the doctrine. On the one hand, this section is very refreshing. At nearly every point, Craig shows clear evidence of having worked through the primary sources. One would not think this to be noteworthy—what else are scholars supposed to do?—but in fact this part is exceptional. Craig regularly notes his surprise to find theologians expressing views contrary to, or quite divergent from, what he had been led to expect in the secondary literature, especially when it comes to Anselm, Abelard, and Grotius.

On the other hand, this section is somewhat disappointing. First, Craig basically skips the first thousand years of the church, stating that "when the Church Fathers did mention the atonement, their comments were brief and for the most part unincisive" (p. 28). I can only hope that Craig will attend to Irenaeus, Athanasius, Maximus, and other such theologians in future work on the atonement, for I think that, much to his delight, he will find himself mistaken. Second, Craig follows a line of thought that excessively favors Reformed theology, even in the medieval theologians he covers. While I find penal substitution to be a biblical feature of Christ's saving work, the way Craig elides honor and justice in Anselm, and then spends most of his allotted space in post-Reformation theologians, is historically skewed. Finally, Craig really does not spend much time interacting with theologians post-Turretin, which leaves a lot of delightful material to be covered. Of course, I could be seen as asking him to write a history of the doctrine, a task that he obviously did not set out to do. My preference, rather, would have been for Craig to

weave his historical work into the argument rather than to have it stand alone as a section on the "History of the Doctrine of the Atonement" for, as such, it is insufficiently representative of the breadth and depth of the doctrine throughout the history of the church. I should also note, though this may not be quite fair, that Craig is overly influenced by the typology of Gustaf Aulén, viewing history in terms of the three main theories that Aulén propounded. I find this typology inadequate for guiding historical thought.

Craig's third and final section consists of a sustained defense of penal substitution against a host of criticisms. This section is carefully thought out and noteworthy for the way it delves into the history and philosophy of law to tease out some of our deep intuitions about these matters. While I find this section to be quite good, it does feel a little "thin" in the sense that the dogmatic tools brought to bear upon the discussion are less than they could have been. The doctrines of the Trinity, Christology and divine attributes are insufficiently employed. Justice is treated primarily as a negative thing (i.e. the punishment of sin) rather than as a life-giving aspect of the ever-living God whose righteousness and goodness is life-giving and eternal. While I do not deny the dimension of justice that deals with sin, judgment, and punishment, I find this one-sidedness to distort some of the argument, leading it unnecessarily far from the character of God and the resurrection of Christ. Finally, throughout much of the argument, it seems like the problem is one of punishment rather than of sin. While it will not do to separate these completely, it seems clear to me that the primary problem is the problem of sin, a problem that involves, but is greater than, the problem of punishment. Overemphasizing punishment within the atonement creates a number of distortions in our thinking about the doctrine, misrepresentations that are hurtful in the long run. One way to overcome this is to emphasize Jesus as the sin-bearer so that our attention is upon him as our substitutionary representative. That emphasis allows punishment to play its role but requires other features of the doctrine, thus helping to bring our theology as a whole into greater balance and healthier proportion.

All in all, however, this book is a great advance. In my readings of philosophers on the doctrine of the atonement, I have found ample evidence of the biblical and historical errors that Craig points. Should the philosophical community engage this book in future work on the topic, I think the level of discussion will be greatly improved. I eagerly anticipate Craig's future work on the subject.

One final note: We are taught from an early age not to judge a book by its cover, and in this case the advice is *apropos*. In addition, we must not judge a book by its lack of table of contents, index, or chapter demarcations. The publication seems utterly unworthy of Cambridge University Press, and I do not lay the blame for this at the feet of the author. In terms of formatting and editing, it seems more like a self-published book than the work of an esteemed university press.

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Devoted to God: Blueprints for Sanctification. By Sinclair B. Ferguson. Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 2016, 296 pp., $17.98 paper.

In each of his ten chapters, Ferguson explains progressive sanctification through an exposition of one of ten "blueprint passages," by which he means foundational, central, or key sanctification passages (1 Pet 1:1–25; Rom 12:1–2; Gal 2:20; Rom 6:1–14; Gal 5:16–17; Col 3:1–17; Rom 8:13; Matt 5:17–20; Heb 12:1–14; Rom 8:29). What makes such exposition valuable is not only the high quality with which it is executed, but the fact that such indispensable exegesis is missing from most contemporary Christian books. To complement his biblical exposition, Ferguson has relevant illustrations and applications that often draw on the contemporary culture and seem to have the intent to contextualize or contemporize his message. His contemporizing gives a postmodern feel and some postmodern content to his book. Frequently, he draws on the controlling cultural ideology of multiculturalism for his illustrations and applications, sometimes in provocative ways, even coining new terms such as "ethsinity" (p. 83). Due to its contemporization, avoidance of technical terms, and non-technical but clear explanation of complex theological concepts, Ferguson's book is a helpful description of sanctification that will likely appeal to and be a valuable doctrinal aid for theologically minded, young, educated laypeople, and from which pastors and scholars may also benefit.

At least three features define Ferguson's treatment of sanctification: comprehensive coverage of standard issues, a Reformed emphasis, and some (surprisingly) Barthian elements. Ferguson covers a number of issues or emphases in sanctification that have become standard features and are thus to be expected in any contemporary presentation on the issue: Trinitarian sanctification, a statement of sanctification ordered by the triune premise, union with Christ in relation to sanctification, a discussion of sanctification as separation versus devotion, distinguishing progressive versus positional sanctification, the relation of sanctification to the New Perspective on Paul (hereafter NPP), the moral motivation for sanctification, and the role of the law in sanctification. However, he does not clarify the various views of sanctification and merely alludes negatively to the Keswick view.

Ferguson includes a number of themes characteristic of a Reformed view of sanctification: defense of a monergistic salvation/justification contrasted with a synergistic progressive sanctification, emphasis on the active and passive obedience of Christ, a stress on federal headship, discussion of mortification and vivification, sanctification's relation to the doctrine of election, affirmation of the tripartite division of the law in relation to the third use of the law, Calvin's Word-Spirit correlation (*Institutes* 1.9.3), and perseverance of the saints. His relatively brief but quality discussion of the law is a welcome complement to Ross's magisterial treatment (*From the Finger of God*).

Although not being known for neo-orthodoxy, Ferguson's discussion of sanctification is surprisingly colored by several Barthian elements at a number of key points: a concern for a starting point of theology from above rather than from below (theology versus anthropology), dialectics, subtle existentialism and phenome-

nology coupled with an avoidance of metaphysics, and a concern to balance the personal and propositional.

Ferguson's main idea might be paraphrased by piecing together several of the book's repeated concepts: progressive sanctification is devotion to God proceeding by renewal of the mind through recognition of the Christian's new identity in Christ or union with him. This summary raises several key issues that require careful reflection: (1) the biblical and theological consistency of the recent idea of sanctification as devotion; (2) the appropriateness of the use of the concept of "identity" with regard to sanctification; and (3) the importance of biblically-consistent moral motivation in relation to progressive sanctification.

While past generations have accepted "set apart" as an uncontested gloss for the main terms relating to sanctification in the OT and NT, respectively coming from the cognates or word groups with the roots קדשׁ and ἁγι, Ferguson seems to provide a theological rationale for the recent lexical trend of rejecting "set apart" as an etymological fallacy in favor of "consecrate(ed)" and "dedicate(ed)" (*HALOT* 1072; *NIDOTTE* 3:885; *TWOT* 786; Ferguson, pp. 1–2). In a manner resembling a Barthian concern for a "from above" theological starting point and implicitly following Rahner's Rule, Ferguson describes holiness as theocentric Trinitarian devotion *in se* that is imitated by his creatures, rather than anthropocentric separation *pro nobis*. Although Ferguson does not dismiss separation as a key idea of sanctification, the title of his book explicitly indicates that he is shifting the emphasis in the definition to devotion (2). It seems that shifting the definition of holiness/sanctification from separation to devotion has quietly taken place primarily in the lexicons until Ferguson's theological justification for the change. The move from lexicon to monograph without serious debate over the change in meaning of this key theological term in other venues signals that the time is ripe for works discussing this important issue.

Particularly in his exegesis of 1 Pet 1:1–25, Gal 2:20, Rom 6:1–14, and Col 3:1–17, Ferguson emphasizes the idea of (self-) "identity" in his interpretation of sanctification (pp. 6, 56–57, 65, 88, 112–16, 126). Less frequently, he uses the terms "self-image" (pp. 81, 113) and "self" (pp. 43, 45, 82, 111, 126) to refer to the concept of "self-identity." Older writers did not use the terms or concepts of "identity" and "self" to explain the doctrine of sanctification (e.g. Calvin, *Institutes*; William Ames, *The Marrow of Theology*; Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*; Walter Marshall, *The Gospel-Mystery of Sanctification*; J. C. Ryle, *Holiness*; Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 4.; Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*; Berkouwer, *Faith and Sanctification*). Neither do the authors in Gundry, ed., *Five Views on Sanctification* use these terms or concepts in relation to sanctification. In Alexander, ed., *Christian Spirituality: Five Views of Sanctification*, Ferguson uses the same terms and concepts in his essay ("Reformed View") as he does in this current book without objection from the other authors. Also in *Christian Spirituality*, Hinson uses the term "self" in his essay ("Contemplative View") and Forde objects on the grounds that Hinson's interpretation results in works righteousness ("Lutheran Response").

Although Ferguson's use of the modern, individual, and psychological concept of "identity" is new in doctrinal presentations of sanctification, it is not with-

out precedent. Since at least the 1960s and 1970s, the NASB, NIV, and RSV have translated the "old/new man" terminology as "old/new self" (Rom 6:6; Eph 4:22–24; Col 3:9–10). Perhaps "self" was originally intended in the translation tradition to reflect the old interpretation of the "sinner in totality" or as a "whole being," sometimes with ontological emphases. But contemporary commentators have seized upon the modern psychological and individualistic understanding of "identity," "self," or "self-identity." Numerous factors are likely responsible for this shift in general and Ferguson's concept in particular; among them may be: the idea of corporate personality from OT studies (Liefeld, IVPNTC, Eph 4:20); the influence of the NPP's emphasis on identity (Dunn, NIGTC; Talbert, Paideia); Marxist, multicultural, and feminist interpretations of the text (Talbert, Paideia), and the psychologies of Freud (the Ephesians commentaries of Lange and Lenski); and particularly Maslow. Such theories gained popularity at the time the NASB, NIV, and RSV were translated (McDonald et al., "Power and Self-Identity" in *Identity as a Foundation for Human Resource Development*, 84–85).

While many will likely accept without question Ferguson's use of identity to describe the process of progressive sanctification, his contextualization or contemporization of the doctrine requires careful reflection. There is a chronological-historical problem and a theological concern with the concept of "self-identity" as an interpretation of biblical sanctification. Chronologically-historically, it is anachronistic to impose the modern, psychological, and individualistic concept of (self-) identity on the premodern biblical text. Giddens summarizes the claim of Baumeister and others that "the search for self-identity is a modern problem, perhaps having its origins in Western individualism. … The idea that each person has a unique character and special potentialities that may or may not be fulfilled is alien to premodern culture" (Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity*, 74; cf. Baumeister, *Identity*, 165; Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, 175–76; Wahrman, *The Making of the Modern Self,* xiv–xv). Theologically, the psychological concept of identity fails to capture the contextual meaning of the passages of the "sinner in totality" or as a "whole being" as originally intended by the translation of the Greek terms as "self." Additionally, this use of identity reflects the general anti-metaphysical stance of some contemporary evangelicals and the current rejection of the ontological notion of "nature," both being present trends that are contrary to the worldview of the biblical text. Ferguson is aware of these problems and he does attempt to qualify the difference between the modern individual self or identity and the biblical premodern terminology, and he does use the term "nature" on occasion. Readers will need to determine whether Ferguson's qualification and overall presentation does justice to both the ontological aspect of sanctification and the difference between the modern, psychological, and individual concept of "identity" and the premodern text. Regardless of how one evaluates Ferguson on these points, his presentation does raise the important issue of whether "identity" is an appropriate paradigm for describing biblical sanctification.

Finally, in several places, Ferguson discusses the believer's moral motivation for participating in progressive sanctification (122–51, 163, 212, 223). In the ethical subdiscipline of moral psychology, there are two basic positions regarding moral

motivation: internalism (a recognition of moral facts provides motivation for moral action) and externalism (a denial of internalism or the idea that rather than moral facts, other factors such as agent interests or desires motivate moral action) (Brink, *Moral Realism and the Foundations of Ethics*). Internalism is the biblically consistent position, while externalism is not in accord with Scripture (John 14:15, 23–24). Ferguson's emphasis on renewing the mind in conjunction with recognizing Scripture's "imperatives" and eschatological "knowledge" places him firmly in the internalist camp. His presentation points to the need for Christian scholars to be aware of the different positions with regard to moral motivation and to take care to adhere to the biblically consistent view in their description of progressive sanctification.

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