

BOOK REVIEWS

The Inclusive Language Debate: A Plea for Realism. By D. A. Carson. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998, 221 pp., \$13.99 paper. *Distorting Scripture? The Challenge of Bible Translation and Gender Accuracy.* By Mark L. Strauss. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1998, 240 pp., \$12.99 paper.

The other day, my six-year-old daughter Lauren and I read the gospel account in which Jesus promises to make his followers “fishers of men” (or so it read in the NIV that we were using). My daughter commented: “Daddy, I’m going to be a fisher of women,” and then adding, with customary “generosity,” “Tahlia [her younger sister], she can be a fisher of men.” I was struck by the perceptive nature of my daughter’s remark: unaware of the recent inclusive-language controversy, she had unwittingly yet intuitively picked up on the need for Bible translators in this day and age to be sensitive to how they render gender-related terms in Scripture.

The “inclusive language debate” that first erupted in the spring of 1997 is one of the most recent controversies that has pitted sincere, godly, card-carrying evangelicals against one other who defend with equal fervor the validity of their respective viewpoints. Who is right? Here are two authors, both complementarians—though Strauss’s comment that “Adam’s priority in creation *may perhaps* mean that he is to function as leader in the relationship (1 Tim 2:12–13)” does not exactly sound very convinced (p. 139, emphasis mine)—who argue forcefully that a gender-inclusive approach to Bible translation is not only not necessarily in conflict with a high view of Scripture, but alone does justice to the requirements of proper translation. Because of the significant overlap between these works, this review, after a brief sketch of the contents of both works, will focus primarily on Carson’s contribution owing to the perhaps more influential nature of his treatment and refer to Strauss only where this is called for in light of additional information provided by him or a variance in viewpoints.

Carson moves from a thumbnail sketch of the recent debate (chap. 1) and a presentation of two largely competing sets of guidelines on the translation of gender-related terms of Scripture (chap. 2) to a discussion of the nature of Bible translation with special emphasis on the rendering of gender-related language (chaps. 3 and 4). This is followed by a brief evaluation of the guidelines produced by the Committee on Bible Translation (CBT), which is responsible for both the NIV and the NIVI (an inclusive-language version of the NIV first published in the UK in 1995) and the Colorado Springs Guidelines (CSG, crafted at a May 1997 meeting convened by Dr. James Dobson of Focus on the Family; chap. 5) and a treatment of some additional OT and NT passages, as well as some critical passages with important doctrinal issues at stake (chaps. 6–8). After addressing the effect of changes in the English language on the translation of Biblical terms related to gender (chap. 9), Carson concludes with several “pastoral considerations” (chap. 10). Carson’s book also has a general and a Scripture index (both unfortunately missing in Strauss’s volume).

Strauss likewise begins by seeking to set the present controversy into historical perspective (chap. 1), which is followed by a survey of gender-inclusive as well as feminist versions (chaps. 2 and 3); the latter is, perhaps appropriately so, not deemed necessary for inclusion in Carson. The remainder of the book is given to critique. This

includes a discussion of the nature of Bible translation (chap. 4), inclusive language related to human beings: generic “man” and “he” (chap. 5, plus an excursus on contemporary English usage; Carson devotes an entire chapter to this), other generic terms (chap. 6), and language related to God and to Jesus Christ (chap. 7). The final chapter presents Strauss’ conclusions (chap. 8) and is followed by two appendixes on the CSG and a comparison of gender-inclusive versions. Not only is these two authors’ procedure quite similar, they argue the same case, often using the exact same examples to illustrate their point. For this reason it would be redundant to trace the argument of both in detail. As mentioned, the remainder of the review therefore will focus primarily on Carson.

In the tradition of adjudicating controversial issues (see his earlier *The King James Version Debate*), Carson issues “a plea for realism” regarding the use of inclusive language in Bible translation. He contends that “all translation is treason” (p. 47), quoting an old Italian proverb (*traddutore, traditore*), and that compromise is the stuff of which translations are made. Gender systems differ from language to language, so that a formal-equivalence approach fails to do justice to the complex task of translating the Scriptures from the original Greek and Hebrew into contemporary English.

As Carson demonstrates at the very outset, a concern for gender inclusion in Bible translation is not a recent phenomenon. Tyndale’s 1526 version (Matt 5:9), the KJV (translation of Heb. *bēn*, pl. *bānīm*), and even Paul (2 Cor 6:18 quoting 2 Sam 7:14) and the LXX (Hos 2:4 [6]) evidence gender-inclusive renderings. Yet, Carson laments, the recent debate is largely characterized by mutual distrust, polarization, ignorance of the nature of Bible translation and an illegitimate linking of Bible translation to the question of Biblical fidelity.

Chronicling the debate surrounding the 1997 revelation of Zondervan’s plans to produce a gender-inclusive version of the NIV, Carson notes that complementarian scholars (such as himself) broke with the leading complementarian organization, the *Council of Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, “because they disagreed with its tightly linking the issue of complementarianism to that of gender-inclusive translations” (p. 35).

Indeed, one of the more significant effects of the current debate has been the dividing of the complementarian camp into advocates and opponents of a gender-inclusive approach to Bible translation. Carson points out that at least some (if not most) signers of the CSG produced by those opposing such an approach do not have formal training in Biblical languages or Bible translation and presumably signed the statement primarily out of trust in those crafting it owing to their complementarian commitment and a concern that feminism appears to be making inroads in the area of Bible translation. I should point out, however, that there are at least a few who do have linguistic expertise (see esp. Vern Poythress, “Gender in Bible Translation: Exploring a Connection with Male Representatives,” *WTJ* 60 [1998] 225–253, esp. 226, n. 5).

An adjudication between both sides of the debate then ensues, in which Carson concurs largely (though not entirely without reservations) with the guidelines produced by the NIV’s CBT. In the slightly ponderous chap. 4 on the nature of gender in language Carson shows how translators must understand how the gender system works in both donor and receptor languages. Gender systems in two languages will be different, so that the issue is marked by considerable complexity, and there is no possibility of faithful renderings by way of formal equivalents.

For this reason “the argument that attaches a particular formal equivalent in gender assignment to faithfulness to the Word of God is profoundly mistaken in principle” (p. 98). Thus Carson (rightly, I believe) calls on Wayne Grudem to withdraw his charge to that effect (p. 206, n. 4) and on *World* magazine to apologize publicly for its tendentious reporting (p. 194). Overall, Carson finds the CSG “open to far more and far more

serious linguistic objections” than the CBT principles (p. 111). According to Carson, the CSG frequently appeal to conservatism in language (when, according to Carson, the English language has changed with regard to gender language), and its proponents tend to be characterized by lexical woodenness (p. 120).

In his treatment of specific Biblical terms involving gender, Carson maintains that the term *anthrōpos* never means “man” (that is, a male human being), though it may refer to such a person, while the expression *anēr*, while having “male human being” as its default meaning, also occurs in a generic sense. Those who believe that “male human being” is part of the semantic range of *anthrōpos* are charged with confusing meaning and reference (though Carson seems to leave the door open just a bit when he refers to “human being” as “the primary meaning of *anthrōpos*,” pp. 150–151 [italics mine], calling this the “normal” or “default meaning,” pp. 153, 160). While conceding that the inclusive edition of the NIV already published in the UK is “too loose” at times (p. 125), he maintains that it is generally on target.

Regarding the translation of *adelphoi* (rendered as “brothers” in the NIV) as “brothers and sisters,” Carson asserts that “[t]his is not flawed translation: rather, the expanded English expression is including people who would have felt included in the Greek *adelphos* but who by and large do not feel so included in English ‘brothers’” (p. 131). Strauss’s argument is identical (pp. 147–151). Notably, even Grudem and the (revised) CSG concur, at least regarding instances of *adelphos* in the plural (though they are rightly chided by both Carson and Strauss for failing to extend the same principle to the singular as well).

In conclusion, Carson appeals for high journalistic standards, calls for the participants in the debate to slow down, encourages them to avoid impugning others’ motives, to eschew entrenched positions, to shun manipulative language and to be careful what they sign on to. Carson finds the criticism of gender-inclusive translation in large part motivated by a certain social agenda regarding the roles of men and women.

What are the merits of Carson’s (and Strauss’) case? Space permits only a few substantive comments of evaluation. To begin with, Carson must be credited with a thorough grasp of the nature of translation and an ability to communicate often complex issues in intelligible terms to a popular audience. As one who initially shared many of the concerns of those opposing a gender-inclusive approach to Bible translation, I found myself a cautious convert to Carson’s position.

I am a “convert,” because Carson has, to my mind successfully, demonstrated that formal equivalence is severely flawed as an approach to translating gender language in Scripture. Thus, at least in principle, a functional equivalence approach must be used. This renders many of the criticisms set forth by opponents of a gender-inclusive approach invalid (such as Wayne Grudem’s “Response to Mark Strauss’ Evaluation of the Colorado Springs Translation Guidelines,” *JETS* 41 [1998] 263–286).

I remain a “cautious” convert, because in some matters of (not insignificant) detail some residual questions remain. Perhaps the most important pertains to the meaning of *anthrōpos* and *anēr* (see the perceptive critique by Poythress, “Gender” 226–227). Is the meaning “male human being” in the case of *anthrōpos* really to be consigned exclusively to the category “referent,” as Carson maintains (pp. 126–127)? On this point even Mark Strauss includes “male human being” in the semantic range of this word (e.g. p. 14: “Here [in Matt 9:9] *anthrōpos* clearly means ‘a male human being’ [emphasis mine]; p. 195: “The Greek lexeme *anthrōpos*, for example, has a semantic range that includes the various senses ‘human being,’ ‘male human being,’ ‘humanity’ and so on”). Andrew Perriman, who likewise shares Carson’s overall view, independently asserts the same, speaking merely of “a more inclusivist semantic profile than *anēr*” in the case of *anthrōpos* (*Speaking of Women: Interpreting Paul* [Apollos, 1998] 215).

Are Strauss, Perriman and others then all subject to “confusion over the elementary linguistic distinction between meaning and referent” (Carson, p. 127)? Or is Carson’s case here unduly dichotomous? Apart from the fact that most standard NT Greek dictionaries include “male human being” in the semantic range of *anthrōpos*, one may cite numerous passages in the LXX such as Gen 20:7; 26:11; Exod 2:21; Lev 20:10; Num 5:15; 25:8; 31:35; Deut 17:5; 20:7; 21:15; 22:16,22,24; 23:1 [22:30]; 25:7; 1 Sam 25:3; Esth 4:11; Eccl 7:28; Isa 4:1; Jer 51:7 [44:7]; 1 Esdr 4:25; 9:40; Tob 6:7 (not to speak of extra-Biblical references such as Dionysius Halicarnassensis, *De comp. verb.* 18.201; Dio Chrysostom, *Orat.* 32.89.3; or Clement of Rome, *Homil.* 13.15.2) where *anthrōpos* quite demonstrably stands in semantic opposition to *gynē*, “woman,” which suggests that “male human being” at least in these instances is a semantic component of *anthrōpos* rather than merely coming into play at the level of reference (see Perriman, *Speaking of Women* 218). Incidentally, this is where Strauss’s consistent dichotomization between *anthrōpos* in a certain context meaning “male” rather than “human being” (e.g. p. 184), based on his maxim that a “word generally has only one ‘sense’ in any particular literary context” (p. 99), turns out to be doubtful, because it unduly biases the interpreter against possible male connotations of *anthrōpos* in a given instance (e.g. John 10:33; see Grudem, “Response” 277–278). As Perriman notes, “It is important to keep in mind that *anthrōpos* may have masculine overtones which are lost in an inclusive translation” (*Speaking of Women* 217).

Likewise, in the discussion of *anēr*, one should probably avoid placing proportionately too much emphasis on the generic sense of the term (which is suggested already by the availability of the less marked term *anthrōpos*). For instance, when Acts 17:34 is adduced as an instance where *anēr* means “male human being” because apparent reference is also made to a woman, Damaris, we should note that standard commentaries such as F. F. Bruce (*The Book of Acts* [NICNT; rev. ed.; Eerdmans, 1988] 343) take *anēr* as referring merely to a group of men (males) including Dionysius, which are set off from other converts such as the above-named woman. This is also the interpretation underlying both the NASB and the NIV. Presumably it is for this reason that Mark Strauss wisely refrains from using this passage to support his argument (pp. 108–109).

In light of the above, care must be taken to guard against a revisionist understanding and consequent erosion in the lexical understanding of various gender-related terms used in Scripture that may result from a gender-inclusive approach to Bible translation. That such an erosion has already occurred in some circles is evident from the translation of *anēr* as something other than man in passages such as Matt 7:24,26; Luke 5:18; 22:63; Acts 1:21; 9:7; 11:20 and 20:30 in certain gender-inclusive versions.

A second element of concern relates to the danger of downplaying the presence of ideological elements in the debate (cf. Stanley E. Porter, “The Contemporary English Version and the Ideology of Translation,” in *Translating the Bible: Problems and Prospects*, JSNTSup 173 [1999] 18–45, esp. 32–34). In fact, apart from the fact whether or not ideology is a *driving factor* in gender-inclusive translation, it is undeniable (acknowledged by both Carson, p. 159, and Strauss, pp. 45–46) that such translation may pave the way for an egalitarian understanding of Biblical teaching on gender roles (see e.g. gender-inclusive translations of Acts 1:21; 20:30; Titus 1:6; cf. Poythress, “Gender” 226). While gender-inclusive translation may in a given instance be *justified* on general linguistic grounds, this does not necessarily mean that such is to be preferred on the basis of contextual or larger theological considerations.

Finally, the price that has to be paid in gender-inclusive translation should be frankly acknowledged. For instance, while an inclusive rendering of *adelphos* in both singular and plural seems unobjectionable where this is indicated by the context, the underlying principle (stated in the NIVI preface) that it is “often appropriate to mute

the patriarchalism of the culture of the biblical writers through gender-inclusive language” when this can “be done without compromising the message of the Spirit” may not be quite as unproblematic as Carson (pp. 27–28) and others contend. Such practice raises the specter of the historical particularity of Scriptural revelation as well as the issue of the task and nature of Bible translation. Is “muting the patriarchalism of the culture of the biblical writers” necessarily the task of the translator or could this also be done by way of explanatory footnotes, Biblical exposition, or other forms of commentary on the text? Perhaps here the reluctance of conservative voices is not quite as illegitimate as it is made out to be by some.

On the whole, it can hardly be denied that the extent of agreement between the Biblical languages and contemporary English is diminishing (at least in the area of gender terminology), as was the case when “Thou” and “Thee” gave way to “you.” Some may respond to this development with linguistic conservatism (Grudem) while others, more “realistically minded” (Carson, Strauss), are more readily prepared to yield to the (apparently) inevitable.

It may be concluded that Carson and Strauss have established—at least to my own satisfaction—that a gender-inclusive approach to Bible translation stands in no necessary conflict with the effort to preserve Biblical fidelity. Furthermore, it is in general the preferable way of rendering gender-related expressions from one language into another, because it is the only truly adequate and linguistically responsible way. Nevertheless, more work remains to be done on a proper lexical understanding of gender-related Scriptural terms such as *anthrōpos* or *anēr*.

It is hoped that the present polarization on this important issue can gradually give way to an increased understanding of the task and challenge of Bible translation and that the common ground between both sides can be enlarged. As Moisés Silva has acknowledged in his conciliatory and judicious conclusion to *God, Language and Scripture* (pp. 137–138), there is indeed room for differing perspectives on this issue (and even kinds of translations). In light of this we would all do well to heed Carson’s parting advice to slow down, avoid entrenched positions, and be careful what we sign on to.

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The Bible in English Translation: An Essential Guide. By Steven M. Sheeley and Robert N. Nash, Jr. Nashville: Abingdon, 1997, 116 pp., n.p.

The explosion of Bible translations in English during the past three decades has left the average layperson in a quandary as to the background, purpose and reliability of the various versions. Sheeley and Nash have provided a useful tool at the popular level for understanding the history and nature of the various English Bible translations. Written in an easy-to-read style with the assumption of little if any prior knowledge of Bible translations, this work is ideal for use in church settings and perhaps even some introductory college Bible courses as a supplemental text.

The work begins with a brief summary of the history of the canon and English Bible, moves to the topic of translation approaches, and then covers the vast majority of translations by classifying them under the headings of “verbal translations” and “dynamic translations and paraphrases.” A final chapter offers an excellent guide to choosing and utilizing a translation. Also, at the end of each chapter is a listing of books for additional reading on the topic. While most of these suggested readings are quite dated, the resources are sound and often represent the standards for the field. The appendixes include an annotated bibliography of many of the English versions of the 20th century

and a listing of computer programs that include English or other language resources. The latter appendix, while helpful, is not comprehensive by any means and already suffers from being dated, especially in the descriptions of the programs. The first appendix offers an excellent chronological overview and summary of the 20th-century English versions and would be an attractive reference guide for both laypeople and students.

While the discussions of the various English translations are sound and form the core of Sheeley and Nash's work, the introductory discussion on the development of the canon leaves much to be desired. Part of this is due to the abbreviated nature of the book, but some of the factual data is misleading at best. For example, Origen is noted as having proposed a canon list, and yet we have no such information from Origen directly, but rather glean such information from Eusebius. Also, the discussion of the Apocrypha leaves the mistaken impression that a set number of books were already recognized perhaps as early as the school at Jamnia and seems to be based on an untenable Alexandrian-canon hypothesis for the origin of the Apocrypha. And the mention of Jerome's Vulgate "as the official Bible of the church for almost one thousand years" (p. 18) should at least be corrected to "of the Western church," since Greek and other languages reigned in the Eastern churches.

But in spite of the canon discussion's lack of precision and the desire for less oversimplification at several points, this work offers a substantially reliable and useful guide for a plethora of modern English versions. Indeed, the authors provide coverage of the most comprehensive number of English translations available in an easily accessible format.

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Holy Writings, Sacred Text: The Canon in Early Christianity. By John Barton. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997, xiv + 210 pp., n.p.

The question of the canon of the NT is one of the knottier issues for the scholar committed both to evangelical piety and to methodological rigor. Evangelicals believe that the whole Bible is the Word of God, without error and completely trustworthy as a guide for faith and practice. Our commitment to such a principle is entirely reasonable, given the attitude of our Lord and the apostles toward both the Jewish Bible and early fragments of the NT itself (e.g. 1 Tim 5:18 quoting Luke 10:7, or 2 Pet 3:16 in reference to Paul's epistles). However, nowhere in either the OT or the NT does the Spirit of God enumerate a list of just which early writings he has so superintended (2 Pet 1:21) that we may consider them the Word of God. Thus we often resort to citations of church councils and fathers to establish the very canon that we then endorse as having an authority independent of and superior to councils and fathers!

There is no shortage of literature on this question. Many handbooks (e.g. B. Metzger, *The Canon of the New Testament* [Oxford, 1987]) offer an independent, systematic overview of the evidence for the growth and scope of the canon. Barton's contribution to this immense literature is of a different sort. He presumes that his reader is familiar with the standard handbooks (and the confusing differences among them). His thesis is that students of the canon have not paid sufficient attention to a number of subtle distinctions. By articulating these distinctions, he is able to show that much of what passes for fundamental disagreement in studies of the canon is in fact a difference in perspective. Three of these distinctions convey the flavor of his contribution (though he discusses more than these three).

One distinction is between inclusion (or growth) and exclusion (or selection). Barton argues that canonization is not a single process, but two. In one process, the canon grows as the churches include new materials in the body of authoritative literature. In the other, they select some texts from a larger number to be distinguished as Scripture. The contrast is reflected in the inherent ambiguity in the term "canon," which may refer to either a "rule of faith" (a broad category into which many works might easily be admitted) or a "fixed list," a "rule of what books to include" (an inherently exclusionary concept). Reviewing the arguments for the date of the canon by Zahn (first century), Harnack (second century), and Sundberg (fourth century), Barton shows that their differences turn largely on the degree to which they are focusing on the inclusionary or exclusionary process.

Second, while many discussions of canonicity focus on whether early Christian writers cite NT texts as Scripture, Barton emphasizes the importance of considering also how they use those texts, irrespective of citation formulas. Since Westcott, it has been customary to use the presence or absence of phrases such as "it is written" or "the Scripture says" to assess the status of a book in the eyes of early Christians. Such a mechanism assumes that the witnesses made their citations with an eye to defining the canon, when in most cases their objective was more pragmatic and pastoral. We should focus instead, Barton argues, on how the texts were actually used. In this effort he draws extensively on a little-known work, F. Stuhlhofer's *Der Gebrauch der Bibel von Jesus bis Euseb: eine statistische Untersuchung zur Kanongeschichte* (Wuppertal: Brockhaus, 1988). Stuhlhofer argues that, all things being equal, one would expect early writings to be cited proportionately to their length, with longer writings cited more often than shorter ones. He counts the number of citations in different periods, using the indexes in the successive volumes of *Biblia Patristica*. After correcting for phenomena such as the repetition of many dominical sayings in multiple gospels, he reports the ratio between the number of citations of a given book and its length. On this basis, he distinguishes three classes of literature. From the time of the apostolic fathers on, the four gospels and the major Pauline epistles are cited more often, in proportion to their length, than the rest of the NT. Both of these classes stand in contrast to books that are scarcely cited at all, except to reject them. Thus usage clearly sets the books of the NT (the first two categories) apart from books later rejected, in spite of the lack of consistent formulaic attestation.

Third, the OT and NT played different roles for the early church. This difference is illustrated by the previous distinction, between formulaic citation and usage. In the apostolic fathers, the great bulk of references introduced as "Scripture" or with the formula "it is written" are from the OT, not the NT, but overall, the NT references outnumber those of the OT five to one or more. This degree of use shows the implicit authority attributed by the witnesses to the NT books. At the same time, the lack of citation formulae attests to a difference in how the witnesses viewed those documents. The OT had an aura of authority because of its antiquity, because of the fact that it was recognized as Scripture. It was holy a priori, and its contents were important to the witnesses largely because they were found in it. In contrast, early witnesses valued the contents of the NT books not for the books in which they were found, but for the history that they recorded, the life and sayings of the Lord Jesus and his apostles. The preoccupation of the early Church was with that history, not with a particular set of books. Barton sees this distinction reflected in the use of codices, rather than scrolls, for the NT documents. Scrolls were the appropriate form for holy books, revered because of what they were. Codices were for everyday documents, valued for what they said. Over time, the greater importance of the NT compared with the OT, reflected in the number of citations, led to the view of codices as more appropriate for holy books, so that eventually the OT was "elevated" to a level closer to the NT by being included in codices.

Barton's analysis does not by any means end the search for a disciplined explanation of the canon that is consistent with evangelical presuppositions, and evangelicals will not agree with all that he proposes. But his novel approach does help us think about this important question from a new perspective, one that highlights the antiquity of the early churches' respect for the NT and opens up new possibilities in understanding the foundations of our faith.

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A History of Israel: From the Bronze Age Through the Jewish Wars. By Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1998, 540 pp., \$34.99.

Since sitting as a student in Professor Kaiser's classes at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School back in the late 1960s when he was first enthusiastically outlining and developing the "promise" theme, which eventually he formulated in his *Toward an Old Testament Theology*, I, along with many other evangelicals, have been greatly influenced by his teaching (both content and style!). Over the years we have been treated to *Toward an Old Testament Theology*, *Toward Old Testament Ethics*, *Toward Rediscovering the Old Testament*, the *Hard Sayings* series plus numerous commentaries and articles, as he has endeavored—and succeeded—to make the OT alive and relevant to our generation. Thus, when a new major work by Kaiser appears, it certainly is an important event.

The present work is a worthy addition to the other standard full-length evangelical histories of Israel, such as those by Wood and O'Brien (1986) and Merrill (1987). In chap. 1, Kaiser briefly presents his evaluation of the current state of OT historiography, evaluating five positions: the traditional school; the Albright/Wright/Bright Baltimore school; the Alt/Noth school; the Gottwald school; and the non-pan Israelite tribal confederation schools. He provides brief, but helpful critiques of each of the approaches. In the end, Kaiser's approach is that of the traditional school: "the text must first be taken on its own terms until it is proven guilty" (p. 132) and he develops a "text-based history" (p. 203). He asks, "Why should we force the biblical evidence to purge itself of its so-called 'theocratic point of view' in order to qualify as 'history'?" (p. 143).

In chap. 2 he presents a very brief introduction to the geographical setting of the land of Israel, along with brief geographical and historical comments on both Egypt and Mesopotamia. In chap. 3 the early archaeological record of the land of Israel is reviewed from the Paleolithic period through Middle Bronze I. Curiously, throughout the remainder of the book, similar archaeological descriptions are not included, although specific archaeological data (especially inscriptions) are frequently cited.

In Part I of his work, Kaiser places the patriarchs and matriarchs in the Middle Bronze II age, rehearsing Kitchen's (1988) arguments in support. Missing in this section is an evaluation of the internal Biblical chronology, which, if followed, could place Abram's and Sarai's entrance into Canaan in the Middle Bronze I, as well as any attempt to correlate site remains with supposed patriarchal and matriarchal presence at certain sites such as Hebron, Gerar, Shechem or Sodom. In addition, in my opinion, there does not seem to be much Biblical evidence for labeling the patriarchs primarily as "merchants" (p. 65) or as "merchant prince[s] who trade" (p. 57). As for Joseph's and Jacob's settings in Egypt, a number of Egyptian parallels are cited, which helps place these stories in their ancient Near Eastern contexts.

Part II deals with the Egyptian sojourn and the exodus from Egypt. The content of the Biblical text is presented, interspersed with Egyptian background material and interpretative comments. For those familiar with other evangelical authors the material and approach are familiar: Jacob descended into Egypt during the XII dynasty, the “new Pharaoh who knew not Joseph” was a Hyksos who began the oppression. The life of Moses is placed in the context of the 18th dynasty, as is the exodus itself. In these three chapters Kaiser takes great pains to frame Biblical events in their ancient Near Eastern (Egyptian) context—but see now Hoffmeier’s *Israel In Egypt: The Evidence for the Authenticity of the Exodus Tradition* (1997). Kaiser opts for a “southern” route (towards Jebel Musa) for the path of the fleeing Israelites and spends a bit of time describing various aspects of the Sinai legislation but modestly does not even refer to his own treatment of the relevant texts in his own major work on the topic, *Toward Old Testament Ethics*.

In Part III Kaiser summarizes the Israelites’ entrance into, and occupation of, the land of Canaan. The textual material of the book of Joshua is placed within the “so-called Deuteronomic History,” and the literary structure of the first 11 chapters of Joshua receive special attention (Hoffmeier 1994). Beside descriptive material, the positions of de Vaux, Noth and Rudolph are briefly described and critiqued. Kaiser discusses the “origins” of Israel, describing and evaluating the various models: conquest, peaceful infiltration, peasants’ revolt and agricultural resettlement of pastoralists groups. In describing the campaigns of Joshua, Kaiser interacts with some of the archaeological problems associated with the early- and late-date theories of the conquest, although more work has been done on the archaeological aspects of these problems in recent years. In addition, Kaiser’s identification of “Debir” (conquered by Joshua) with Tell Beit Mirsim is now rejected by most, since this hill-country city (Josh 15:49) has been more probably identified with *Kh. Rabud* (Kochavi 1974), as per the maps on pp. 130 and 165.

In Part IV Kaiser summarizes the textual evidence describing the period of the Judges. The possibility of an amphictyony is presented and rejected, and the chronology of the period is investigated (judges are arranged in chronological order, with some overlapping of “judgeships”). There were a few topics that I expected to find but did not: discussion of Deborah and Barak, destruction levels at Hazor, treatment of the MT numbers in 1 Sam 6:19, something on the arrival of the Philistines, and an attempt at correlating the chronology of the Judges with Egyptian excursions into Canaan. In addition, a few of the site identifications could be improved upon: Ophrah of Gideon is probably better located at *Kh. Taiyibeh* (167213), five miles south of Megiddo, and Kedesh of Barak more probably at *Kh. Qedish* (202237), one mile west of the south end of the Sea of Galilee—both of which fit the contexts of the various stories better.

Kaiser wisely devotes some 83 pages (Part V) to his treatment of the united monarchy. He devotes a full chapter to the reconciliation of texts related to Saul’s rise to power, basing his discussion in the main on Robert P. Gordon’s and V. Philips Long’s (1994) treatments of the topic. A “text-based history” of the fall of Saul and the rise of David is then presented. Along the way, Kaiser interacts with those who deny the historicity of David, evaluating the methodological underpinnings of their positions and reminding his readers of inscriptions mentioning “the house of David” (Dan and Meshastelas). In addition he treats some of the alleged historical inaccuracies (e.g., when did Saul first meet David? who killed Goliath?) found in the history of David’s rise to power. Problems related to the internal chronology of events that occurred during the reign of David are treated (following Merrill’s detailed chronology) and David’s wars of expansion to the east and northeast are described. However, Kaiser’s thesis that “Jebus” was a place in the vicinity of Jerusalem (p. 243) seems a bit idiosyncratic.

Solomon's rise to power, his building projects—in Jerusalem and elsewhere—and his decline are briefly described in chap. 19. Articles by Millard and Kitchen (1989) form the basis of Kaiser's discussion of Solomon's wealth, but the existence (and date) of the "Solomonic Gates" at Gezer, Megiddo and Hazor are not mentioned. The problem of the "Solomonic stables" at Megiddo is briefly treated—they are not Solomonic, but are stables. Very brief treatment is given to reflection on the actual source of all of Solomon's wealth (p. 284).

The seven chapters of Part VI are devoted to the independent kingdoms of Israel and Judah from 931 to 586 BC. Kaiser follows Thiele's dating system and helpfully outlines its basic features/assumptions. In addition, he describes how "relative dates" are tied to astronomical data so as to yield "absolute dates." Throughout these chapters Kaiser continues to present a "text-based history" augmented by illustrative archaeological finds (e.g., high place at Dan). Kaiser's assertion that the earliest days of Rehoboam were taken up fortifying Judah "against their big brother to the north" (pp. 307–308 and p. 302) seems wide of the mark, for Rehoboam fortified cities on Judah's eastern, southern and western frontiers, but *not* the northern (2 Chr 11:5–12)—maybe he was hopeful of renunciation? In addition, possibly Shishak's move north prompted Jeroboam's building activities at Penuel (p. 304).

In his treatment of the northern and southern kingdoms, not only are the activities of various Israelite kings presented, but the histories of the surrounding nations (Assyria, Egypt, Babylon, Aram, Edom, Ammon and Moab) are discussed in some detail. Thus it comes as somewhat of a surprise that the battle of Qarqar is not mentioned in connection with Ahab's reign (although it is obliquely referred to on p. 375). Kaiser continues to trace his "text-based history" of both the northern and southern kingdoms until their fall (722 and 586 BC). Along the way illustrative archaeological and epigraphic material (e.g., Lachish ostraca, the bulla of Baruch, Babylonian ration lists) are mentioned. He even has a reference to the Ekron inscription, which was discovered in 1996. However, the map of "Jerusalem in Jeremiah's [*sic*; Nehemiah's?] Time" (p. 396) does not reflect the fact that most, if not all, of the western hill (south of the transversal valley) had been inhabited and fortified since the 8th century (see even his text, p. 378—although most scholars would say the wall was built in preparation for Sennacherib's anticipated attack, not after it—as Kaiser holds). In addition, there is also some probability that Hezekiah's illness and the visit of the delegation of Merodach-Baladan to Jerusalem occurred before—not after—Sennacherib's invasion, possibly to encourage Hezekiah (and others) to open a western front against Sennacherib, while Merodach Baladan would open an eastern front. As Kaiser traces the decline and fall of Judah, he helpfully places the relevant Hebrew prophets in their historical contexts.

Parts VII and VIII treat the Babylonian exile and the returns to Judah described in Ezra and Nehemiah. Among the topics briefly treated are calendrical and linguistic changes and (very briefly) some of the historical issues related to the book of Daniel (e.g., Nabonidus or Nebuchadnezzar's "illness," role of Belshazzar, identification of Darius the Mede, of Zerubbabel). Kaiser succinctly presents the histories of the neo-Babylonian and Persian empires and places the three returns in their historical contexts. But I was a bit surprised that no reference was made to Yamauchi's comprehensive 1990 treatment of the Persian period.

Part IX of the book takes the history of Israel through the Hellenistic period down to the arrival of the Romans in 63 BC. These chapters will help those who use this as a textbook for an OT course that takes Israel's history down to the beginning of the NT era—although given the mention of "Jewish Wars" in the title I had expected the book to extend to AD 70 or 135. He concludes his book with a 16-page glossary of terms, which students and layperson should find helpful. The glossary is followed by a four-

page bibliography. Unfortunately, a glance at the listing of entries indicates that on occasion it does not cite the more recent editions of books such as the *Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land* or *A Survey of Israel's History*. The first (not the third edition) of *The Macmillan Bible Atlas* is cited, although in a few instances, more recent editions are cited in the footnotes.

Besides my observations noted above, a few inaccuracies have crept into the text. For example the Mount of Olives is east of Jerusalem—not south southwest (p. 236); Zeruah is Joab's mother—not son (p. 271); and Jehu did not assassinate Athaliah (pp. 345–346).

An important area in which Kaiser's book goes beyond earlier evangelical histories of Israel is in its analysis of some of the more recent approaches to investigating and attempting to write a history of Israel, yet the book as a whole does not seem quite as "cutting edge" as Kaiser's *Toward an Old Testament Theology* did when it was first published. For me the methodology and content of Kaiser's book has a familiar feel to it, and I think it will find a welcome home among evangelicals.

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Can A 'History of Israel' be Written? Edited by Lester L. Grabbe. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997, 201 pp., \$66.00.

This book is a collection of essays written by eight members of the European Seminar on Methodology in Israel's History. The contributors include H. Barstad, B. Becking, R. Carroll, P. Davies, L. Grabbe, N. P. Lemche, H. Niehr and T. L. Thompson. The first in a projected series, this volume arises out of the Seminar's consensus that there are problems facing those who would write a "history of Israel"—itself a problematic phrase, since the term "Israel" can be used to refer to a nation, an ethnic group or a region. All essays were solicited as responses to two questions. "Can a 'History of Israel' be written and if so, how? What place does the text of the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible have in the matter?" (p. 13).

Most contributors take one of two positions, the first being that the Bible can and should be critically used as evidence—but only as secondary evidence, necessarily subject to independent confirmation—for writing a history of *the periods it describes*. This position is best represented by Grabbe, Becking and Niehr. Grabbe offers principles for evaluating usable evidence in the Bible, Becking warns against naively equating the Biblical accounts with material evidence and Niehr is concerned with how we are to integrate the primary and secondary sources.

The second position is that the Bible can only be critically used as evidence for writing a history of *the period in which it was written* (by which is meant the Hellenistic period), and that a "history of Israel" dealing with earlier times must use non-Biblical evidence alone. The feasibility of writing the history of any region and period depends on the available evidence. This position is held by Lemche and Thompson, who propose a "spectrum method" to assess correspondences between material data and the implications of textual data, and who stress the need for regional histories that are not controlled by a focus on a single area nor overshadowed by the Biblical conception of Israel.

The remarks of Davies (p. 105) seem to indicate that he falls somewhere in between the two positions; he devotes much of his essay arguing for a proper use of terminology. Carroll does not propose a method, but offers observations, concluding that the presence of "bogus history" (pp. 96, 101) in the Bible creates the problem of determining

“how to overcome our essentially agnostic position in order to make *reliable* judgments about the historical nature of the contents of the Bible” (p. 87, emphasis Carroll). Barstad differs from other contributors by proposing a post-critical “narrative history.”

Grabbe writes a conclusion summing up the similarities and differences of the contributors’ positions. What all Seminar members object to is “(a) that the *literary* construct of ‘biblical Israel’ can be immediately translated into historical terms, and (b) that ‘Israel’ should dominate and canalize study of the region in antiquity” (p. 189). There was also a consensus that writing “a ‘history of Israel’ as the history of an *ethnic* entity is simply too question-begging” (p. 189, emphasis Grabbe).

None of the contributors takes the position that the Biblical accounts are “innocent until proven guilty”; as Grabbe notes, it is precisely the trustworthiness of the Bible as evidence that constitutes the question (p. 193). While all the contributors believe the Bible contains falsifications and inaccuracies, the difference between their positions lies in the degree to which they are convinced that verifiable historical information can be extracted from the text. Grabbe’s essay provides the most detail on how the Bible could be critically used when doing historiography. It remains to be seen whether the methods he proposes actually allow historians to overcome the “agnosticism” that Carroll discusses.

Given his postcritical sympathies, Barstad’s essay seemed somewhat out of place alongside the other contributors. It seems to me that there is only a “crisis” in historiography (pp. 39–40) if one accepts the implications of postmodern theory—which, as Barstad himself admits (p. 54), not all are willing to do. It is doubtful that most of the other contributors would agree that “‘truth’ on the one side and ‘fiction’ on the other is not a valid distinction anymore” (p. 43), or that “it is important to realize that we today can no longer make the claim that traditional historical truth is more ‘valuable’ or more ‘correct’ than narrative truth” (p. 64).

While the word “ideological” was used by several contributors to describe the Bible (pp. 89, 111, 160, 192), there is insufficient discussion regarding to what degree the presence of ideology prevents historiographers from recovering genuine historical data in the text. Nor is an adequate distinction always drawn between an ideological *creation* of history and an ideological *interpretation* of history.

Some contributors (e.g. Becking, p. 71) contrast what they see as the Bible’s theological impulse with an (absent) historiographical impulse. While all admit that the Biblical authors were not modern historiographers, it is difficult to see why a theological interest excludes a historical interest. How could, say, the DtrH make its theological point in 2 Kings 17 without adducing events that purportedly happened? Grabbe’s argument that theological intent does not automatically invalidate the Bible’s status as historical evidence (pp. 32–34) is well taken.

This volume is valuable for its acknowledgment of past errors, its emphasis on methodological consistency and its testimony that the Seminar is willing to confront difficult issues, even if these issues are not fully resolved. Although it is written by historians who use the critical method, the assumptions of which have been questioned elsewhere, it raises significant questions for those who do not. What is their rationale for writing “histories of Israel”? What methods have they uncritically adopted? This volume is also significant for the nonhistorian in that long-held ideas (e.g. the existence of the Davidic united monarchy, pp. 141–142) are being challenged—an event that has important implications for current religious beliefs. These scholars are redefining the historiographic task for the next century and should be watched closely.

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Scribes and Schools: The Canonization of the Hebrew Scriptures. By Philip R. Davies. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998, xi + 219 pp., \$24.00.

The work is designed to discuss the social circumstances lying behind the canonization of Scripture. The author states that no scholarship ever approaches a set of data without "some prejudices and preconceptions" (p. 3). His prejudice is that Biblical scholarship's construction (or reconstruction) of the canonical process is to be preferred over the main (i.e. Biblical) construction of canon for "no scholars believe that the ten commandments were given as written to Moses on Sinai." He states explicitly that Israel never existed as described in the pages of the Biblical canon (p. 3) but the historical accounts of ancient Israel are mainly traditions created by a later society. This gives the reader an introduction to the author's prejudices.

The book divides into ten chapters. The first chapter is "The Dimension of Canon." Davies challenges the idea that the Biblical canon is reliable concerning its own formation and asserts that Biblical scholarship has been lax in refuting those who assume that it does. He follows with a discussion on the *origins* of the meaning of "canon" and traces the meaning of this word to Hellenistic schools. He is correct to point out that the idea of canonization is much older than Hellenism, present in both Mesopotamian and Egyptian civilizations. He then points out that canonizing is a historical process. It is a matter of *copying* and *archiving*. The canonizing (not just copying) of the OT covered centuries. The issue then is how and why a text becomes canonical. For Davies it is because a text was copied until it reached a certain (respected) status and was then classified as belonging to a collection of some kind. He then proceeds to point out that what is commonly deemed as canonical is also considered authoritative. Davies ends the first chapter by stating that "I think it is methodologically imperative that we discount the 'canonical' status of the canonized sources, because their canonicity does not constrain the historian to credulity" (p. 14). In other words, if I understand him correctly, only Scripture addressing the subject of canon that corresponds to Davies's sociological analysis is to be considered as relevant.

The second chapter, "Canon in the Ancient World," gives a brief survey of scribal tradition in ancient Mesopotamian, Egyptian and Greek cultures. Ancient scribes were a highly trained class and played an absolutely integral part in each of these cultures. "Learned scribes since the time of those who existed after the gods . . . they made themselves heirs out of writings, of teaching which they had composed" (p. 32). Literally thousands of texts have been recovered from Mesopotamia alone. Scribes copied literature over a long period of time, both scrupulously transmitting what they copied as well as making changes in the text. In this regard, it is surprising that there is no reference to Tigay's works. This chapter closes with presuppositions as to why a document was canonized. The reader should remember that the author here is discussing non-Biblical texts too. It is not unfair from this point, however, to suspect that the author is laying out the criteria he will use to suggest the motives for canonizing the OT canon. *In fine*, his criteria for discerning canonization include the use of artificial and archaic language, longevity of a text that creates a certain aura, the text's association with an event or festival, the profuse copying of a text in scribal schools, its incorporation into a library, the urge to produce a standardized text to minimize variants, respect for the past, the output of famous authors who were heads of schools and the values held by scribes from different social classes.

The third chapter treats "misconceptions" about Jewish canonizing. He dismisses the works of M. Brettler, M. Smith, J. W. Miller and D. Carr with their notion that canonization arose from an attempt to resolve conflict. M. Fishbane fares better. Fishbane sees canonization deeply inbedded in a long history of scribal activity, the approach that

I also hold. However, Fishbane falls short, in Davies's assessment, for failing to demonstrate an acceptable rationale for the canonical process. He then critiques M. Haran's work *tyrqmh pwsah*. Haran's view, close to mine, states that Scripture was written with the intention of being canonized. Canonization was "coterminous with final composition" (p. 47). Davies's concern with Haran is that he cannot understand why certain books of the OT would be *intended* for canonization nor how an author might obtain clout enough to warrant canonical acceptability. (The issue, of course, is fundamental.) His second reservation is understandable if one does not accept the Biblical rationale for canonicity.

Davies then discusses the works of J. Sanders and B. Childs, perhaps the two most well-known authors on the subject. He charges that Sanders relies too much on an analogy with a postcanonical process, i.e., a position that focuses on the reception of canon rather than its formulation (p. 49). His criticism of Childs is more severe. He objects to Childs's promotion of a "religious dynamic" in interaction in community as a decisive factor in canonizing. For Davies, this is too restrictive. It seems passing strange, however, that one cannot consider a religious dynamic as primary in a book like the OT. For Davies the final canon is the end product of an open-ended process that includes multiple and complex societal factors that made up a number of smaller canons, like the law and wisdom, which were eventually finalized, collected and positioned into one corpus that marked the end of a very long process.

Chapter 4, "A Sketch of Israelite and Judean History," contains a brief history of the priesthood in Jerusalem. During the monarchical period canonization may have had its start. But it seems that the societal makeup of the monarchical period precluded canonizing. His conclusion then is that the history of canonization began with the returnees after the Babylonian captivity. Canonization, if it did begin earlier in the monarchical period, was interrupted and reformed entirely by the immigrants who returned in the neo-Persian period. It was in this period that the temple and priesthood assumed the control of the community. The priestly scribes served the goals of the Persians and became the custodians of imperial revenues and treasures generated by trade. This required a large number of scribes. Along with this, there developed a zeal for a literature that expressed a national ideology, the basis for canon and the way to exert local control. Later on the Hasmoneans had a need for *political canonizing* to insure the integrity of Judaism against the encroachment of Hellenism.

The fifth chapter deals with the role of Judah's institutions such as schools and libraries, essential to understanding the process of canonization. These functions indicate extensive scribal activity. While scribal activity flourished in ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt it most likely did not, in Davies's opinion, flourish as early as the monarchical period in Israel, primarily because scribal activity that produced canonical works had to have a good (societal) support system. Such a community *in* Israel did not appear until the neo-Persian period. The discussion of David's retinue in 1 Chronicles 23–27 describes a *situ* much different from its description in 2 Sam 8:16–18. The Chronicler describes David's court in Chronicles in terms of a Persian administration. "The view of Judah in the Persian period as a cultural backwater . . . needs to be reconsidered" (p. 79). (Perhaps, in light of the postexilic prophets, he is right.) That milieu provided the conditions for canonizing. Texts that depict the depositing of sacred writings in the time of Moses, Joshua and Samuel are texts of a much later era retrojecting its present practices in the past. So much, then, amounts to one's dating of Scripture and the value one places on the integrity of the sacred texts.

The sixth chapter concerns the canonization of legal material. Canonization in ancient Israel is improbable. Legal material from Mesopotamia has nothing to do with legal praxis, a hallmark of Mosaic legislation. Law codes served as teaching models of

ideal justice. Canonization during Josiah's "reform" is discounted. That, according to Davies, was complete fiction. Deuteronomy, the only book in the Pentateuch deemed as *Torah*, was written in the fifth century by Levites. These priests moved to power by creating a temple-centered society to be governed by an authoritative law code putting ultimate authority in the priests (p. 99). For political clout laws were formulated after the fashion of a suzerain treaty to be read at liturgical ceremonies. It is this postexilic community in neo-Persian era that provided the motivation and milieu for the canonizing of the Mosaic law.

The seventh chapter, "The Canonizing of the Prophets," states that the starting point of canonizing does not reside in the distinction between the true and false prophet. Davies argues that Noth's "Deuteronomistic History" has clouded the issue. Noth's theory holds that the scrolls from Joshua to Kings were a single work. It is better judgment to see that these works are not a single work but pertain to the shaping and reshaping, the copying and recopying of various (canonical) scrolls into a rational sequence. Thus by editing, scribes harmonized scrolls attributed to the prophets into one canon, making them fit for preservation. These scrolls were transmitted because they had contemporary relevance; the prophets were wise men who admonished Israel to study Moses.

In the next chapter, "Canons of David and Solomon," Davies suggests connections between the works attributed to these two kings and the Levites in Chronicles. The works include the Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, etc. Again it is an attempt to support the position that the canonizing of canons in Israel took place in the postexilic period by the Levitical priesthood. The following chapter deals with "serious entertainment" referring to books like Daniel, Esther and Ruth. Many scholars already hold a late date for these books. Their rise to canonical status is due to the entertaining quality that made them very popular. Jewish additions to Daniel and Esther demonstrate ethnicity as another motivation for canonizing and an early tendency to bring these works into the mainstream of Jewish thinking of the day.

In the tenth chapter, "Canons and the Dead Sea Scrolls," the author searches for clues in the Qumran corpus for traits of canonizing. He sees the numerous Qumran scrolls and fragments as representing stages of the canonical process. Some scrolls represent a final canonical form (Exodus and Leviticus?) while on the other hand some texts were hardly at the autograph stage (p. 168). Some were somewhere in between. Such factors as the presence of multiple copies of the text, contents cited as authoritative, the extent to which a text has been fixed and interpretive literature generated by Biblical writings help to weigh where a Biblical text is in the canonical process. The last chapter concerns the rabbinic-Masoretic canon. Davies holds that the final standardization of the Hebrew Bible was established by Jacob ben Chayyim in the second rabbinic Bible (1524/25). The move, however, toward standardization is much earlier, during the second-temple period. This move arose from the need to define Judaism during the Maccabean conflict. Orthodox Judaism was the way of arriving at a consensus in Judaism to meet political issues. The Hasmonean initiative revealed in 2 Macc 2:13-15 of the establishment of a sacred library is a mark of the beginning toward a finalized canon because it was the Hasmoneans who brought Jewish history to a glorious closure. This was the canon that the rabbis inherited.

I hope I have presented Davies's work fairly. It is difficult for a conservative Presbyterian not to find objections to a Biblical minimalist at almost every turn. But even if historical-critical methodology is a given, I believe many critics would have reservations about depending so heavily on the author's social constructs and his equation of a mechanical process of transmission as the rationale for canonical authority. And whether or not one accepts the supernatural in the OT, one must deal with the fact

that OT writers *did*. “There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, Than are dreamt of in your philosophy” (*Hamlet*, Act 1, Scene 5).

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Pillars of the Kingdom: Five Features of the Kingdom of God Progressively Revealed in the Old Testament. By Robert I. Vasholz. Lanham: University Press of America, 1997, ix + 238 pp., \$29.50 paper.

Vasholz has set forth in this book a theology of the kingdom of God that he believes is revealed in stages throughout the OT. Beginning in Genesis and concluding with the prophets of the neo-Persian era, he arranges this development under five rubrics: kingdom politics, kingdom pilgrims, kingdom progress, kingdom profile and kingdom presence.

This way of approaching the OT is intriguing in that it dares to suggest that a theology of God's kingdom is present even in the earliest chapters of Genesis. In Genesis 1–3, for example, Vasholz depicts man as the representative of God's kingdom on earth, the agent of God's rule over the creation (kingdom politics). God is present in the garden (kingdom presence). There is order and design in the creation from the very beginning (kingdom profile). There is a spiritual struggle in the lives of the first human couple involving a choice between righteousness and evil (kingdom pilgrims). Although there is moral failure on the part of man, God provides for spiritual victory in the midst of defeat and paves the way for the spiritual progress of mankind (kingdom progress). These themes of struggle and failure, progress and triumph, continue throughout the OT on an increasingly larger scale. The development of each of these five rubrics becomes more impressive with the author's treatment of the Davidic-Solomonic era and beyond.

One question that arises from such an approach, however, is whether it is appropriate to talk about the “kingdom of God” in the OT before the establishment of the monarchy. There are no explicit references to God as the king of Israel until that time, although there are many passages that imply the rule of God over his people (e.g. Exod 15:1–5; Num 10:35; 1 Sam 4:4; 8:7). This is not to deny the sovereignty of God over his creation from the beginning of time or the unfolding of God's redemptive plan throughout the OT. It is simply raising the question of whether a theology of the kingdom of God can be found in the Pentateuch or if such a theology must be derived from other sources. Furthermore, the book lacks a conclusion, which may have clarified the author's purpose in setting forth the material as he did. Viewed as a whole, however, this book offers a helpful survey of the theme of God's rule over his called-out people in the OT.

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Old Testament Theology. By Horst Dietrich Preuss. Translated by Leo G. Perdue. 2 vols. OTL. Louisville: Westminster, 1995, 1996, xii + 372 pp.; viii + 438 pp., \$34.00 each.

Here are two information-packed volumes presented by a seasoned, articulate German scholar on a topic that continues to fascinate, challenge and engage scholars. Preuss, known for clearly-written books and wide ranging essays, died in 1993, a year

after the publication of vol. 2. It is to the high credit of translator and publisher that vol. 1, which was completed by the author in 1991, appeared in English in 1995, and vol. 2 a year later.

Preuss advocates a center for OT theology, and that at a time when many say that a search for a center is pointless. For Preuss the center of the OT is God's election and the consequent obligation that this election imposes. The election is not a one-time activity and certainly not outside of time but notably in history and so open-ended. The primary instance of election is the selection of a people Israel in conjunction with their exodus from Egypt. Yahweh chooses a land, kings, priests, prophets and the city of Jerusalem. The obligations that devolve on those chosen are fundamentally to witness to this God who has elected them but also to order life in keeping with Yahweh's demands.

Volume 1 is devoted to a description of the God who elects. Following a succinct chapter on the history, methodology and structure of an OT theology, Preuss unpacks the meaning of election via word studies, their semantic fields, along with an overview of God's election activity. God's election in history aims at a community of God's people. The obligation part of the centralizing equation is taken up through a discussion of the Sinai covenant and law in general. The majority of vol. 1 focuses on God's names, titles, acts, powers of activity (Yahweh's spirit, his angel, his glory and "name," his justice, blessing, wisdom and word), and God's "nature." The topic of revelation gets serious treatment.

The second volume explores the consequences of Yahweh's election activity and is more diverse in subject matter. It begins with the narratives of the ancestors and locates the Yahwistic religion within the ancient Near East. Kingship, the messianic hope, the temple and the so-called Zion tradition are treated. Under the topic, "Election Experiences in History," Preuss somewhat oddly deals with sociology, anthropology, ethics and worship, and only in conclusion deals directly with history (more accurately eschatology).

There is much to applaud. The case Preuss makes for election and obligation as a theological center cannot be dismissed as just another futile attempt. Like other proposed centers, scholars will poke at inadequacies. In the light of past attempts, Preuss perhaps wisely arranges his materials somewhat loosely. The center is in God's activities and not in concepts. But the theological power that emerges from positing a center and expounding it far outweighs, in my opinion, the liabilities that result from an inability to fit all the data under a single theological umbrella.

The range of material that can be brought under the topic of election is large. Quite properly and rather eloquently Preuss offers a portrait of Yahweh, Israel's deity who is sovereign over the world. Evangelicals who are in danger of bowing at the shrines of sociology and anthropology could clearly benefit from close attention to what is the high point of the work: the discussion of God (1.139–249). In Preuss's scheme the covenant is clearly, and in this writer's view properly, subordinate to a larger reality. For whatever reason OT theologians have overrated the place of covenant.

The expansiveness of the treatment is reminiscent of Eichrodt's work, and like Eichrodt, Preuss has an eye out for the ancient Near East context and hence comparisons and contrasts. But Preuss better than Eichrodt represents the dynamic inherent in the OT. Preuss's work is in a class with von Rad's two volumes, but Preuss is more focused than von Rad. Preuss has published on wisdom, preaching from the OT and on Deuteronomy and "Second Isaiah." It is his concentration on the last two that is repeatedly transparent in this theology.

Some sections, such as the discussion on the fear of the Lord, are a model of lucidity and comprehensiveness. Well-stated nuggets are here and there. "Hope in God is indeed

never free from disappointment, but it is still removed from the dejection that disappointment usually produces" (2.259). The writing style, even in translation, is methodical without being plodding (for the most part), and flows well.

A marked and welcome feature of the book is Preuss's crisp but highly informed interaction with other scholars, mostly German, but also American, including evangelicals. Selected writings, some from this *Journal*, are both noted and evaluated. The author's acquaintance with secondary literature and his control of that literature is both commendable and enviable. The longest chapter in vol. 1 (110 pages) has 773 endnotes. The smaller-print endnotes for the two volumes occupy a total of 164 pages; there scholars will find choice resources. Preuss's discussion is laced more than is customary with Biblical references. At times his treatment of a topic is encyclopedic.

Readers of this *Journal* would do well to follow Preuss in highlighting the importance of history. Scholars of an earlier era may have been too preoccupied with historical settings and their verification, but the current fascination with the literary lens through which to see theology, and which so easily becomes dismissive of the historical dimensions, clearly needs correction.

For all its pluses, the two volumes will not however be the last word on the subject (if that is even conceivable). While readers of this *Journal* can be encouraged and even admonished by the importance Preuss gives to history, they will understandably take offense at the kind of historical grid Preuss offers. Preuss leans very heavily on a critically reconstructed history. Still in this regard he is a moderate. Alt's view on the God of the ancestors is rejected. Unfortunately the now-acknowledged fragile documentary hypothesis is fully embraced. Too often an otherwise well-written synthesis on a theological subject is marred by the intrusion of an outdated historical reconstruction.

The enthusiasm evoked by vol. 1 wanes sharply in vol. 2 especially in the exposition of worship. The reconstruction regarding sacrifices is not only too conjectural (Preuss cannot unshackle himself from the views of his teacher L. Rost) but the treatment of sin and atonement is too removed from the theological mainstream. This discussion is postponed to late in the second volume. His treatment is problematic. "The themes of sin and guilt, as well as of atonement and cultic and ethical purity, are postexilic" (2.234). His exposition on "righteousness" is challenging but also troublesome. Somehow the classical prophets with their speeches of accusation and God's judgment do not get their due.

The work is lengthy (567 pages of exposition). At several points Preuss gets caught up in elaborate treatments of the genesis of a conception or institution. Given his conviction about the importance of history, such descriptions, were they succinct, might be tolerable. But are they necessary to a book focused on theology? A writer on the theology must distinguish, in my judgment, between phenomenology and theology, between the history of religion and theology. Failure on Preuss's part to be discrete about these distinctions results in information overload and now and again in a blurring of focus.

The monograph is one to be reckoned with, read and studied, not least because it is the latest, and possibly the last to build an OT theology on a critically reconstructed history. Still, the service he has rendered in stirring the Biblical theological pot is a very substantial one. The scholarly community is clearly in his debt.

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Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy. By Walter Brueggemann. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997, 777 pp., \$48.00.

A prolific writer and widely renowned scholar here offers a highly stimulating, although controversial, synthesis of the OT. Brueggemann is known for exegetical essays that have a theological edge and that press for current relevance. Both features—attention to the theological nuances of single texts and his grappling with the text's address to the present situation—characterize this expansive treatise. For this contribution, so thoughtful and articulate and destined to give another large impetus to the endeavor of laying bare the OT are all in his debt: the church, academia and society.

Brueggemann's work capitalizes on the image of the courtroom with its testimony, counter-testimony and disputation. A third of the book deals with Israel's core testimony that is explicated with the help of the grammar used to tell of Yahweh: verbs, nouns and adjectives. The verbs include "create," "make promises," "deliver," "command" and "lead." Adjectives for God (e.g. "gracious," "avenging") come primarily from Exod 34:6–7 and some psalms. Nouns to speak of God are metaphors of governance (judge, king, warrior, father), about which Brueggemann is less than enthusiastic, and metaphors of sustenance (artist, healer, gardener-vinedresser, and shepherd).

In the description of Israel's counter-testimony in which her own witness is cross-examined (ca. 100 pages), the negativity of Yahweh is explored: his hiddenness and the ambiguity of his character. Brueggemann highlights tensions, even the possible "contradiction within the very character of Yahweh" (p. 249). Brueggemann also stresses the incongruity between Israel's core testimony and her lived experience. Here Brueggemann finds a place for wisdom literature. The entry of additional witnesses in Part 3 only slightly relieves the tension in the imaginary courtroom. Here the subject is the transactions, or better, altercations between Yahweh and conversation partners, primarily Israel, but also the human person, nations and even creation. A fourth section (ca. 40 pages) is about mediators between people and Yahweh: the king, prophet, cult, Torah and sage. Brueggemann's passionate concern to understand how Biblical texts impinge on the current situation is reflected in a 100-page introduction and a 50-page conclusion. In the first he astutely analyzes the driving forces in OT theology writing in the 20th century. In the latter he sets out the way in which a Biblical theology addresses post-modern culture.

Brueggemann's book is Biblical theology in a new key! He eschews both the historical approach and the canonical approach. He dismisses, or at least brackets out, attention to ontology, reason and history (pp. 118, 125n., 708)—all characteristic concerns of the enlightenment. Christian faith as reasoned faith (à la Cartesian dualism) has failed (p. 715). Salvation history is not a rubric here; repeatedly it is stated that it is impossible to know what "really happened" (pp. 206, 714). Nor is the book keyed to historical periodizations, except that the time of the exile is identified as the matrix for Israel's faith (pp. 74–78). Sociology and literary rhetoric (grammar, rhetoric), rather than history are governing perspectives. Discrepancies are identified, not in order to be harmonized, but to be exploited for the tensions they elicit. The word "odd" occurs frequently (p. 622–623), and a repeated theme is that of tension, paradox and disjunction (p. 282). In earlier proposals for an OT theology (e.g. his articles in *CBQ* 1985) he tilted toward dialectic; here he plunges in that direction headlong.

The postenlightenment ethos is taken seriously. In the spirit of the philosopher M. Foucault (whom he cites) Brueggemann stresses the particular and often shows his aversion to universalistic claims (p. 325). He seeks to honor the variegated nature of the text. He fears reductionism, resists closure (pp. 149, 268–269, 717) and forever appeals to openness. High visibility is given to transactions and interactions. When introducing

the NT he makes every effort to avoid supersessionism (pp. 449, 651). Brueggemann engages Israel's testimony about Yahweh with modern agenda: policy-dominated violence such as the Holocaust (pp. 263, 329), civil disobedience (p. 240), feminism, nation-states, homosexuality and economy. He hopes that his construal of the OT will be more pertinent to pastoral care than other more cerebral-oriented attempts. The lack of a topical index, unfortunately, reduces the reader's access to these topics.

Brueggemann's work, perhaps as seminal for the next generation as was von Rad's, is more radical than von Rad's, for Brueggemann essentially turns his back on the enlightenment project. He sees von Rad as trapped by history (p. 145n.). But like von Rad, Brueggemann represents the dynamic that is present in the Scripture, not in the interplay and development of traditions as did von Rad, but in the tensions that exist in testimonies. Unlike von Rad, he places creation up front, neglect of which, he charges, has contributed to the crisis of patriarchalism (p. 161). Brueggemann's book contrasts sharply with the recent work by H. D. Preuss, who in the tradition of historical-critical scholarship gives major attention to history, advocates God's election as a centering theme and like von Rad subordinates creation to redemption. Preuss has a large and compelling study on the names for God; Brueggemann does not treat the topic. Preuss leans heavily on Deuteronomy and Isaiah and so stresses God's election. His references to wisdom are minimal. Brueggemann also gives a privileged position to Second Isaiah (p. 120n.), but returns frequently to Exod 34:6-7 (see the Scripture index) as he elaborates on the tensions within Israel's testimony. For Brueggemann wisdom plays a large role.

A strength of the book is that theological claims are carefully anchored in Biblical texts, not by way of tacked-on Biblical references but by extensive exegesis, frequently in clusters of three diverse Biblical texts. A welcome feature is that these text-passages, extending to as much as a page, are often printed in their entirety. Theological word studies abound, especially in the first part of the book, with a focus not on single words but on the semantic fields. Brueggemann's encyclopedic knowledge and his extensive work on a wide range of genres enable him surefootedly to incorporate a vast array of Biblical material.

Brueggemann's keen awareness of the current culture and the present interpretive context enables him to model creatively how Scripture and Biblical theology are to be brought into conversation with systematic theology, sociology, psychology, and related disciplines. His skill with the English language is delightful and enviable (e.g. Yahweh as "a restless agent of social newness": p. 179). The reader is readily drawn along. Frequent summaries, extending to whole chapters (e.g. chap. 7), serve as helpful review and orientation. Some topics in OT theology, often minimally treated, such as nations or the aesthetic, are well-researched and presented. Other topics, such as holiness and the drama of divine/human partnership, are explicated in unconventional but compelling ways. Observations on literary schemata are both fascinating and compelling (e.g. hearing/justice/deuteronomistic in juxtaposition with seeing/holiness/priestly, or the synthesis of modes of mediation; cf. also the schematic, p. 700). Brueggemann's work is quite strictly theological; he probes relentlessly the answer to the question "How does ancient Israel speak about God?"

In one sense Brueggemann has destabilized the discipline of OT theology. The sociological bent (e.g. courtroom testimony), the philosophical underpinnings (diversity), and the prominence given to the literary (e.g. grammar) contravene conventional approaches. The book raises large questions, as it should, but Brueggemann's answers are nontraditional and frequently unsettling and stretched. Readers of this *Journal* will properly raise questions about Brueggemann's disregard of the historical dimensions. Does not the bracketing out of the history compromise a major feature of the faith? What really happens when the literary metaphor rather than historical events

become determining in theologizing? Is not the emphasis on the tensions (even for the interiority of Yahweh, it is claimed) an exaggeration?

Brueggemann, it will seem to many, works overtime to enlarge on the negative traits of Yahweh, such as his fierceness. Does the portrait of God as presented by Brueggemann adequately cohere with that given in the OT? Brueggemann wants to keep options open. Does he so accommodate to the spirit of the age that he misses the persuasiveness with which the OT addresses the world? If his presentation has ready appeal at the moment, will it in the longer run still be adjudged adequate? Brueggemann speaks repeatedly about Israel's daring assertions. His own daring at times oversteps limits, as when he speaks about "an untamed quality in Yahweh," Yahweh as a "loose cannon" (p. 296), or about "Yahweh's mean-spirited irascibility" (p. 560).

There will be debate about pieces of his analysis: his minimizing of the importance of human personhood in the image of God in favor of a stress on relatedness (chap. 15), asserting that Israel never arrived at monotheism (p. 231), offering only a limited discussion of messianism, emphasizing obedience but avoiding use of the word "sin" (though admittedly sometimes seeking new language, e.g. violation of governance, p. 503). Readers of this *Journal* will often find themselves magnetically drawn to Brueggemann's intriguing conceptualizations, but then again repelled by his troubling formulations.

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Priests, Prophets, Diviners, Sages: A Socio-historical Study of Religious Specialists in Ancient Israel. By Lester L. Grabbe. Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1995, xviii + 261, \$20.00 paper.

Grabbe examines all the main forms of religious specialists in Israel—those who devote themselves to "a particular branch of religion, or viewed organizationally, of a religious system" (p. 2). The author takes a very skeptical view of the historical reliability of Biblical texts because the original authors and redactors did not have an unbiased view of what they were describing. Thus Grabbe relies heavily on (1) hints in the text, (2) cross-cultural comparisons and (3) some authentic texts. To aid his approach, he uses anthropological ethnographies of primitive peoples plus M. Weber's sociological method of developing "ideal types" to suggest new possible interpretations, to provide models that can be tested, to fill in gaps missing in the Bible and to suggest new questions to ask the Biblical text. By taking a synchronic look at various OT texts and comparing them to ancient Near Eastern material (which is often quite a good survey), Grabbe develops a Gestalt, or composite picture of each religious specialist: the king, priest, prophet, diviner and the sage. The main difficulty with his methodology is that it excessively highlights minor and unclear points (e.g. Joseph's divination cup) and regards any theological interpretation of the Biblical data as suspect, critically undisciplined and of little value. Consequently, he concludes that there is no qualitative distinction between divination and prophecy (p. 124).

Grabbe finds evidence underlying the present text that Israelite kings were heavily involved with the cult (e.g. David and Solomon set up temple worship) and believes that later views of kingship have "suppressed or reinterpreted" much of this information. He surveys ancient Near Eastern material where kings were main figures in the cult, but wisely rejects Mowinkel's theory of an autumnal New Year's festival in Israel. The chapter on the priest is a fairly straightforward survey of the roles of priests, with a brief discussion of the differences between the Levites and Aaronic priests. His

ancient Near Eastern comparison is somewhat slanted because he does not include a discussion of divination by ancient Near Eastern priests (that is in a separate chapter). Surprisingly, he concludes that most references to prostitution are to be interpreted merely as symbolic language of religious straying from Israel's God.

A major portion of the book is devoted to prophets. He connects Elijah to the activities of a shaman or healer, concludes that the story of Micaiah ben Imlah is biased against Ahab, believes that the woman who had Isaiah's child was not his wife (Isa 8:1–3), and feels that the "false prophet" Hananiah (Jeremiah 28) was really little different from the "true prophet" Isaiah, except for the specific time and place of the two prophecies. He repeatedly tries to minimize the distinction between true and false prophets and emphasizes the common characteristics between Biblical prophecy and divination. Although many blinded Israelites were deceived because they did not see these as distinct, this is not the way the Biblical text presents them. After a nice survey of ancient Near Eastern and modern (Nuer, Seneca Indians) "prophets," he concludes that "the study of Israelite prophecy has been bedeviled by the theologically partisan views of the discussants. Such theological questions have no place in a properly (*sic*) sociological study" (p. 116). One can hardly read such a statement without reflecting on the absolute necessity of being theological when reading the prophets. Grabbe's own partisan views have a major impact on his "objective" approach to the text.

The final two chapters cover diviners and the wise. He properly recognizes divination as a real part of Israelite life, but rather than painting it in any kind of negative tone, he pictures it as an acceptable means of inquiring of God by pointing to Joseph's divining cup (Gen 37:19), the Urim, Thummim, and ephod, the household gods, and by claiming that "all inquiry language" is evidence of divination (pp. 124, 126). Thus he uncovers the true situation in Israel that biased editors of the text tried to cover up (Deut 18:9–14 is Deuteronomic fiction in his view). Of course part of the problem is Grabbe's broad definition of divination (p. 139). His treatment of the wise includes the wisdom books, scribes, schools and the relationship between wisdom and apocalyptic, but this chapter is a survey of problems rather than a clear picture of the role of the wise person.

The ideal type produced by these studies is what Grabbe calls a "critical minimum" (p. 206) that presents the least that can be said without speculation (a questionable statement). On the one hand we have to agree with Grabbe's assessment that many past studies of these roles (by scholars on the left and the right) have been overly controlled by theological assumptions that are no longer credible. But Grabbe's solution, which cuts out most theological statements of the text, does not produce a satisfactory solution. His "objective" sociological method gives a bad name to sociology, for a sociological study of roles does not need to eliminate theological claims made by religious people. Grabbe's basic distrust of the "biased" Biblical text we have inherited heavily colors the tones of the images he sees in Israelite society.

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Sage, Priest, Prophet: Religious and Intellectual Leadership in Ancient Israel. By Joseph Blenkinsopp. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1995, xi + 191, \$19.00.

This contribution to the growing socio-historical study of leadership roles in Israel investigates three social roles (sage, priest and prophet). Blenkinsopp's approach to this task recognizes that people can function in several roles, that later redactors may

have reshaped some traditions, and that Weber's "ideal types" are useful for comparative purposes. He believes that the ideological nature of the written record in the Bible informs us of their own self-understanding of different roles and legitimates the activity of identifying those who filled these roles.

Blenkinsopp is sympathetic with Whybray's study of wisdom but disagrees with his conclusion that there was no institutional vehicle or professional class that kept or developed wisdom traditions. Starting with Ben Sira in the Hellenistic period, where more is known about wisdom, Blenkinsopp moves to earlier texts where less information is available. His goal is to find the themes in the traditions of the sages that give continuity to their world view. Ben Sira's wisdom is didactic, upper class, closely connected to piety and the law, acclimatized (but distinct from) Hellenistic culture, and focused on morals and ethics. He traces the earliest references of this tradition back to the "elders" who were custodians and transmitters of the ethos which gave Israel its identity in its early stages. When statehood was developed, scribes were needed to keep records and develop its literary and intellectual traditions, but little epic or commercial archaeological evidence exists to support these processes from the time of David and Solomon. He finds more evidence in the time of Hezekiah (Prov 25:1) and in Isaiah's castigation of the king's counselors. Proverbial wisdom and legal codes served as educational material for those entering the state bureaucracy. This upper-class social context produced Job in the Persian period, but the writings of Qohelet were influenced by Greek Stoic teachers in the third century BCE.

Blenkinsopp believes that the priestly information (P) comes from the post-exilic period, but he maintains that the worship practices of Israel were quite different from the ideals in P (he notes the two stones representing deities found in the Arad temple). The priests were in charge of all cultic activities, exerted a great deal of social control over worshippers and taught the torah to insure stability in the Israelite way of life. Blenkinsopp traces the development of the priesthood from early divination by the use of the Urim and Thummim, through the early priests at Shiloh and concludes with the rise of Zadok and the complex view of priesthood in Chronicles. He also re-evaluates the relationship between the priests and Levites.

The final chapter covers the prophetic role, keeping in mind the differences between prophetic figures that appear at various time periods and the differences between Israel's and ancient Near Eastern cultures. Thus he appropriately gives comparative data a secondary role of corroborating and contextualizing information, while giving primary weight to Israelite evidence. Blenkinsopp believes the Deuteronomic view of prophecy had a major impact on the Israelite presentation of prophets as preservers of the law of Moses. After describing the activities of several prophetic-like figures (seer, medium, augur, man of God) he gives a brief historical survey of early communal peripheral prophets who were not cult functionaries, the state prophets and the writing prophets who are characterized as "dissident intellectual." They brought "a coherent vision of a moral universe over against current assumptions cherished and propagated by the contemporary state apparatus" (p. 144). Their social role was to form, maintain, transform and disintegrate the social norms by calling into question the assumptions of the dominant ideology. With the rise of an upper class, a state military and bureaucracy, changes in the taxation system and land tenure rules, a lower class arose that was oppressed so that the luxurious life style of a few could be maintained. These injustices gave rise to prophetic protests of social injustice and attempts to bring reform to the prevailing social setting.

Blenkinsopp's sometimes Biblical reconstructions are only moderately developed but his sociological analysis is usually articulated with a good sense of social reality and its impact on roles and relationships. The three essays are not equally detailed, but each provides a wealth of current information on the social understanding of Israelite

culture. The reader will gain much from this text and find its methodology and conclusions more consistent with Biblical data than Grabbe's similar book (reviewed above).

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Hebrew/Aramaic Index to the Septuagint, Keyed to the Hatch-Redpath Concordance. By Takamitsu Muraoka. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998, 160 pp., \$19.95 paper.

Hatch and Redpath's concordance to the LXX, first published in three volumes in 1897 and reprinted in 1987 by Baker Books in an attractive two-volume edition, has been an important tool for the study of the Greek OT throughout the twentieth century. In a supplement to this concordance Hatch and Redpath also provided, among other things, a Hebrew index in which they indicated the Greek equivalencies used by the LXX translators for the words of the Hebrew Bible. However, in order to conserve space they did not actually cite the Greek words used to render the various Hebrew or Aramaic words in question, but instead devised a system of numerical cross-referencing. After the Hebrew or Aramaic word for each entry in their index one finds a page and column reference where the corresponding Greek word(s) may be found in the concordance proper. Sometimes this system works fairly well; at other times it is laborious and awkward. For example, for Hebrew *ʾābaddōn* ("destruction") the index lists only one entry (151c), which can be rather quickly checked. But in the case of the verb *ʾāmar* ("to say") one finds for the qal alone some 50 entries. Looking up the appropriate page references in order to determine the Greek identity of these 50 words is needlessly time-consuming. In other words, while Hatch and Redpath's index will eventually yield the information needed, it is not very user-friendly.

It is this deficiency that Muraoka has sought to correct. In the work under review he provides the same information that Hatch and Redpath sought to provide, but in a much more usable and convenient format. Beneath each Hebrew or Aramaic word is a listing of its actual Greek equivalencies in the LXX, together with page and column references to the specific listing found in the concordance. Muraoka's index thus makes the use of this feature of the Hatch-Redpath concordance much easier than was previously the case.

Muraoka has also taken the opportunity to improve on certain other features of Hatch and Redpath's work. For example, he engages in text-critical decisions both with regard to the actual *Vorlage* behind the Greek translation and with regard to variants within the Greek manuscript tradition itself. He also includes Hebrew and Aramaic equivalents for Greek words in 1 Esdras, since that material was absent from Hatch and Redpath. He also takes into account the evidence of the Dead Sea scrolls where this is relevant. (For a fuller explanation of his methods, see T. Muraoka, "A New Index to Hatch and Redpath," *Ephemerides theologicae lovanienses* 73 [1997] 257–276.)

Muraoka's index is a welcome addition to LXX tools and studies. In the interests of fairness we should extend thanks not only to Muraoka himself but also to his wife, who completed the initial 500+ page handwritten draft in 1971 and more recently proofread the galleys for the present publication. The work has been well produced and accurately checked. It is available both as a separately bound volume and as a part of the latest edition of the Hatch and Redpath concordance now published by Baker. This index is a useful tool that will further facilitate study of what is in fact the most important ancient version of the Hebrew Bible.

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Poetry & Wisdom. By Peter Enns. IBR Bibliographies 3. \$12.99 paper. *Old Testament Theology*. By Elmer A. Martens. IBR Bibliographies 13. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997, \$11.99 paper.

These volumes by P. Enns and E. Martens are welcome additions to an impressive series of exegetical tools known as the IBR Bibliographies, which are intended to guide the minister, rabbi, student or interested layperson to the works relevant to their research interests. The entries are well chosen and the annotations are informative and accurate. These are the fifth and sixth volumes to appear in a series planned for 14 volumes, covering both OT and NT studies.

Enns placed 484 items selected for "Part 1: Wisdom" in the following sections: anthologies, introductions, origins and ancient Near East influence, social setting, theology, and wisdom influence outside the three specific wisdom books he then takes up in detail: Ecclesiastes, Job and Proverbs. Further subdivisions include theology/teaching; literary structure, genre and meaning; and specific topics pertinent to each of these three books. The 300 items in "Part 2: Poetry" are arranged in four categories: a general section on poetry, arranged in chronological periods; Psalms, Song of Songs and Lamentations; and sections on three specific books: Psalms, Song of Songs and Lamentations. The enormity of the secondary literature covered is acknowledged by the author, as is the unavoidable overlap between some of the categories selected. Nonetheless, the coverage is fair and surprisingly complete in matters of detail.

The volume by E. Martens is arranged in nine sections, which are arranged somewhat differently in format. The opening section on "Reference Works" is an excellent summary of the basic library tools for study of the OT in general, including "A Resource Guide for Study of Basic Old Testament Theology" in electronic format. Section 2, "Serial Literature," includes a list of journals, monograph series and collected essays oriented toward the larger subject of Biblical theology. Once again the annotations serve as a useful introduction to the world of "library science" in general.

The subject of the book itself begins in section 3, "History of the Discipline/State of the Discipline," with a brief summation of the past 200 years of scholarship followed by a judicious section of 32 entries. Section 4, "Issues in the Discipline" (104 entries), and section 5, "Perspectives on Old Testament Theology" (49 entries), are closely related. Section 4 is organized in six subdivisions: (1) "The Task of Old Testament Theology," (2) "Biblical Theology and Other Disciplines," (3) "Method of Old Testament Theology," (4) "History and Faith" and (5) "The Place of Wisdom." Chapter 5 is in four sections: (1) "Biblical Theology: Canon, OT, NT," (2) "The Jewish Perspective," (3) "Sociological Perspectives" and (4) "Christian Preaching." The author acknowledges that these divisions are arbitrary and that they overlap. Section 6, "Old Testament Theologies," is the most valuable part of the book with 66 carefully selected entries that range from 1792 to 1995. Readers should add the masterful work of W. Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament* (Fortress, 1997) to this list, which appeared too late to be included.

Sections 7-9 do not match in quality what precedes. Selecting the items for a book like this is no easy task, and the problem is exacerbated by the format of the series itself. With 200 entries to go, Martens chose to distribute them among "Theologies of Corpora," on sections of the OT larger than a single biblical book (chap. 7); "Theologies: Book by Book" (chap. 8); and "Monographs on Selected Biblical Themes" (chap. 9). The problem created by this decision is illustrated in the last chapter, which includes 93 entries, 23 of which are not monographs in the usual sense of that word, as the title of the chapter indicates. Of the 30 sections within this chapter, 17 have two or less entries. It seems odd to list such topics as "Anger," "Blessing," "Healing/Health," "Peace," "Providence," "Sacrifice," "Salvation," and "Sin," each with only a single bibliographical entry!

One could quibble about omissions. I simply examined a number of books in my own personal library which I would have included, such as: G. Braulik, *The Theology of Deuteronomy* (BIBAL, 1994); M. Buber, *The Kingship of God* (Harper & Row, 1967); J. S. Feinberg, ed., *Continuity and Discontinuity: Perspectives on the Relationship Between the Old and New Testaments* (Crossway, 1988); and A. J. Heschel, *The Prophets* (Harper & Row, 1962). Moreover, I was disappointed not to see my own article ("The Center of the First Testament within the Canonical Process," *BTB* 23 [1993] 48–53) in what is otherwise a fairly complete section on "Center/Unity" (pp. 56–60). It should also be noted that Lohfink's book (#234) has been reprinted under the title, *The Inerrancy of Scripture and Other Essays* (BIBAL, 1992).

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The Torah: Theology and Social History of Old Testament Law. By Frank Crüsemann. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996, 460 pp., n.p.

Crüsemann undertakes the task of attempting to explain how different law books were combined into one Torah. He understands the questions that he wants to answer as best approached through legal-historical and social-historical investigations. He proposes to "examine societal relationships in Israelite jurisprudence, the groups and institutions underlying the legal documents, their social intent and effects, the societal context of their theological bases and historical fictions" (p. 16).

Crüsemann spends the next six chapters investigating the pertinent Biblical literature. This investigation includes the preexilic prophetic literature, the Sinai pericope, Moses and the legal institutions in Israel, the book of the Covenant, Deuteronomy and the Priestly writing. His concluding chapter is entitled "The Pentateuch as Torah: The Way as Part of the Goal," where he identifies the Pentateuch as a product of the Persian period and views it as supporting the sociological issues of that period.

As he begins his study Crüsemann shows that he is not simply going to adopt the methods of the past. When critical analysis produces only rubble, he says, the time has come to switch methodologies (p. 30). Evangelicals would nevertheless be unconvinced that Crüsemann's new method is acceptable or productive, because it is still highly reconstructive.

Regarding the prophets, he is willing to acknowledge that written instructions existed that presented themselves as words written by God to Israel as early as Hosea. But he does not believe that the traditions are ancient, nor that they were connected to Moses or Sinai. By Jeremiah's time, he concludes that Yahweh's written will was available and called Torah. By this point in the book, it is already clear that to Crüsemann, the absence of reference to any element of tradition can be taken as proof that that element was unknown.

This approach results in four rather predictable conclusions regarding the Sinai–Torah tradition. First, he sees no connection between the mountain of God and instructions from God in pre-Deuteronomistic, preprophetic texts. Second, the connection between those traditions was not deuteronomistic. Third, he concludes that priestly influence preceded deuteronomistic shaping of the Sinai pericope, and fourth, that there was a shift in emphasis from cult to law in the Persian period. These theses lead Crüsemann to his findings concerning how and why the Torah got connected with Sinai in the deuteronomistic strata of Exodus 19–24 in the Persian period. Crüsemann insists that the historical events that the Bible records (such as the end of the northern kingdom, the

Deuteronomic movement, the exile and the Persian empire) can legitimately be seen as instigating the literary evolution that he sees in the texts.

When Crüsemann moves on to Moses, he poses the question "Who was this Moses?" He has far more confidence in his own reconstructions than in the Biblical information. But it is interesting that he uses the Biblical information (quite selectively) to fuel his reconstructions. His conclusion is that Moses is a personified prototype of the institution portrayed in Exodus 18. He takes all of the roles that the text connects to Moses seriously, but refuses to consider that there might be a Moses to fill them. He rather speculates, for instance, how Jeroboam was similar to Moses (in order to consider whether Jeroboam was the model for the development of the Moses figure). In the end he sees Exodus 18 as descriptive of the Jerusalem high court (2 Chronicles 19) and posits Moses as the embodiment of that ideal projected back to Sinai. All of this is perfectly in line with the well-established critical dictum, accepted by Crüsemann, that Biblical texts cannot be accepted as historical reports. He can only believe that Moses represented some authority in postexilic Israel or Judah. He confesses he does not know one, and that it is unacceptable to posit one. He ends up deconstructing Moses on behalf of the postexilic community as he insists that for them Moses was just an image for the correlation of tradition and autonomy. So he concludes that Moses is "more the need for the possibility that his Torah might survive all institutions and thereby be preserved. Moses stands for the legal intention of God and its realization in the shaping of autonomy. He is the tradition of the renewal of tradition" (p. 107).

As Crüsemann then moves on to the literary traditions of the law, the reader will again be mystified at the odd combination of what he is willing to accept and what he freely rejects and reconstructs or deconstructs. So the book of the Covenant is understood against the "slender, but clearly recognizable threads" that he claims associate it with the theological and historical developments and events of the ninth century. He proclaims that it is "entirely probable" that the faith of that period (Elijah, Elisha, Jezebel and Jehu) would have attempted to formulate demands from a jealous God. In like manner his study of Deuteronomy leads him to conclude that its historical background was the court coup against Amon.

All of these methodological anomalies are clearly exposed when the reader is told that if we expect to understand all of the Torah texts, we "cannot ignore their actual historical context" (p. 129). In the very next sentence he notes that it is "uncontroverted . . . that the location before the conquest is fictional, it really takes place later." He continues that "it is misleading to introduce categories from the contemporary historical reconstruction of the Israelite early period and to make that a vehicle for our own understanding." It becomes clear then, that what he means by the actual historical context, is the one that he has reconstructed for it.

By this point in the book I must confess that my incredulity led to despair and I was forced to be content with skimming the remainder. I have often instructed my students to be willing to look beyond methods and presuppositions that are contrary to their own in order to glean the positive contributions that can expand our thinking and offer at least tidbits of insight. I think that most evangelical readers would agree with me that this book challenges that optimism to the breaking point.

Certainly one could engage in a point-by-point critique of Crüsemann either from an "objective," scholarly perspective, or from the vantage point of evangelical presuppositions. The former, trying to meet the author on his own turf, would be a long tedious process, in that the items that he considers evidence rarely rise above the level of subjective speculation. If he would be granted the courtesy of the deconstructionist, there is no grounds left for critique. From the vantage point of the evangelical, there is little to commend this book. Its most outstanding and useful feature is its extensive (80-page)

bibliography, though even that has some inexplicable lacunae (it totally neglects the writings of S. Greengus and S. Kaufman, and ignores many of the important writings of such a prominent expert as B. S. Jackson).

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Israel in Egypt: The Evidence for the Authenticity of the Exodus Tradition. By James K. Hoffmeier. New York: Oxford University, 1997, 224 pp., \$35.00.

Hoffmeier's new work is a necessary corrective to the current trend in Biblical scholarship characterized by the heavy use of anthropological and sociological models and by a hypercritical attitude toward the OT. His stated aim is to follow the evidence where it leads, and he concludes that there is no need for skepticism regarding the essential historicity of the rise of Joseph to power in Egypt, the sojourn and bondage of Israel in Egypt, and the accounts of the exodus.

Hoffmeier's first two chapters present an excellent summary of the current state of the debate over Israel's origins. Hoffmeier brings together a thorough knowledge of the critical literary studies of the OT and the latest historical and archaeological data. The melding of such materials is indeed a strongpoint of the book throughout. Hoffmeier concludes that much of the skeptical attitude toward a conquest model is based on current theories of historiography more than on evidence.

In chap. 3 Hoffmeier summarizes the textual and archaeological evidence for a Semitic presence in late Middle Kingdom Egypt and beyond. His collection of virtually all the available major sources makes it clear that there was a definite Semitic presence in Egypt in the times required for Israel's sojourn.

Chapter 4 deals with the Joseph story, again from both the viewpoint of literary criticism and Egyptology. The chapter is brief, hitting only certain highpoints of this rich Biblical passage. Hoffmeier defends the historicity of the account. Perhaps the best part of the chapter is the section dealing with the Egyptian proper names, while the weakest is that dealing with the status and titles of Joseph. While seeming to accept Ward's denial that Joseph was ever vizier, Hoffmeier does not discuss the possibility that Joseph was chief steward of the king, nor does he attempt to date the career of Joseph.

Hoffmeier's fifth chapter, on the details of the Israelite sojourn in Egypt after Joseph, is excellent. Particularly valuable is his discussion of the toponyms in the account. He is perhaps a bit too hasty in dismissing Tell el-Maskhuta as Pithom on the basis of lack of New Kingdom habitation evidence. If the bondage began earlier than the New Kingdom, under the Hyksos, this site could well be Pithom.

Chapter 6, on Moses and the exodus, presents much important material. Hoffmeier points out the inadequacy of claiming the birth account of Moses is based on that of Sargon of Akkad, but does not call our attention to parallels between the Moses stories and other ancient texts such as the Story of Sinuhe. The main argument of the chapter is that the ten plagues were not so much attacks on individual gods of Egypt as a frontal assault on the power of Pharaoh. Hoffmeier is correct in denying that each plague was an attack on a particular deity, a view held by some (although not I, as Hoffmeier claims in a note: see my *Egypt and Bible History*, p. 106).

The last three chapters deal with the complex topic of Exodus geography. Hoffmeier attempts, using his own good personal knowledge of the eastern delta, to locate the places named in the account where possible. He identifies the Yam Suph with one of

the lakes along the Isthmus of Suez, but stresses that absolute identification is not currently possible.

Hoffmeier's book is an important contribution to the study of the Hebrew experience in Egypt. Its two major strengths are the author's powerful refutation of hypercritical views on the narrative and his presentation of the latest Egyptological data.

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The Sin of Moses and the Staff of God: A Narrative Approach. By Johnson Lim Teng Kok. Studia Semitica Neerlandica. Assen: Van Gorcum, 1997, xv + 185 pp., \$58.00 paper.

Kok's monograph (a revised M.Phil. thesis) adds another piece of artillery to the growing arsenal of attempts to provide unified *literary* readings of Biblical narratives as distinct and dissenting alternatives to the common fragmentation resulting from modern source and tradition-critical readings. His chapters cover recent developments in Pentateuchal studies, the literary approach to the Pentateuch, exegetical analysis and narrative patterning of Exod 17:1–17 and Num 20:1–13, a thorough discussion and critique of scholarship regarding the sin of Moses in Num 20:1–13, and a narrative consideration of the sin of Moses and its relationship to the staff of God. He seeks to discover Moses' transgression that barred him from the promised land, noting that the wide diversity of resolutions to the difficulty is due to the "complex and perplexing nature of the sin of Moses" (p. v). His proposal, that Exod 17:1–7 and Num 20:1–13 are *narrative analogies* (not "doublets"), arises from this view that scholars have failed to consider the relationship between Exod 17:1–7 and Num 20:1–13, and particularly the importance of Moses' "staff of God" in these narratives (see esp. chap. 7). It is his view that the exegetical key resides in the *unlawful and willful use of this staff*. He has augmented traditional views with compelling evidence that the sin of Moses is related to his *striking* the rock by drawing out the importance of Moses' *misuse* of the rod of God in striking the rock in Numbers 20. Using a tactical *narrative* plan he translates, contrasts and compares the structures and contents of the Exodus and Numbers texts, assuming textual *unity* of the Hebrew text throughout his discussion. Kok provides helpful analyses of the "narrator's strategy," demonstrating the great usefulness of close readings of the text itself. Correlating type-scenes and narrative analogies, he does a fine job of exegeting these two pericopes.

Literary-analytical readings should be warmly welcomed, and Kok has given us a well-reasoned statement in their defense (chap. 3). Nevertheless, I am uncomfortable with the common, and quite unnecessary, dichotomy in this approach to look upon the text "as a story rather than history" (p. 39). Literary analyses can provide exciting antidotes to the theological barrenness of traditional approaches. To do so, however, they must rely, in part, on the view that these flawless literary narratives relay the wonders of God's redemption *in history*. Further on the theological level, it remains uncertain that literary readings such as this, that retain residual tradition-historical assumptions from redaction criticism, etc., actually provide a sufficient alternative to those methodologies, often being "hoist with their own petard." That is, it is questionable that the proposed marriage between *diachronic* and *synchronic* methods (pp. 19–20) has been sustained.

In conclusion, it should be asked whether this narrative approach of "purposeful patchwork" between historical and literary study makes any *definitive* breaks with the assumptions of traditional analyses, even though alternative conclusions are proposed.

Such text-immanent, final-form, narrative readings that focus on artistry and unity of the canonical text, are vital developments in Biblical studies, but it should not be assumed that the philosophical presuppositions resident in source and redaction-criticism can be so easily evaded by simply saying they are “not relevant for understanding the poetic function” of the text (p. 44).

Lastly, to redaction critics, Kok’s motto “what the Redactor has joined together, let no critic rend the texts asunder” (p. 45), is rather moot and certainly arbitrary. Stating that the Pentateuch has a surface unity may not provide an adequate solution to the problems created by also stating that “the Pentateuch is a product of a long history of tradition and editorial activity” (p. 55), for the so-called “intentional theological redactions” of the Pentateuch may in the end prove to be the theological intentions of the author himself. As he himself notes (n. 115), denying sources and affirming unity does not invoke a consensus of theological interpretation.

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Leviticus. NCB. By Philip J. Budd. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996, xxiii + 395 pp., \$26.00 paper. *Leviticus*. OTL. By Erhard S. Gerstenberger. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996, xiv + 450 pp., \$42.00.

Two recent treatments of Leviticus by P. Budd and E. Gerstenberger interpret Leviticus through the grid of the Wellhausenian documentary hypothesis. Of the two works, Budd is more prone to see accurate reflections of historical events than Gerstenberger, though he, like Gerstenberger, assumes that the book reflects the life situation of Israel later than the time of Moses. The book of Leviticus, they argue, was written in the final stages of the history of Biblical Israel, from the postexilic period. Consequently, both scholars view the repetition of the divine formula, “The LORD said to Moses” (which occurs 38 times in the book) as a fictitious statement inserted solely to give the contents some authoritative credence.

Both authors reconstruct the history of Biblical events and institutions rather than accepting their historical veracity at face value. According to Budd, the priesthood officially began about the time of the beginning of the monarchy and developed over the next centuries until it was completed in its present form sometime in the postexilic period. The beginning of the monarchy would also mark the time of the recognition of Israel as a unified nation. The establishment of sin offerings on the other hand could not come from this early period, because any notion of forgiveness must derive from the Persian period when the sacrificial system was seen to be a gracious provision by God. Budd does not address texts such as Hos 4:8 or Mic 6:7, which appear to undermine his view about the role of sin offerings. Rather, without supplying supporting data or rationale, he claims that these texts are uncertain and little can be deduced from them.

A necessary concomitant to the dogma that Leviticus received its final shape in the postexilic period is the conviction that each of the sections of the book must have had a lengthy compositional history. Budd sees series of additions in many passages. This is perhaps best illustrated in his analysis of Leviticus 16, the Day of Atonement. Budd considers the original nucleus of the account to be vv. 6–10. Verses 11–22 constitute a later expansion and later still are vv. 29–34, where postexilic priestly writers have aligned the text with the concern of the Holiness Code (Leviticus 17–26).

Moreover, and as additional proof of the lateness of Leviticus 16, Budd reminds the reader that the prophet Ezekiel did not refer to a scapegoat nor a high priest. For

Budd, this argument from silence can only mean one thing: there is no scapegoat or high priest in the time of the exile. Yet, Budd somewhat backpedals from this position when he claims that elements of the scapegoat ritual may reflect some *ancient* custom; but they are incorporated in Leviticus and do not reflect historical reality. The scapegoat and the high priest did not exist until the postexilic period that Leviticus describes. Moreover, proof of the lateness of Leviticus 16 is to be found in the fact that the heavy emphasis on penitence and fasting should be understood as a concern in the postexilic era (Ezra 9:6–15; Neh 9:6–37). The composition of this chapter may have taken place over centuries.

Gerstenberger is even more adamant and thoroughgoing about the length of time allotted for the compositional history of the Book of Leviticus. He makes more frequent comments than Budd in this regard. Gerstenberger claims that not one chapter of Leviticus was written at a single setting or by a single hand. The final form of Leviticus is the end result of a final process that went on for centuries, involving not only written but oral stages that would inevitably result in the continuous alteration of content. Gerstenberger dismisses the continuous refrain of Leviticus “The Lord said to Moses” as not having anything to do with authorship when he observes that it is only on rare occasions that the OT writings contain the genuine names of authors.

Not only is the writing of Leviticus a very late literary product but Gerstenberger is emphatic about the claim that the main institutions and ceremonies in the book are of Canaanite origin. The Israelites appropriated these customs dictated for the agricultural year from their Canaanite neighbors. The Israelite priesthood was also modeled after the practice and customs of the original Canaanite inhabitants. Hence, these institutions were not revealed by God to Moses. Gerstenberger candidly asserts that the revelation to Moses at Sinai is a literary fiction.

The camp and wilderness narratives are also fictitious inventions and possess only symbolic value at best in the text. In reality the camp is the sacred precinct of Jerusalem or perhaps the city of Jerusalem itself. The tent of meeting is actually the temple, read back into the early history of the nation in order to give this institution divine credence by associating it with Moses and Mount Sinai.

The postexilic community, not an individual author, is accountable for the final shape of the text of Leviticus. This being the case, the events should be read in the light of Malachi and Haggai and Ezra and Nehemiah, where apparently tension had arisen between the priesthood and the congregations, particularly about financing the cultic institutions.

Gerstenberger's comments on Leviticus 18–20 are illustrative of the comparative religion approach he employs to interpret Biblical texts. These moral and sexual laws are not divine directives for governing morality. On the contrary, they merely reflect the community's attempt to create constitutive norms for the proper socialization of young people. This passage reflects the universal tendency found in all societies to consider their own ethics as superior to others. Leviticus 18–20 merely describe the post-exilic community's consciousness of what is illicit sexual behavior. They in no way provide authoritative guidelines for moral behavior as scriptural imperatives.

These two commentaries, while strong on issues of philology and literary analysis, have ignored recent scholarly productions that seriously challenge the entire critical approach to the Bible. Archaeological discoveries in Mesopotamia and the Levant have uncovered intricate systems of worship similar to the one found in Leviticus across the Fertile Crescent in the second millennium BC and even in the third millennium BC, long before the time of Moses. Also, studies in intertextuality have shown that the prophets were not only aware of the law, they based their messages on it; this is at complete odds with the Wellhausenian theory that the prophets were the true innovators of the Israelite religion and that their writings preceded the law. The prophetic use of

previously written law has been more than amply demonstrated in M. Fishbane's *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*. The argument for the priority of law over prophets has also been shown linguistically particularly by A. Hurvitz (*A Linguistic Study of the Relationship Between the Priestly Source and the Book of Ezekiel*), who has shown that that language of Leviticus is earlier, not later than the prophet Ezekiel. Moreover, the authors have ignored recent critiques of the documentary hypothesis by Whybray, *The Making of the Pentateuch* and R. Rendtorff, *The Problem of the Process of Transmission in the Pentateuch*, who are calling for a new approach to the study of the Pentateuch.

In spite of these criticisms as well as gaping omissions, an evangelical can still learn much about the contents of Leviticus if he or she bears in mind the presuppositions of the approach of these commentators. Budd and Gerstenberger are at their best when they stop trying to reconstruct the history of the passages based upon a flawed evolutionary model for the history of Israel and attempt instead to analyze the book's contents. When they do so, one will find many of their comments insightful.

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Deuteronomy and the Hermeneutics of Legal Innovation. By Bernard M. Levinson. New York: Oxford University, 1997, xiv + 205 pp., \$39.95.

A comprehensive revision of the author's dissertation under M. Fishbane at Brandeis, this erudite work utilizes the methods and assumptions of the source-critical approach common since Wellhausen to explain how the 6th-century laws of Deuteronomy employed and transformed earlier laws in the Book of the Covenant (Exod 20:22–23:33). This transformation, according to Levinson, is part of a radically new program of cult centralization in which Jerusalem's temple came to be considered the only legitimate sanctuary. His thesis is that the authors of Deuteronomy reused and reworked the older material in order to lend their innovations the "guise of continuity with the past and consistency with traditional law" (p. 21), all while in fact essentially abrogating the original intent of those older regulations. Thus, although Deuteronomy purports to be a reaffirmation of the conventional religious law, the reaffirmation camouflages what is in fact a fundamental departure, according to Levinson.

Levinson begins his thesis with the altar law of Deuteronomy 12 in comparison with the older altar law of Exod 20:22–26. The latter assumes the existence of altars of earth and stone in addition to the tabernacle/temple's bronze altar. Whereas conservatives have argued either that Deuteronomy 12 does not in fact exclude secondary altars (cf. the stone altar of Deut 27:4–8 on Mt. Ebal), or else that it is predictive of a distant, future day when there would be a centralization of worship, Levinson is dismissive of all such attempts to read the Pentateuch's laws synchronically as a coherent unity. He holds, instead, that under the guise of a prediction Deuteronomy in fact represents a retrojection into the past of a modernistic transformation of the data. Accordingly, Levinson insists that the contradictions are real, frequent and explainable only on diachronic, source-critical grounds.

Subsequent chapters argue that the cult centralization had ramifications for Passover, converting it from a local, family-based slaughter to a pilgrimage. It also had ramifications for the legal system, says Levinson, reducing the judicial power of provincial priests by transferring their legal authority to an independent local, secular judiciary.

It is interesting to note how Levinson's vision of what the authors of Deuteronomy were doing parallels what theological liberals did in both Church and synagogue at the beginning of the 20th century when they used traditional religious language to convey what was in fact a radically new religion. But to see the authors of Deuteronomy as liberals in both thought and method represents an anachronistic and improbable rejection on Levinson's part. Moreover, this kind of approach assumes that the second temple editors responsible for compiling the Pentateuch were completely incompetent (or worse), either too blind to see the blatant contradictions between their sources or else completely indifferent to such contradictions. Levinson himself remarks that it is "a major irony of literary history that Second Temple editors incorporated both the Covenant Code and the legal corpus of Deuteronomy into the Pentateuch" (p. 153), though the latter was written to subvert the former. To that, Levinson continues, they added the holiness code of Leviticus 17–26 which was written to rework Deuteronomy in yet a different direction, and then the editors patched it all together with a series of harmonizing glosses.

To me such a thesis is not merely ironic, but altogether incredible. The task before conservative scholars—there is a dissertation or two here to be written—is to demonstrate in detail how the contradictions that Levinson and the descendants of Wellhausen see among the groups of laws in the Pentateuch as it now stands can in fact be plausibly read as a coherent unity.

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The Book of Joshua: Its Theme and Role in Archaeological Discussions. By David Merling, Sr. Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series 23. Berrien Springs: Andrews University Press, 1997, xvii + 353 pp., \$19.99 paper.

This doctoral dissertation provides an up-to-date summary of the major interpretative approaches to the question of the relationship between the appearance of Israel in Canaan and the role of archaeology in the issues. The first half of the book considers the five major approaches to Israel's appearance: conquest, peaceful migration, peasant revolt, economic and environmental. This is a valuable summary of the theories and an analysis of their strengths and criticisms. It concludes with a review of the archaeological evidence pertaining to the sites associated with the place names mentioned in the "conquest" accounts of Joshua 1–12. Merling argues that none of the archaeological evidence has relevance for the presence or absence of Biblical Israel.

The second half of the book considers the nature of the book of Joshua. Merling denies that the main concern of Joshua is with the conquest of the land. Instead, he prefers to see the book as focused upon God's presence with Israel in order to confirm and allocate the land as God's gift to the people of Israel. This is followed by a discussion of the limitations of archaeological evidence in identifying historical acts of conquest and destruction and in perceiving the presence of a new people or ethnic group. Merling questions the use of nonevidence as a basis for denying historical value due to the absence of conquest and destruction levels of evidence. From the standpoint of Joshua and of Israel's historical reality, its adherence to monotheism becomes the single most important factor for its unique identity.

This study provides much of value in its analysis. It is clearly written with detailed outline of the models of interpretation and their difficulties. Merling also incorporates some valuable analysis of the broader typological studies regarding what evidence may

be expected in a historical conquest and what evidence exists for the presence of a new people group in an area.

There remain several questions about this work. First, there are the lengthy discussions of each of the sites related to place names conquered by Israel according to Joshua. Merling's conclusion from all of these is that there is no evidence associating any of the sites with Israel's conquest. This is true even for Hazor, which in the view of many best fits the description of the LB/Iron I transition conquest by Israel. According to Merling, it would seem that no amount of material culture can determine Israel's presence or conquest. What is necessary? Is some sort of inscriptional evidence required? If so, why review all the archaeological evidence? A paragraph justifying the need for inscriptional evidence and concluding that none exists would be much more useful.

Second, there is a consistent attempt to argue for an early date for Israel's appearance in Canaan, and by implication, an early date for the exodus. There is nothing wrong with taking this position except that it puts Merling in a position of using the methods that he criticizes. For example, in order to justify a 15th-century BC appearance of the city of Ramses in Exod 1:11, he opts for anachronistic editorial insertions (p. 227). This is the sort of selective bias of which Merling accuses Gottwald, Alt and Noth. It would also be helpful if Merling would recognize that this is merely one interpretation of the (biblical and archaeological) evidence and provide some justification for it.

Third, the identification of Amarna *apiru* with Biblical Israel overlooks linguistic issues that remain unresolved in this equation (pp. 69–74, 231). The Philistines cannot be equated with the sociological concept of *apiru* because they were an established social grouping apart from others (such as Egypt). Instead, references to Amarna *apiru* normally describe a group that became disaffected from the society in which they formerly lived.

It would appear that Merling does ultimately opt for a conquest model that is earlier than Albright's. It is also smaller and less apparent in the archaeological strata. Nevertheless, at no time does Merling deny that Israel came from outside of Palestine nor does he question any of the Biblical accounts that describe conquests of the various cities.

Merling has made a significant contribution in this thesis. He has provided the first substantial analysis and presentation of the archaeological and textual data that takes the Biblical text seriously and refuses to ignore the weaknesses of the archaeological interpretations.

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Introduction to the Psalms: The Genres of the Religious Lyric of Israel. By Hermann Gunkel and Joachim Begrich. Translated by James D. Nogalski. Mercer Library of Biblical Studies. Macon: Mercer University, 1998, ix + 388 pp., \$45.00.

Sixty-five years after its publication in German, this classic of OT scholarship is finally available to an English-speaking audience. The father of OT form-critical studies, Gunkel in this volume lays out the now-familiar genres of the psalms such as hymns (i.e. community praise psalms), individual thanksgivings, individual and community laments, royal psalms, and others. (Gunkel's work was completed after his death by his student Begrich.) In its day, such classifications were a major step forward in the study of the psalms, and Gunkel's form-critical observations still form the foundation for current analyses, even though his categories have been refined by Westermann, Gerstenberger and others.

Some aspects of Gunkel's work have not stood the test of time so well, including his attempts to correlate every form (genre) with a different *Sitz im Leben* in Israel, his assumption that Israel's religion was the product of an evolutionary development from a simple, primitive religion to a more complex one, and his radical emendations of the text. He was a true product of his time in such matters. Furthermore, Psalms studies today are focused much more on other concerns—such as the composition and message of the canonical Psalter—than just form-critical ones.

However, Gunkel's form-critical categories have become part of the air that we breathe when we study the psalms, and rightfully so. Thus, all English-speaking students of the psalms can be grateful to Mercer and James Nogalski for producing this eminently readable translation of a classic and indispensable work.

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The Message of the Psalter: An Eschatological Programme in the Book of Psalms. By David C. Mitchell. JSOTSup 252. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997, 428 pp., \$66.00.

The Message of the Psalter is one of several recent additions to the growing corpus of work that treats the purposeful arrangement of the Book of Psalms. Mitchell is in full accord with those who argue that the Psalter is not a random anthology but is a purposefully edited literary whole. His thesis, however, goes in a different direction from that of others who have attempted to articulate the theological agenda that guided the editorial process.

Mitchell disagrees with current theories on the editorial agenda, which are historical in orientation. In particular, he takes issue with Wilson and McCann, who argue that the Psalter is a call to trust in the Lord alone, given the rejection of the Davidic monarchy (Psalm 89). Mitchell raises several pertinent questions at this point. If there is no longer any interest in the house of David, why does David's name appear in sixteen titles and several psalms in Books 4 and 5? Why do Books 1–3 end on the note of the Lord's apparent failure to keep his promises (Ps 89:35–39 [MT 34–38]), if the message of the whole is to trust the Lord? Mitchell also notes that Wilson's theory does not fit with what we know about Israel's attitude toward the house of David at any of the proposed times for the final edition of the Psalter.

Contrary to such a historical orientation, Mitchell argues that the agenda is eschatological. The opening chapter on the history of interpreting the Psalms shows that an eschatological orientation has been the dominant interpretive approach to the Psalms except for the brief period of about 1820–1970. Mitchell examines the Asaph collection and the Psalms of Ascent, arguing that each has an eschatological orientation.

Mitchell then sets this eschatological movement in the context of prophetic eschatology, which can be broadly described in terms of an ingathering of Israel, an alliance of hostile nations that attack Israel, salvation by the Lord, followed by consummate worship of the Lord by Israel and the survivors of the nations. This picture is filled in by the addition of two other motifs, that of the smitten king and an ensuing exile.

The full picture then emerges: the king comes (Psalm 45), Israel is gathered in (Psalm 50), the nations gather for war (Psalms 73–83), the king is cut off (Psalm 89), rescue by the messianic king (Psalm 110), paeans of messianic victory (Psalms 111–118), and the ascent of all Israel to celebrate the feast of tabernacles (Psalms 120–134).

Mitchell has certainly moved the discussion of the editorial purpose of the Psalter in the right direction. The idea of an absolute rejection of the Davidic monarchy certainly seems to founder on a text like Psalm 132: "For the sake of David your servant,

do not reject your anointed one" (v. 10) and "Here I will make a horn grow for David and set up a lamp for my anointed one" (v. 17). In his commentary, McCann says this psalm is not to be heard messianically but simply articulates "hope for the future of God's people." Such an interpretation seems, however, to distort the obvious meaning of the text by forcing the text to fit a predetermined agenda. Psalm 132 articulates a living hope for the restoration of the house of David and the coming of the anointed one.

Likewise, Ps 118:26 anticipates the coming of someone in the name of the Lord to bring salvation. Based on this text, at the time when the Psalter reached its final form according to Wilson (the first century AD), there was just such an anticipation of "one to come" (Matt 11:3). This one who would come was the king of Israel from the house of David (Matt 21:9; John 12:13).

While Mitchell has moved the discussion in the right direction, he himself acknowledges that more research is needed to substantiate his thesis (p. 301). As he admits, his research has not integrated the Davidic psalms, the Korahite psalms, the Psalms 135–150 or the significance of the Elohist Psalter. No small task! Though not conclusive, *The Message of the Psalter* makes a valuable contribution to the ongoing study of the purposeful arrangement of the Psalter, as it points us in the direction of an eschatological agenda for the whole.

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Yahweh as Refuge and the Editing of the Hebrew Psalter. By Jerome F. D. Creach. JSOTSup 217. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996, 156 pp., \$55.00.

This work, which is Creach's revised doctoral dissertation completed under J. L. Mays, joins the growing number of recent studies on the editorial shape of the book of Psalms. In contrast to many more limited studies, Creach "attempts to show an editorial interest in the arrangement of individual psalms and sections of psalms that spans the *entire* Psalter" (p. 17; emphasis mine). The starting point for this study is the statement "Blessed are all who take refuge in him" at the end of Psalm 2. As many scholars have noted, this statement forges a link with Ps 1:1 ("Blessed is the one") and binds these psalms together as a joint introduction to the Psalter. But more significantly, Creach argues, this statement also introduces the theme and ordering principle of the first two Davidic collections (Psalms 3–41 and 51–71), and the entire Psalter—namely, the notion of seeking refuge in Yahweh. Thus, for Creach, the intentional editorial shape of the Psalter "displays an interest in choosing Yahweh as refuge because of the ineffectiveness of human rulers" (p. 104), and thereby encourages a life of complete dependence on Yahweh.

Creach begins his study by reviewing past scholarship, and then in the next two chapters moves on to an exhaustive analysis of the meaning, function and development of the verbal and nominal forms of "refuge" (*hāsâ/mahṣeh*) and associated terms in the book of Psalms. The next two chapters explore the impact of the motif of Yahweh as refuge on the present shape of the Psalter, and on the formation of the book of Psalms. In his discussion of the former, Creach especially looks for any indications of "an 'intentional' editorial purpose behind the present book that has the idea of 'refuge' as a guide to reading the whole work" (p. 76). He concludes that the idea of "refuge" was a determinative factor in the shaping and organization of the book of Psalms. He further proposes that the preponderance of terms relating to "refuge" in the two Davidic collections (Psalms 3–41 and 51–71/2) may suggest that they once formed an early Psalter, with the second Davidic collection patterned after the first.

The strength of Creach's thesis is his discussion of the terms relating to "refuge." He does a thorough lexical analysis of *ḥāsâ* and its wordfield, and highlights the use of a significant motif that is found throughout much of the book of Psalms. Nevertheless, I question whether the notion of "seeking refuge" is distinct enough to be meaningful when talking about the editorial shaping of the Psalter, especially when Creach defines its semantic field so broadly. Thus, I am not convinced that the notion of "refuge" is a "key organizing feature" (p. 77), or that there are "definite signs of deliberate structuring of the Psalter around the idea of 'refuge'" (p. 104) to the same extent that Creach allows. The sheer frequency of *ḥāsâ* and associated terms clearly establishes the idea of "refuge" as one of the root metaphors in the Psalter—as Creach compellingly demonstrates—but this is not the same as demonstrating that it was a key organizing principle. At times it appears that Creach is not convinced either. For example, at the end of chap. 4 he minimizes his own conclusion: "Although there are definite signs of deliberate structuring of the Psalter around the idea of 'refuge,' the data may be viewed more generally, drawing an equally strong theological conclusion: *ḥāsâ* and associated terms are the vocabulary of a piety, central to which is the idea of dependence on Yahweh, that permeates the Psalter and seems to be at the forefront of the minds of those who collected the book" (p. 104). Similarly, he concludes his discussion of the formation of the Psalter (chap. 5) with the following: "The Davidic Psalter might have been originally collected more generally as a series of 'testimonies' or 'model prayers' in which *ḥāsâ/mahseh* and associated terms *happened to express some key ideas*" (p. 114; emphasis mine).

In sum, while Creach may at times overstep the bounds of his evidence, he has nevertheless done an excellent job in isolating and elucidating one of the root metaphors of the book of Psalms: that Yahweh is a refuge to those who seek him. For this reason alone this study deserves careful attention.

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Reading the Psalms as a Book. By Norman Whybray. JSOTSup 222. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996, 137 pp., \$36.50.

With this book, Norman Whybray offers a welcome—albeit somewhat overstated—critique of recent research on the shape and shaping of the book of Psalms. In fact, this is the first and only book-length evaluation of the idea that the final form of the Psalter is a coherent book with a single theological message. This critique is especially welcome in that Whybray comes to this debate in some ways as an outsider looking in, and thus offers a fresh perspective.

Whybray begins by surveying recent views on the composition and arrangement of the Psalter. He then takes aim at a number of the "assured results" of much of this research. In turn, he evaluates the evidence for a comprehensive wisdom (chap. 2), messianic (chap. 3), or anti-sacrificial redaction (chap. 4) of the book of Psalms. His procedure in these chapters is to examine each type of psalm with an eye towards signs of "wholesale" redaction, whether in the psalm itself or in its placement in the collection. Thus, for wisdom psalms he examines "pure" wisdom and torah psalms (1, 8, 14/53, 25, 34, 39, 49, 73, 90, 112, 119, 127, 131, 139), as well as psalms with wisdom (19, 37, 40, 78) or torah (18, 27, 32, 86, 92, 94, 105, 111, 144, 146) interpolations. With a healthy skepticism characteristic of much of his scholarship, he concludes that there are no clear signs of a comprehensive editing of the Psalter along any of these lines (pp. 118–119). He further maintains that the redaction of the Psalter is very complex and that

“the stages by which it took its present shape lie mainly beyond our knowing” (p. 124). Thus, for Whybray, it is basically impossible to move beyond general observations on the shape of the Psalter, such as the move from lament to praise, or the vague notion that Psalm 1 serves “to instill in the reader the importance of a redactor’s conviction . . . that meditation on the Torah . . . is the indispensable means for the attainment of divine blessing” (p. 121).

Many of Whybray’s criticisms are well founded. He offers a good critique of the interpretation popularized by Childs, and now taken for granted, that the reference to meditating on the *tôrâ* in Psalm 1:2 refers not to the law of Moses, but to the book of Psalms itself (pp. 38–40). Whybray contends that there is no indication in the psalm itself that warrants this reading, but that it is more natural to take the object of *hâgâ*, “meditate,” as an acknowledged written corpus, i.e. the law of Moses, similar to its use in Josh 1:8. He also takes issue with the view that the present form of the Psalter documents the failure of the Davidic covenant (pp. 93–99; he mistakenly attributes this position to D. Howard on p. 93, when in fact Howard argues against this position), arguing that the placement of royal psalms in the last two books of the Psalter, such as Psalms 110 and 132, make it difficult to accept. Moreover, he also critiques an entirely negative reading of Psalm 89, arguing that hope is implicit in the psalmist’s recollection of Yahweh’s faithfulness to his promises to David. What the psalmist laments is only the *apparent* failure of the Davidic covenant (pp. 93–94).

Despite these and other good criticisms, a major weakness in this work is Whybray’s understanding of editorial activity. He assumes that if the Psalter underwent any significant redaction “we should expect to find signs of reinterpretation *throughout* the Psalter” (p. 42; cf. similar statements on pp. 84, 99, 101, 119, 121). Most scholars would agree that there are not signs of a “wholesale,” “thoroughgoing,” or “systematic and purposeful” redaction or “comprehensive editing” that touches every psalm in the Psalter. But most scholars also have a growing appreciation for the subtle and at times esoteric means by which redactors practiced their craft and maintain that the placement of psalms at the seams of previous collections, and such phenomena as juxtaposition and concatenation, *are* meaningful signs of redaction. Nevertheless, Whybray’s skepticism underscores the simplicity and reductionism of much recent research as well as the lack of consensus on what constitutes legitimate signs of editorial activity. Whybray is certainly correct when he asserts that the compilation of the Psalter was “extremely complex, took place over a considerable time, and was influenced at its various stages by different editorial policies” (p. 119).

In sum, while Whybray offers many good critiques and cautions that scholars would do well to heed, his extreme skepticism is unfounded. With due concern for proper method, I believe that it is possible to move beyond general observations and uncover something of the significance of the editorial shape of the book of Psalms.

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Listening In: A Multicultural Reading of the Psalms. By Stephen Breck Reid. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997, \$9.95 paper.

In this book Reid has focused attention on 42 psalms that he has arranged in three groups, all of which deal with what he calls the “self.” As he puts it, “This book . . . proclaims that the understandings of the self one encounters in the Psalter reveal a *theological* anthropology, one in which the doctrine of God is essential to the task of understanding what humanity is” (p. 103). Though he is in conversation with recent

historical, critical, literary and rhetorical study of the psalms, the primary concern is to move beyond this academic focus into an imaginative reading of African American, Latino and Asian American materials. The strength of the book is the reflection on the works of such authors as Anaya (*Bless Me, Ultima*), S. Cisneros (*The House on Mango Street*), D. Hopkins and G. Cummings (*Cut Loose Your Stammering Tongue*), T. Morrison (*Beloved* and *The Bluest Eye*), A. Walker (*In Love and Trouble*), and R. Wright (*Native Son*). The book also includes numerous references to shorter articles of note and personal vignettes throughout, which add color and depth.

Focusing on what specific psalms have to say about what it means to be human, Reid turns to African American, Latino and Asian American cultural sources. For example, he challenges the idea that what is wrong in our society is the result of the "mob at the gate" with a reading of certain psalms of lament in light of the musical tradition of the blues, arguing that the absence of justice and the absence of God cannot be separated. To those who insist that our problems are the result of "rot at the top" in our social and political institutions, Reid reminds us of the dominant motif of the sovereignty of God in the psalms and the fundamental summons to morality on the part of God's people past and present.

The chapter on "The Conflictual Self" is essentially a reflection on 16 laments that the author has arranged under four categories: those dealing with "Enemies" (Psalms 3, 13, 30, 31, 102, 143, and 55), the "Wicked" (Psalms 12, 26, 28, 141), "Prayers of Persecution" (Psalm 64), and "Psalms of Sickness" (Psalms 6, 35, 41, 86). The second chapter, "The Authoritative Self," also takes up 16 psalms including the so-called "YHWH *mlk* Psalms" (Psalms 93–99) and selected "Royal Psalms" arranged under the headings of "The Vulnerable King" (Psalms 20, 21, 144, 89:38–52), "The Authoritative and Faithful King" (Psalm 127), "The Just King" (Psalms 72, 89, 101), and "The Elected King" (Psalms 2, 110). Chapter 3, "The Contextual Self," focuses on selected "Korahite Songs of Zion" (Psalms 46, 48, 84, 87) and "Asaphite Psalms" (Psalms 76, 73, 83, 75, 78, 81).

The organization of the discussion of the psalms selected is not always clear. A section titled "Prayers of Persecution" (pp. 21–23) includes only Psalm 64. An "Asaphite Zion Song" is included under the general heading of "Korahite Songs of Zion." The sections on "Asaphite Psalms" (pp. 83, 85–96) actually deal with only six of the 11 psalms in that collection. The attempt to include a section on "Listening In to the Early Church" in its use of these psalms is commendable but not developed in sufficient depth, particularly in chaps. 2 and 3.

There is carelessness in references to the five books of the Psalter. Once Book 4 is cited when it is actually Book 5 the author is discussing (p. 18); and the reference to "Books 1 and 2 of the psalter" (p. 62) should read Books 2 and 3. Ivan Engnell is twice cited as Ian Engnell (pp. 55 and 106); and the heading "Psalm 89:38–52" (p. 58) should read "Psalm 89."

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An Introduction to Wisdom and Poetry of the Old Testament. By D. K. Berry. Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman and Holman, 1995, 422 pp., \$24.99.

Berry's book divides almost evenly into two parts, the first on OT wisdom and the second on OT poetry. The book is wide-ranging in its scope, and in both sections there is an overview of the terrain to be covered followed by a discussion of the comparative ancient Near Eastern material, the history of interpretation of the Biblical material, and then several chapters on the wisdom or poetic texts themselves.

The tables dispersed throughout the text to illustrate Berry's analysis of texts are a great help in this type of wide-ranging introductory volume. The questions at the end of each chapter and the glossary of terms and subject bibliographies at the end of the book also enhance the user-friendly nature of the text for students being introduced to the wisdom and poetry of the OT.

In an introduction of this sort one expects the work to be wide-ranging but in my opinion Berry's book suffers in this respect. Different views tend to be described without a coherent and integrated picture emerging, conceptually the work is sometimes weak by being an uneven synthesis of views rather than a coherently argued piece, and some of the best work that has been done in some areas is not referred to. In the remainder of this review I will give a few salient examples of these deficiencies to substantiate these criticisms.

Berry rightly makes the focus of his attention the canonical wisdom books as we have received them rather than the historical stages underlying them, but when he comes to deal with Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, for example, he never mentions some of the most creative recent work in this area. Berry, in my opinion, does not adequately explore the literary shape of Proverbs as a whole and has no reference to R. van Leeuwen's highly creative work in this area. Van Leeuwen's article on the sage in prophetic literature is referred to in the book but none of his works on the literary shape of Proverbs are mentioned.

As regards Ecclesiastes Berry is really not very helpful in assisting the reader to get an understanding of the book as a whole. All sort of points are made but there is little constructive resolution into a larger whole. Admittedly this remains a difficult issue in Qoheleth scholarship but once again key sources are not referred to. In my opinion M. Fox has done some of the most creative recent work on the literary (and thus canonical) shape of Ecclesiastes, and even if one disagrees with his conclusions—as I do—he has opened up crucial directions for reading Ecclesiastes as a literary whole (cf. e.g. Fox's *Qoheleth and his Contradictions*, 1989). Berry mentions Fox's work on the Song of Songs but no mention is made of his considerable body of work on Ecclesiastes.

Likewise when it comes to the Psalms, Berry mentions an article by G. Wilson on the shape of the Psalter but never refers to Wilson's more substantial work nor to the highly creative work of scholars like J. C. McCann who are developing ways of reading the Psalms as a whole.

Apart from this type of large omission there are numerous small points that need considerable elaboration if they are to be taken seriously as possible positions. Berry says of Job, for example, that "The pessimistic attitude of the book's poetry reveals a philosophical bent in direct contrast to the positivistic tone of Proverbs" (p. 141). I am not convinced that Proverbs is positivistic, nor am I clear that the poetry of Job is philosophically far from Proverbs.

There is a need for the sort of introduction that Berry has set out to write. Students will find this book a help in many ways but books like Murphy's *The Tree of Life* will remain the more indispensable introductory texts.

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Character in Crisis: A Fresh Approach to the Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament.
By William P. Brown. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996, 179 pp., \$17.00.

In this work, Brown attempts a synthesis of the wisdom literature of the OT through the lens of character formation. This approach helps to solve the theological dilemma

facing wisdom scholars as to the center of wisdom thought. Is wisdom literature primarily anthropocentric, reflecting humanity's quest for wholeness and balance in life, or is it rooted in creation theology, indicating a theocentric focus? The bridge that connects the anthropocentric and theocentric views of wisdom is character formation.

The first chapter is crucial to understanding Brown's view of character/virtue. Brown traces the concept of character both from a narrative and philosophical standpoint under the overarching ideas of descriptive and prescriptive character. Wisdom literature emphasizes both types of character through a dynamic interchange between descriptive and prescriptive characters. Flat characters (descriptive) such as the parental guide in Proverbs affirm the normative values of the community, but the more complex characters (prescriptive) of Job and Qoheleth challenge the status quo and reform character. Therefore, the wisdom books do not give a homogeneous picture of a normative character. Instead, wisdom literature's recasting of normative character provides a paradigm for avoiding moral fascism, as well as anarchy.

The remaining chapters of the book explore the changing normative character in wisdom literature. The book of Proverbs provides the basic formation of character. The focus of the chapter is primarily on Proverbs 1–9 and 31. Beginning with the various virtues found in Prov 1:2–7, which are constructed as a chiasm, the moral virtues of righteousness, justice and equity are central. Therefore, Brown maintains that the book of Proverbs is not simply concerned with intellectual virtue, but moral issues in the community, contra W. McKane.

As one might guess, the book of Job is focused on the deformation of character (Job 1–31) and the reformation of character (Job 32–42). Especially good is Brown's view that Job's character is reshaped from the prologue, through the dialogues, up to the oath of innocence in Job 29–31. Job's integrity remains, but it has moved from quiet piety to anger to courageous confrontation with God. However, Brown's description of Elihu is less than satisfying. For Brown, Elihu represents a prophetic type of sage, who is given wisdom and insight by divine revelation. However, the *Sitz im Leben* for a prophetic wisdom is not given, nor an adequate explanation of how the Elihu section was included in the book of Job.

Finally, the book of Ecclesiastes is an example of character reconstructed. Qoheleth's confessions suggest that the one who pursues wisdom will be empty-handed at the end of his life (p. 123). Therefore, Qoheleth challenges traditional wisdom by raising issues such as a static cosmos, youth and the family. While I agree with Brown regarding a static cosmos, I am not convinced that the challenge of wisdom's teachings are linked to the family. Qoheleth is not actively undermining the family. Rather, he is simply describing examples of lone individuals, who are denied the pleasures of home. These negative examples could be seen as affirming family. Indeed, there are other examples of Qoheleth's challenge of wisdom in the book, e.g. time, success and death. Ultimately, Brown sees Qoheleth as "stepping out of character" and becoming a detached observer of life. Once Qoheleth recognizes a break between cause and effect, then traditional character formation is threatened. In the end, Qoheleth reconstructs character by affirming a *carpe diem* existence, as well as a submissiveness to the fear of Yahweh, that in the end is true wisdom.

Brown has provided an excellent lens for viewing the wisdom literature of the OT. An emphasis on character formation, which is indeed at the heart of wisdom instruction, is crucial to understanding wisdom literature.

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Isaiah 13–27: A Continental Commentary. By Hans Wildberger. Translated by T. Trapp. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997, x + 624 pp., \$65.00.

Isaiah scholars and others who work primarily in English will welcome this translation of the second volume of Wildberger's three on Isaiah 1–39. Ever since the appearance of this work in German between 1965 and 1982, it has been looked to as one of the most reliable sources in matters of form, structure, and historical background on the first part of the book of Isaiah. In these ways, the work probably comes the nearest to being a successor to Gray's volume in the ICC series.

Wildberger follows the same pattern that he established in his first volume. That is, for each unit (as long as 24 verses in the case of 13:1–14:2, or as short as five in the case of 14:23–27) he provides a listing of relevant literature (updated through 1979), a translation with very thorough textual notes and discussions of form and setting. These are followed by the commentary proper, which proceeds verse by verse. The final section on each unit is entitled "Purpose and Thrust." Here the author seeks to deal with what might be called the perennial significance of the passage. In this volume the form and structure of the larger units (13–23 and 24–27) receive vastly disproportionate treatment. Chapters 13–23 receive two pages, while 24–27 are allotted 28 pages.

As one might suspect upon reflecting that 624 pp. have been devoted to just 14 chapters of Isaiah, Wildberger's work is characterized by meticulous thoroughness. Whether it is in the area of textual criticism, form, historical setting or Hebrew grammar and etymology, the reader can expect to find not only the fullest presentation of the evidence but also a very judicious weighing of that evidence. While Wildberger could hardly be called a conservative in Isaiah studies (he accepts multiple authorship and does not hesitate to designate significant portions of the book [notably 24–27] as postexilic), he can still be counted upon to reject radical conclusions in most instances. Thus, he rejects extreme late-dating for the "Isaiah Apocalypse," preferring a date between 500 and 400 BC to one in the 100s. In the same way, he is unlikely to accept the extreme atomization of the text that characterized many of the form critics of his era. Likewise, he is generally more likely to attribute disputed passages in these chapters to Isaiah of Jerusalem than are other modern commentators.

This tone carries over into the commentary and "Purpose and Thrust" sections. Students of modern commentary writing have long lamented the bifurcation which the dominance of historical critical studies has produced. Great historical-critical commentaries were written as though the theological teaching of the text was of no significance. Yet all along it is precisely this teaching that has made the Bible timeless. On the other hand, the theological commentaries have too often surrendered the historical-critical discussions because it was agreed that these discussions did indeed undermine the validity of the things being claimed about reality in the text. Wildberger's work comes much closer to striking a balance between these poles than do many commentaries on Isaiah. While evangelicals will wish he had gone much farther in discussing the theological meaning of the text, at least he does not act as though there *were* no such meaning.

Thus, this commentary is an interesting example of the attempt to discover some cohesive meaning in a text that one's methods have tended to fragment. The reader will have to judge for himself or herself how successful the attempt was. Many, while being grateful for the attempt, will be frequently disappointed that so often so little can be said. Thus, while 17 pages are given to the text, form, and setting of 23:1–14, discussion of the purpose and thrust accounts for less than half a page. It might be pointed out that the commentary section on this unit runs to 13 pages, but almost all of this is given over to historical questions surrounding the fall of Tyre.

The translation seems to be both competent and lucid. Like all translations of German it suffers at times from long and complex sentences. But these are held to a minimum and even these seem to escape the woodenness that can sometimes creep into a German-to-English translation. English readers of above-average competency should find the work both easy to read and enjoyable.

There is a smattering of maps, charts and graphs throughout that help to make some of the more technical discussions of chronology, geography and etymology more intelligible. A particularly interesting one places the Hebrew of Isaiah 15 and 16 alongside that of Jeremiah 48, making visual the degree of commonality between the two. (It is significant, but less than is suggested by some discussions.) There are indexes of Biblical and ancient Near Eastern references, names and subjects and Hebrew words. These are not exhaustive (except possibly those to ancient Near Eastern texts), but they include enough to be helpful in locating desired matters.

In summary, this volume makes available to English readers an extremely useful compendium of information relating to the text, language and historical background of Isaiah 13–27. It will probably be the first source turned to on these issues. It will not be so frequently turned to for help in understanding the theological significance of these chapters.

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The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 40–66. By John N. Oswalt. NICOT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998, 755 pp., \$48.00.

This is the commentary on Isaiah 40–66 for which many evangelical Bible students have been waiting. With this volume, Oswalt has filled a gap that long had existed in the study of Isaiah. Many of the recent commentaries on Isaiah 40–66 involve treatments from a more liberal theological viewpoint. Certainly the authors of those works are to be commended in that they ask questions and provide insights often overlooked by evangelical scholars. However, not since E. J. Young's three-volume work on Isaiah has a commentary provided such comprehensive coverage of this portion of Scripture from an evangelical perspective. Oswalt's book will prove to be a welcome addition to the library of scholars, students and ministers alike.

Oswalt's outstanding contribution in his first volume on Isaiah 1–39 (in the same series) whetted the appetite for this work, and it does not disappoint. Along with an easy-to-read writing style, Oswalt has combined an extensive knowledge of Isaianic scholarship as well as a technical knowledge of the Hebrew language. The combination of all these gifts has allowed Oswalt to create an understandable commentary that also has unusual depth.

Oswalt examines the text of Isaiah 40–66—as he did chaps. 1–39—under the rubric of “servanthood.” By showing the commonality of “servanthood” in both halves of the book, Oswalt argues that the connections between the two portions of the book are strong and that chaps. 40–66 are the logical extension of the first 39 chapters.

The author takes a strong stand for the unity of authorship in Isaiah. He contends that arguments against single authorship derive more from ideological concerns than from the evidence within the text itself. Concerning the reluctance of many skeptical scholars to admit the possibility that an 8th-century prophet could describe 6th-century events, Oswalt says, “Their [i.e. skeptical scholars'] conception of the nature of prophecy still prevents them from taking the step that the book itself clearly asks its readers

to take: accept these writings as the result of the encounter of a single human being with the self-revealing Lord of the cosmos" (p. 5). In fact, as Oswalt notes, one of the proofs of the superiority of Israel's God over idols is God's ability to reveal future events. However, if Isaiah 40–66 dates from the exilic period, this "proof" of a God who could tell the future would become a nonproof. For Oswalt, authorship deriving from Isaiah, the 8th-century prophet, is demanded by the assertions of God's superiority found in chaps. 40–66.

Although Oswalt approaches Isaiah from the perspective of the reliability of Scripture, he does not avoid addressing the controversial topics that invariably arise in Isaianic studies. The "Servant Songs" are such an example. Oswalt notes the difficulty in identifying the servant consistently in the songs, addressing the problems of identity within the various passages, but identifying the ultimate Servant of the Lord as an individual, the Messiah, who was to be the ideal Israel.

According to Oswalt, chaps. 56–66, rather than being an appendage added by "Trito-Isaiah," are a synthesis of the contrasting points of view found in the earlier sections of Isaiah. Chapters 7–39 warn of judgment if individuals do not maintain righteous living in obedience to the covenant. Chapters 40–55 speak of God's grace that is available even to those who do not deserve it solely on the basis of the righteousness of God. At first these two perspectives seem incompatible. Oswalt, however, argues that chaps. 56–66 solve the problem by demonstrating that through God's grace people can become God's servants as they allow God to make them righteous (p. 559). Once again, rather than seeing a division of Isaiah into the writings of two or three "Isaiahs," Oswalt demonstrates the overall continuity of the message and theme throughout the book of Isaiah.

Oswalt's treatment of the prophecies related to the restoration of Israel is worthy of note. Some of these prophecies use exalted, even hyperbolic, language, and interpreters debate whether this type of language should be interpreted literally or figuratively. Oswalt attempts to maintain a consistent hermeneutic while recognizing that some texts call "for a judicious mix of literal and figurative interpretation" (p. 547). Oswalt views the restoration prophecies as looking beyond the return from the Babylonian exile, noting that some of the prophecies may even have implications for the establishment of the modern state of Israel and "those who have lived since 1948" (p. 553).

This volume will prove to be one of the classic evangelical approaches to Isaiah 40–66. Along with the companion treatment of Isaiah 1–39, Oswalt provides a scholarly, yet reverent, approach to Isaiah. He interacts with the scholarly debates related to the various topics in Isaiah 40–66, but he also holds the Scripture in high regard. In every way, Oswalt has provided a much-needed work. Scholars and students will appreciate Oswalt's masterful job of dealing with the language and the text. Busy ministers, who seek help in explaining Isaiah to their congregations, will value the insights gleaned from the author's careful explanation of the text. We all owe a debt of gratitude to the author for his outstanding contribution to the study of Isaiah.

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A Commentary on Jeremiah: Exile and Homecoming. By Walter Brueggemann. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998, xiv + 502 pp., \$32.00 paper.

This book is a combined edition of Brueggemann's previously published two-volume commentary on Jeremiah in the International Theological Commentary series (*To Pluck Up, To Tear Down*, 1988 [reviewed in *JETS* 34/3 (1991)]; *To Build, to Plant*,

1991). The volume begins with a newly written brief survey of "Recent Jeremiah Study" in which Brueggemann assesses the redefinition of Jeremiah studies emerging out of the 1986 publication of three major commentaries on Jeremiah by W. Holladay, R. Carroll and W. McKane. It is Brueggemann's opinion that these three commentaries, while reflecting substantial differences in approach, nevertheless have in common a disproportional intensity of criticism and thinness of interpretation (see his "Jeremiah: Intense Criticism/Thin Interpretation," *Int* 42 [1988] 279). In Brueggemann's view, the book of Jeremiah ultimately "does not belong to the scholarly guild," but rather to the synagogue and the Church, where it has been preserved and read (p. xiii), although as a "public document" Jeremiah cannot be contained within the Church and synagogue because it "purposes to address all who attend and listen" (p. xiv).

Brueggemann is clearly one of today's most prolific and astute writers on matters of hermeneutical, exegetical and theological import for the contemporary reading of OT literature. His writings are both innovative and imaginative. Reading them can be exhilarating and exasperating, enlightening and elusive at the same time. Reading this commentary is no different from many other examples of his writing. It contains a wealth of material for elucidating the underlying theological issues with which Israel was confronted at the time of the Babylonian captivity, and suggests ways in which these same issues reappear in different forms in our own time and culture. According to Brueggemann this is a commentary that is intentionally addressed to the Church and synagogue as communities that expect "to be addressed in dangerous and unsettling ways by the holiness that sounds here" (p. xiii). This statement is not an idle threat. Reading Brueggemann is always unsettling! He regularly deals in provocative statements that alternately inspire and disturb. In spite of differences that evangelical interpreters may have with some, if not many, of Brueggemann's theological, philosophical, hermeneutical and literary-critical assumptions, he brings a superb gift of language to his task and suggests numerous fresh approaches to understanding the text that very often fit well within an evangelical framework.

While in his introduction Brueggemann disavows adjudication between the different positions on the composition of the Jeremiah reflected in the works of Holladay, Carroll and Childs (p. 11), the commentary for the most part sidesteps these issues by accepting the text as it stands, while not denying significant editorial reshaping. He views the book as a "complicated literary composition" (p. 7), and he is skeptical about the possibility of unraveling the specifics of the editorial processes that gave form to the book, but he concludes that in the end what matters is its present canonical shape. The skepticism about untangling the book's textual history spills over into skepticism about the "person of Jeremiah" as well. While Brueggemann does not deny that the "Jeremiah" of the text is rooted in historical reality, he views the *persona* of the prophet as an "intentional construction" (p. 11), and suggests that the Jeremiah of the book of Jeremiah "is more like a 'portrait' that reflects the taste and interest of the artist, rather than an objective report that is factually precise" (p. 11). He concludes that whether Jeremiah is a "discernible historical figure or an imaginative literary construct is not required for this exposition, and finally adjudication of the matter is impossible" (p. 12).

Brueggemann's interpretive perspective is shaped primarily by sociological and literary analysis. He views the Biblical text as "neither neutral nor objective, but as located in, reflective of, and concerned for a particular social context that is determinative of its shape and focus" (p. 13). He sees the book as the reflection of a dispute in Jerusalem "about who rightly understands historical events and who rightly discerns the relation between faith, morality, and political power. The tradition of Jeremiah articulates a covenant-torah view of reality that stands in deep tension with the royal-priestly

ideology of the Jerusalem establishment" (p. 14). The sort of literary analysis that Brueggemann embraces is not traditional source- or form-critical analysis, but rather one that recognizes the power of language to "propose an imaginative world" without "excessive reference to external historical factors and without excessive interest in questions of authorship" (p. 15). He says that the interpreter should focus on "the action and voice of the text itself" and not be "led away from the actual work of the text by any external reference or hypothesis" (p. 15). His interpretive method rests on the assumption that "Jeremiah's proposal of the world is indeed an imaginative construct, not a description of what is nor a prediction of what will be. . . . It invites the listener to participate in the proposed world so that one can imagine a terminated royal world while that world still exists, and one can receive in imaginative prospect a new community of covenant faith where none has yet emerged" (p. 17). So in Brueggemann's view "sociological analysis helps us see how the covenantal perspectives of the prophetic tradition stand over against royal ideology" while literary analysis "helps us see how Judah is invited to act faithfully, even if that faithfulness is against the presumed interest and 'truth' of the Jerusalem establishment" (p. 17). It is then when the "text is read and heard as a critique of ideology and as a practice of alternative imagination" that the "text continues to have power and pertinence in many subsequent contexts, including our own" (p. 17). From this synopsis of Brueggemann's method, it should be apparent that imagination plays a central role in his conception of both the formation and proper reading of the text. His approach says that the text invites the reader to enter the imaginative world of Jeremiah's prophetic vision and in so doing to experience its power for contemporary living.

In the commentary proper Brueggemann divides Jeremiah into fifteen main literary units, each of which is given a general introduction and then detailed commentary along with suggestions for contemporary relevance is provided for each subsection within the larger unit. This is a commentary that every interpreter of Jeremiah should consult when wrestling with the meaning and continuing relevance of Jeremiah's words for today.

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Ezekiel 21-37: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary. By Moshe Greenberg. AB 22A. New York: Doubleday, 1997, 372 pp., \$39.95.

Serious expositors will welcome the appearance of the second volume of Greenberg's commentary on Ezekiel (the first appeared in 1983). Like the first, it combines rigorous philological and historical scholarship with an epistemological stance that challenges modern orthodoxy in ways often consistent with evangelical presuppositions. Readers should study the introduction to vol. 1 for a discussion of the methodology that supports both volumes. Five characteristics of his work will be of interest to readers of *JETS*.

First, Greenberg's primary burden is the exposition of the Masoretic text (MT). He recognizes that this text is often problematic but argues that it is more reliable than reconstructions, and thus the fundamental artifact with which the expositor must be concerned. He always tries to give the reader a meaningful translation and exposition of the MT, while responsibly listing and often discussing both versional variants and conjectural emendations. For instance, the absence of 36:23b β -38 in the earliest Old

Greek manuscript and irregularities it exhibits in other witnesses has led some to consider it a latter addition. Greenberg discusses the question in some detail, finally arguing that the section fits both the local structure of the passage and the general tenor of the 6th-century prophets and should be retained.

Second, the exposition draws a wide net across the interpretive spectrum. Greenberg interacts not only with the modern interpreters, but also with premodern interpreters of the Hebrew text. He draws heavily from the rich expository traditions of medieval Judaism, and also from John Calvin "as manifestly utilizing the Hebrew" (p. 24), while remaining thoroughly modern in his technical approach to the text.

Third, unlike many moderns, he finds no need to view the individual prophet (in this case, Ezekiel) as a mask worn by a school. That the oracles may have been collected and arranged in their present form by others than Ezekiel, he has no doubt. But in his mind, the attribution of those individual oracles to Ezekiel the son of Buzi is a claim to be accepted unless explicitly disproved, rather than doubted until explicitly verified. This orientation, implicit in vol. 1, is defended explicitly in the brief preface to vol. 2.

Fourth, Greenberg is sensitive to structural concerns and a holistic interpretation of the text as coherent literature. For each paragraph of text he offers a translation, a section entitled "Comment" dealing with text, lexicon, grammar and parallels, and another section entitled "Structure and Themes." He does not attempt a comprehensive analysis of symmetric structures in the text, but is sensitive to the thematic grouping and arrangement of paragraphs and how that arrangement contributes to the development of the overall message, in the tradition of Cassuto.

Fifth, evangelicals must understand that though his presuppositions are conservative, his approach within those presuppositions is rationalistic, not apologetic or harmonistic. The accuracy of Ezekiel's prophecies is one of the more challenging issues that the book offers to those who confess the infallibility of the Scriptures. For instance, some understand the oracle of the 27th year promising Egypt to Nebuchadnezzar (29:17-21) because he "had no wages" from his campaign against Tyre to admit the failure of the earlier oracles promising that he would conquer Tyre (e.g. the oracle of the eleventh year, 26:3-14, in particular 26:12). Under the founding terms of the prophetic order in Deut 18:15-22, such an admission is tantamount to denying that one is a true prophet. Greenberg devotes no energy to harmonizing 29:17-21 with either 26:12 or Deuteronomy. By his reading, many of Ezekiel's prophecies did fail, and the prophet was willing to issue quite candid "amendments" bringing things up to date. Greenberg cites with approval Freedman's observation that "Ezekiel didn't agree with the assessment of the Deuteronomist about how to tell the difference between true prophets and false prophets" (p. 617). In fact, he takes the existence of these amendments (and their retention even when, in the view of some moderns, some of them failed) as *prima facie* evidence of the faithfulness of the book's editors to preserve Ezekiel's oracles as given rather than recasting and recreating them to suit the objectives of a "school of Ezekiel."

In reading a classic, one is participating in a conversation with the author and other readers. We evangelicals who wish to engage this conversation in the context of the Bible frequently find our experience dampened. Some conversational partners agree so closely with our own views that we are not stretched by the conversation. Others differ so widely from our presuppositions that meaningful dialog is impossible. Greenberg's two volumes on Ezekiel offer evangelicals an understandable conversation that will enrich our understanding of the text, respectfully stretch our assumptions about it, and leave us eager for the promised third volume.

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The Book of Ezekiel Chapters 1–24. NICOT. By Daniel I. Block. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997, xxii + 887 pp., \$48.00; *The Book of Ezekiel Chapters 25–48*. NICOT. By Daniel I. Block. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998, xxiv + 826 pp., \$50.00.

Block has produced a superb and monumental commentary on Ezekiel. On this very difficult and sometimes outlandish prophet, Block's two volumes meet admirably the NICOT series' goals. He offers the Church and synagogue Biblical scholarship of the highest quality, draws from a wide range of critical methodologies, approaches divergent opinion with an irenic tone, writes with evangelical conviction and lets his own passion for Scripture and the people of God shine through. It works! And these new Eerdmans NICOT books themselves are a delight to read, with clear format, verse or topic references on every page for quick location and easy-to-read bibliographies. Omitting the several fine excurses from the otherwise detailed table of contents was unfortunate, in my opinion.

The introduction for the entire project launches the first volume. Here Block takes up in succession, background in terms of the world of the prophet himself, the author (Ezekiel), his purpose and methods, the nature of prophecy and Ezekiel's literary style, the Hebrew text of the book, the book of Ezekiel in Jewish and Christian tradition, and the enduring theology of Ezekiel. Bibliography for the work in both volumes concludes this introduction. After the text and commentary on the allotted chapters in the separate volumes, each concludes with its own set of indexes covering selected subjects authors, Scripture references, extracanonical literature and selected Hebrew words and phrases.

The text and commentary sections of each volume are organized as follows, with some variation apparently prompted by the length, literary complexity and place in Block's vision of the whole. (1) Discussion of the "nature and design" of the larger literary units (e.g. 1:1–3:27, "The Call of Ezekiel to the Prophetic Ministry") opens the consideration of each. Form, genre, structural and rhetorical matters find treatment here. (2) Then follow the author's own excellent translation of each succeeding subunit (e.g. 1:1–3), with most text-critical notes housed here as footnotes. (3) Often, as warranted, a treatment of the nature and design of the smaller unit appears as well. This discussion of "nature and design" moves (sometimes without separate title) into (4) the exegesis of the unit, usually proceeding one or two verses at a time, but sometimes more synthetically. (5) In many but not all cases work on the subunit concludes with reflections under the heading "Theological Implications."

Block's skepticism regarding the possibility of reconstructing accurately the prehistory of the MT together with his skill in historical-grammatical exegesis and synchronic literary-rhetorical readings have decisively shaped his approach. This commentary will focus its major energy on understanding the text as a whole and the text as we now have it in its own historical context. (At this particular historical dimension Block is a master, repeatedly bringing his familiarity with ancient Near Eastern literature and culture meaningfully to bear on the interpretation of Ezekiel.) Leslie Allen placed his own work on Ezekiel midway between W. Zimmerli and M. Greenberg (WBC 28, xxiii). On that sort of scale, Block's work stands well on the Greenberg side of Allen's. Block cites Greenberg as the most substantial influence shaping his approach to the book of Ezekiel and sees himself as following Greenberg's "holistic" approach (*Chapters 1–24*, 20 n. 14; 24 n. 33).

For Block the prophet Ezekiel is himself the most likely candidate for recorder of the specific oracles in the book at or near the prophetic events themselves. He suggests the prophet's ability to demonstrate the truth of his own utterances may have been one motivation in this self-documentation (as also in the dating formulas). This issue was particularly germane to Ezekiel's setting among exiles strongly inclined to dismiss his

oracles as eloquent nonsense. While the prophet's further involvement in the book's production is "more difficult to demonstrate," Block sees good reason to support speculation that Ezekiel was also the primary editor of the work as we have it (p. 22). He admits the possibility editorial clarification by later hands (e.g. 1:2-3), but appeals to such later hands figure rarely in the 1,468 pages of his interpretive work. Pursuing the possibility of this later editorial work more seriously would only have strengthened this commentary.

Block regards "halving" and "resumptive exposition" as the two most prominent features of Ezekiel's editorial strategy and the two most promising insights for perceiving the integration intended between discrete oracles. In the former, as Greenberg already saw, a first oracle propounds a theme, a second follows with another linked to the first by various devices. Often, though not invariably, a concluding "coda" links the two in a meaningful whole. Chapters 6:1-14; 23:22-35 and 38:2-39:29 are examples. Block does some of his finest work, tracing the various lexical, syntactic, grammatical and rhetorical links between these "panels," often mounting convincing argument for the editorial linking of units others might disjoin. At the same time Block's instinct to resist fragmenting the text can lead him to minimize evidence that could and perhaps should point to redactional activity and the insights to be gained from dealing with it.

In "resumptive exposition" Block builds on the observation of many source and redaction critics that topics raised briefly are often followed later in Ezekiel's work with lengthier, related expositions. The most obvious examples are the treatment of the divine *kābôd* in 1:1-28, resumed in 8:1-11:25 and 43:1-9, and the "prophetic watchman" in 3:16-21, resumed in 33:1-9. While source or redaction critics are want to regard one or the other of these dual passages as inauthentic, Block sees them as deliberate editorial strategy to be pondered for meaning of the text as it now stands.

With many others Block finds the book dividing into two major parts, chaps. 1-24 giving "Messages of Doom and Gloom for Judah/Israel" and 25-48 "Messages of Hope and Restoration For Judah/Israel." Ezekiel devotes the vast majority of the oracles now housed in chaps. 1-24 to disabusing the exiles of their false hope. This, according to Block, the prophet does by undermining official orthodoxy's "pillars of divine promise" (p. 8), pillars on which, misunderstood and misapplied, their confidence rested. The four pillars (Block calls them "immutable propositions"): the irrevocability of Yahweh's covenant with Israel (Sinai), Yahweh's ownership of the land of Canaan, Yahweh's eternal covenant with David and Yahweh's residence in Jerusalem (p. 8). Then, against the backdrop of this severely chastened understanding, chaps. 25-48 promise Israel's restoration based on these same claims which now become pillars of hope.

Within the first of these two major halves of the book chaps. 1-3 present "The Call of Ezekiel to the Prophetic Ministry," chaps. 4-11 record "Signs and Visions of Woe for Israel/Judah," while chaps. 12-24 gather "A Collection of Prophecies of Woe against Israel." In the call "narrative," which like all the other narratives in Ezekiel is in the form of oracles, Block sees signs of strong resistance in the prophet. He thinks it likely that the divinely imposed silence that closes the 1:1-3:27 call unit rises in part as a response to this resistance. Ezekiel remains capable of speech but free to speak only at the command of God, and in the following seven years almost entirely of judgment. Thus he will not meddle in the promised judgment of Jerusalem by prophetic intercession or calls to repentance. Block understands Ezekiel's tour of the Jerusalem temple in chaps. 8-11 as visionary: he is not physically transported to Jerusalem and none of his ministry transpires in Jerusalem. He nevertheless pictures the realities of apostate Judah in the last decade before its fall to Babylon (vs. Greenberg's "montage of whatever pagan rites were ever conducted at the Jerusalem temple" [AB 22, p. 201]).

Part 2 opens with “Negative Messages of Hope: The Oracles Against Foreign Nations” (25:1–32:32). Block includes these oracles among the messages of hope for Israel not simply by the sort of reverse logic for Judah implicit in the judgment of the nations but solidly upon the prophet’s clear words of hope in them. Positioned precisely in the middle of the 25–32 unit (in 28:24–26), the brief oracle provides the fulcrum on which the whole set of oracles turns. Chapter 33 announces “The End of an Era,” in which Ezekiel’s initial charge as a prophetic watchman (3:17–21) and the earlier disputation over divine justice (18:1–32) are reshaped to address the despair of the exilic community, their false hopes now dashed by the fall of Jerusalem.

Block takes chaps. 34–48 as the book’s final section: “Positive Messages of Hope for Israel: The Gospel according to Ezekiel.” Here Block’s insight that the book’s “sequence of events” in Israel’s restoration reflect conventional judgment-restoration traditions in the ancient Near East addresses the location of the “misplaced” oracles against Mount Seir (35:1–15; *Chapters 25–48*, 271–272). Following a line suggested by Aharoni (p. 427) and emphasizing the oracles’ placement among Ezekiel’s announcement of salvation, Block sees the Gog-Magog oracles (chaps. 38–39) not as apocalyptic but as “satirical literary cartoon” (no fodder here for detailing Russian hordes descending on Israel). The result is some of the most creative and insight-filled work in the commentary. The point? A guarantee by the Spirit poured out on the returned exiles that Yahweh would never again hide his face from Israel as he had in the 586 BC events (p. 489). Finally the vision of chaps. 40–48 Block understands to be “ideational.” It provides guidance anticipating the life and worship of the restoration community but comes replete with indications that a literal fulfillment is not expected. “The prince” is enigmatic in the book and remains enigmatic in Block’s discussion. He is not a royal or messianic figure but still recipient of “crown” property and “royal lands,” with close ties to chaps. 34 and 37 (p. 678–680, 724–746).

One of the more disappointing aspects of the commentary for me surfaces in the “theological implications” sections of the work, not for lack of insight there but because the hermeneutic beneath them seems confusing. The reflections turn out to be more “theological *applications*” than “theological *implications*.” The “implications” are lessons, instruction not only for the past but also for the present people of God. Theological inferences that could have been and no doubt were legitimately drawn from the oracles and the canonical book of Ezekiel but which cannot be directly imported into Christian theology are screened out. The continuities of Ezekiel with Christian thought find emphasis while the discontinuities remain hidden. But Block’s hermeneutic here, so far as I could see, is never clearly worked out in the commentary itself. One could have wished the hermeneutic implicit in the NT’s striking reinterpretation of several important Ezekiel passages (which Block treats well) would have provided in the “theological implications” perhaps a start on indicating the criteria by which one decides how Ezekiel is normative for Christian faith and practice.

A second item begging for treatment by Block is the issue of the fulfillment and apparent nonfulfillment in Ezekiel’s prophecy. This is particularly significant, one would think, when the interpreter has based his conclusions about Ezekiel’s role in recording oracles and in dating them on the prophet’s concern to validate the messages he uttered and thereby to authenticate his prophetic call. A commentary of this sort would be an excellent home for an excursus on what it means to talk of “eternal, immutable promises of God” (*Chapters 1–24*, p. 22) in view of the gap between the vision of Ezekiel and the realities of the restoration community.

And for all the excellent reference to Jeremiah, Leviticus and Deuteronomy, I would be eager to see Professor Block’s summary treatment of Ezekiel’s use and interpretation of these Biblical materials.

These gaps notwithstanding, this commentary will repay study for years.

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Eschatology in the Greek Psalter. By Joachim Schaper. WUNT 2.76. Tübingen: Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1995, 212 pp., DM 78 paper.

This book represents a revised version of the author's 1993 Ph.D. dissertation at Cambridge University. Schaper's aim is to contribute to our understanding of the eschatology of early Judaism as a source for NT backgrounds. One must take care to understand this limited focus. This is not a book about the Greek translation of the Psalms as such. It is a book about the influence of Hellenism on Palestinian Judaism in the 2nd century BC. The Greek Psalter is the means for getting us there.

Schaper begins the book by setting it within the context of recent and classical approaches to the Greek translation of the OT. Here his approach is clearly guided by his larger purpose. For Schaper, the focus on the textual history of the Greek Bible and its translation technique, which occupy much of the current study of the LXX, are granted some importance, but center stage is reserved for the study of the historical and cultural context of the translator(s) of the Greek Psalter. Says Schaper, studies of the Greek Bible that focus on linguistic features of its translation vis-à-vis the Hebrew Bible are generally "ahistorical" because they tend to overlook nonlinguistic factors in translation. A word or a phrase might have been translated in a certain way not because of the translator's understanding of the relationship between Hebrew and Greek but because of the translator's dependence on a proto-rabbinical hermeneutic. Moreover, since we do not have the Hebrew Bible of the Greek translators, it would be anachronistic to suppose the translator used a Hebrew text identical to the present MT. The attempt to reconstruct (through textual criticism) the Hebrew version used by the translator of the Greek Psalter, is "an impossible endeavour." One cannot therefore make absolute statements about the equivalencies of Greek and Hebrew in the Psalms. For that reason, one should focus on the Greek Psalter itself as a religious document in its own right. Schaper's approach, by his own admission, is reminiscent of earlier scholars such as C. H. Dodd (1935) and Z. Frankel (1851).

A major part of Schaper's thesis rests on his dating and locating the translation of the Greek Psalter in 2nd-century BC Palestine. This is also the most tenuous part of his argument. It would be impossible in this brief review to rehearse his justification for this position. In the last analysis, his argument rests on the meaning given to a single Greek word used in the translation and additional corroborating evidence. Schaper himself acknowledges the tenuousness of this argument. Nevertheless the entire subsequent argument of the book is based on this dating and location. Much of the verse-by-verse explication of individual Greek psalms builds on the assumption of a 2nd-century Palestinian origin of the translation. Before relying too heavily on the results of Schaper's analysis of the Greek psalms one is advised to read carefully the brief chapter on "The Greek Psalms in Jewish Worship" (pp. 131–133). Here Schaper attempts to come to terms with the notion of the use of a Greek translation of the Psalms in the largely Semitic (albeit Hellenistic) context of 2nd-century Palestine. I leave it to the reader to decide whether he has answered all the questions.

The bulk of Schaper's study is devoted to a careful and insightful analysis (exegesis) of isolated "eschatological" and "messianic" passages in the Greek Psalms. His general

tack in each passage is to show first that the Hebrew passage is best understood non-eschatologically, e.g. Psalm 1 belongs in a wisdom context (Gunkel). The Greek translator, however, saw an occasion in the text to render his own eschatological hope meaningful to his 2nd-century context. It is in those instances where the translator had a measure of linguistic liberty to choose from among several Greek words that we see the theology of 2nd-century BC Judaism of the translator(s) coming through. Here, in just these types of translational opportunities, we can observe the sea-change from OT piety to Hellenistic eschatology and ultimately to Christianity.

The book concludes with three chapters which center on the Greek translator's understanding of the temple and worship in Judaism, the translator's use of early Jewish exegesis, and "Eschatology and Messianism" in the Greek Psalms. It is here that Schaper develops his central thesis: the LXX (that is, the Greek Psalter) is a valuable, but often overlooked, historical source for reconstructing the development of OT religion, through its transformation in Hellenism, to its ultimate rebirth in NT Christianity.

Schaper's study is a bold, and I believe successful, attempt to refocus scholarly attention on an oft-neglected aspect of NT backgrounds. As such it makes a major contribution to our understanding of messianism and early Jewish eschatology. The implications for NT studies are obvious and Schaper does much to bring these to the attention of the reader.

There is no need, in my opinion, to pit his own contribution against other quite different approaches to the Greek Bible. The fact that today the LXX is of central importance to serious text-critical work on the Hebrew Bible does not diminish the particular kind of importance Schaper attaches to it. The Greek Bible offers quite different opportunities when viewed through the eyes of an *Alltestamentler*. Moreover, not all "translation technique" approaches to the Septuagint are "ahistorical," as Schaper contends. In fact, his bibliography and footnotes suggest he has possibly overlooked some translation-technique approaches that, like Schaper himself, do take into account historical and hermeneutical considerations such as proto-rabbinic exegesis and Qumran-peshet interpretation.

In light of the obvious value of this study, I hesitate to add a criticism. Perhaps it is not so much a criticism as another way to look at the task of using the Greek Bible as an early witness to interpretation. There is, in my opinion, a price to be paid for focusing too heavily on the Greek Psalms as a document in its own right. There is, of course, a place and a justification for doing so, but in a study such as this, I believe it clouds our picture of the role of the Greek translation of the Psalms in the development of Jewish eschatology and messianism in 2nd-century Palestine. In focusing on the sense of the Greek Psalms as such and the context of its translator(s), one may fail to see the equally important historical fact that the translator's own Palestinian community was more a product, not of the Greek Bible, but of the Hebrew Bible, and in particular the Hebrew Psalter. In my opinion, Schaper's idea of a theologically innovative Greek translator is something of an anachronism. It appears to envision the translator too much in terms of a modern exegete addressing his audience with a theologically new understanding of the Hebrew Bible. As Schaper sees the Greek Psalter, "it served as a means of cultural accommodation to the needs of an increasingly Hellenized Jewish community" (p. 133). It is also possible to view the Greek translator of the Psalms as someone more intent on preserving the identity of his religious community by means of his translation. What is fundamentally new about the Greek Psalms may only be the translation, not the meaning that is reflected in the translation. Rather than being a new religious document, it is possible that the Greek Psalter was intended to be a document that would conserve cherished ideas that had already made their way into the interpretation of the Hebrew Psalter. There is, of course, no doubt that many of these ideas already

reflected the influence of an emerging Hellenism. But Hellenism did not begin with the use of Greek translations. Part of the problem, as I see it, lies in Schaper's exegetical dependence on earlier form-critical approaches to the Psalms. To be sure, there is little eschatology in an individual psalm once it has been removed from its place in the Hebrew Psalter and set in one of Gunkel's preexilic *Sitz im Leben*. As many today have come to realize, though, by the time of the Greek translation of the Psalms, much thought had already been given to the messianic and eschatological implications of the psalms, particularly at the time they were being edited and arranged within the post-exilic Hebrew Psalter. By taking such possibilities into consideration one might conclude that the "new" eschatological and messianic ideas in the Greek Psalter were in fact already in the final version of the Hebrew Bible. This distinction is an important one because on it rests the question of the NT's appropriation of the OT Scriptures. Schaper has ably shown that the NT's understanding of the psalms rests on the shoulders of the Greek translator. The question that remains is how much the translator's own understanding of the psalms draws on the interpretative framework laid down by the framers of the Hebrew Tanak. Had Schaper raised that question, I believe, his results would have been considerably strengthened.

Schaper's work is a welcome and valuable addition to the growing literature on the LXX in general, and the Greek Psalter in particular. He has, to my satisfaction, amply demonstrated his basic thesis that the Greek Psalter represents a kind of eschatological reading of the psalms prevalent in Judaism in 2nd- and 1st-century Palestine and that ultimately fed the hopes of early Christianity. As such he has also shown the importance of the Greek Bible for understanding both early Judaism and Christianity.

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The Spirit in the Gospels and Acts: Divine Purity and Power. By Craig S. Keener. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1997, xxi + 282 pp., \$24.95.

This work, based on Keener's dissertation written under D. Moody Smith at Duke University, "traces samples of two strains of Jewish understanding of the Spirit in early Christian narrative literature" (p. 1). Those two strains are prophecy and purification. In the introduction, Keener is careful to point out that the book "is not a survey of all (or even most) relevant texts" related to the Holy Spirit (p. 1). Instead, its primary goal is "to investigate historical questions" (p. 4) in a way which "underline[s] the pervasively Spirit-centered character of early Christian experience" (p. 5).

In order to carry out this objective, Keener begins with a survey of "The Spirit of Purity and Prophecy in Early Judaism," including non-Jewish literature, early Judaism, rabbinic literature, and nonrabbinic Jewish sources. He then works in detail with samples from Mark (1:9-11), Matthew (3:1-4:11; 12:1-45; 9:35-10:15), John (1:31-33; 2:1-11; 3:1-8; 4:21-24; 7:37-39), and Acts (1:1-2:47). Of these samples, those from Mark, Matthew and Acts highlight the theme of prophecy and those from John highlight the theme of purification.

The problem is, however, that the book's title raises certain expectations that its introduction cannot completely erase. To compound those expectations, the book jacket announces, "We are rewarded . . . with perhaps the most detailed study of the Holy Spirit in the Gospels and Acts in light of the ancient evidence of the religious world in which these texts emerged." In fact, the gospel of Luke—in which the Holy Spirit plays

a particularly prominent role—is omitted completely, and in some cases the reader learns less about the Holy Spirit than about other historical and theological (particularly Christological) issues. Also, the conclusions that Keener reaches on these issues are strongly influenced by the fact that, throughout his work, he assumes the two-source hypothesis, the existence of Q, late dating (e.g. post-AD 70 for Matthew), and the use of the redaction-critical method. Some of the results are, therefore, different from those of readers who work from a different starting point. Two minor criticisms relate to the notes. First, although they are extensive (225 per chapter on average; 339 in the chapter on John) and detailed, their sheer volume makes them annoying as endnotes. Second, when seeking a primary-source reference, the reader sometimes encounters a secondary source instead.

Nevertheless, once the reader can come to terms with the fact that he or she is reading a detailed exegetical study of selected NT passages related to one another by the mention of the Holy Spirit, there is much to commend this book. It contains a wealth of exegetical work, including a thorough investigation of historical questions related to the passages examined. Keener handles both the Biblical text and extra-Biblical sources carefully and even-handedly. He refers consistently to primary sources, and he has included extensive bibliographical resources and indexes. His tracing of the theme of water as a means of purification in the chapter on John's gospel is particularly interesting, and the comparatively brief chapter on Acts (12 pages of text) provides a good overview of the Spirit as the source of prophetic empowerment. These strengths may well make this book one you will want to own.

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Jesus in Context: Temple, Purity and Restoration. By Bruce Chilton and Craig A. Evans. *Arbeiten zur Geschichte des Antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums.* Leiden: Brill, 1997, xi + 572 pp., \$182.50.

This volume collects together 20 essays, most of which were previously published but are now slightly revised, by two prolific, contemporary North American scholars and representatives of the "Third Quest of the Historical Jesus." Chilton teaches at Bard, Evans at Trinity Western. The essays are loosely unified by the theme of situating Jesus squarely in the context of Second-Temple Judaism and by frequent treatment of the themes of seeing Jesus as concerned for purity issues and the significance of the incident traditionally known as the "temple cleansing" and related texts. The essays are arranged in three sections: theoretical, background, and exegetical studies, with 11 chapters by Chilton and nine by Evans. A jointly written introduction and detailed (35-page) bibliography frame these chapters.

The introduction states, "both [authors] have identified themselves with Evangelical Christianity" (p. 20). It also claims that the amount of historicity seen in the account of Jesus' trial forms the sole substantive point of disagreement between the two authors (p. 22). But Chilton is overall much more inclined to assign portions of gospel pericopae to later stages of Christian composition than is Evans, and neither falls into the inerrantist definition of "evangelical" which this *Journal* represents. Nevertheless, there is enormous value and insight in many of these essays to which a brief review cannot begin to do justice.

The eight chapters I found most significant were: (1) Evans on "Early Rabbinic Sources and Jesus Research"—a response to Neusner with illustrations of how rabbin-

ica can be judiciously sifted to shed light on historical, form and tradition criticism of the gospels; (2) Evans' critique of Neusner with respect to his ahistorical interpretation of the Mishnah and his playing down of messianic expectation during the Tannaitic age ("Mishnah and Messiah 'in Context': Some Comments on Jacob Neusner's Proposals"); (3) Chilton on "Jesus within Judaism"—a survey of Christian treatment of the topic with special focus on the 20th century and particular detail concerning the Third Quest; (4) Chilton on John the Baptist as primarily a "purifier" rather than a prophet ("John the Purifier")—though curiously without any interaction with J. Meier's extensive, somewhat different treatment of the subject in *A Marginal Jew*, vol. two; (5) Chilton on "E. P. Sanders and the Question of Jesus and Purity"—critiquing Sanders' rejection of this gospel theme as inauthentic and a sequel to his somewhat parallel critique of Sanders' rejection of Jesus as concerned with repentance; (6) Evans on "Aspects of Exile and Restoration in the Proclamation of Jesus and the Gospels"—an important complement to the partial corroboration of N. T. Wright's ongoing work; and (7) Evans on the temple incident as a genuine act of purification and not merely a prediction of its fall ("Jesus' Action in the Temple: Cleansing or Portent of Destruction?").

Other chapters include Chilton's "Ideological Diets in a Feast of Meanings," which offers a convenient summary of the thesis of his whole book on the Last Supper—*A Feast of Meanings*—Jesus first saw the temple cult replaced by his own coming sacrifice on this night, and this is what led Judas to turn him in. Chilton surveys various anthropological understandings of animal sacrifice in the context of the *Akedah* in "The Hungry Knife: Toward a Sense of Sacrifice." Evans plausibly refutes the notion that the farmers in the parable of the wicked tenants should be viewed as peasants in "Are the Wicked Tenant Farmers 'Peasants'? Jesus' Parable and Lease Agreements in Antiquity." Evans studies Jewish backgrounds and parallels to the parables of the prodigal son and the pounds to argue for their authenticity in "Reconstructing Jesus' Teaching: Prospects and Proposals." "The Temple in the Isaiah Targum" reflects Chilton's mastery of that source over many years and highlights critical attitudes toward the temple not unlike some found in Jesus and first-century Essenism. Chilton analyzes Matt 17:24–27 in light of temple practice, the Matthean community and Jesus and his movement in "A Coin of Three Realms," and attempts a source-critical division of John 2:15 in "A Whip of Ropes. . . ." Evans again supports authenticity by studying Luke 22:24–30 against its Scriptural and political background in "The Twelve Thrones of Israel." Chilton concludes the volume with a tradition-critical dissection of the trial narrative, sifting out discrete parts to attribute to the historical Jesus and the various circles of his early Christian followers (cf. Chilton's full-length book on *The Temple of Jesus*).

The four chapters apparently composed first for this anthology are Chilton's critique of Sanders; Chilton on "A Generative Exegesis of Mark 7:1–23," more of Chilton's unique brand of tradition criticism; Evans on "Who Touched Me? Jesus and the Ritually Impure," on the eschatological significance of this aspect of Jesus' healing ministry in light of Jewish backgrounds; and on "Do This and You Will Live: Targumic Coherence in Luke 10:25–28," another defense of historical authenticity and literary integrity in light of Jewish interpretation of Lev 18:5. The most curious essay, arguably, is Chilton's on "Shebna, Eliakim, and the Promise to Peter," almost half of which seems entirely to digress from the argument in order to summarize Chilton's thesis in his book on the Isaiah Targum and to respond at length to a review which substantially misunderstood what Chilton meant there by an "exegetical framework."

Clearly these essays are of uneven value. Some are also highly technical, although the unpointed Hebrew of the ancient Jewish texts, while printed for the specialist, is also regularly translated. In general, Evans' studies seem less speculative than Chilton's, but they are also less creative. One may wonder if, in their proper concern to rescue the

historical Jesus from modern non- and even anti-Jewish interpreters who have underemphasized Jesus' concern for ritual purity and the Jerusalem temple as existing, God-ordained institutions of his day, Chilton and Evans have not underestimated how much Jesus broke from and challenged conventional thinking of his time. But the latter is so much better known that this redress is an important swing of the pendulum in the opposite direction, even if arguably a bit too far.

This volume is much freer of mechanical errors than many published by Brill, but one still notes a significant number of typographical errors. It is also a shame that these articles are collected in a volume so costly that few individual scholars will ever buy it, and now a few theological libraries will have to forego it as well. One wonders if the presumed objective of greater accessibility in collection of essays of this nature will actually be met. Nevertheless, for the scholar who can get it and work through it, the effort will be richly rewarded.

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"I Will Give You Rest": The Rest Motif in the New Testament with Special Reference to Mt 11 and Heb 3–4. By Jon Laansma. WUNT 98. Tübingen: Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1997, xv + 459 pp., n.p. paper.

In this published form of a doctoral dissertation written under the supervision of I. Howard Marshall and Paul Ellingworth and defended at the University of Aberdeen in 1995, Laansma, while refocusing on the two passages stipulated in the subtitle, offers us the contours of a Biblical theology of "rest."

The brief opening chapter sets up the problems Laansma wishes to address. Contemporary scholarship has largely been so interested in establishing a wisdom Christology background to Matt 11:25–30 that it has paid insufficient attention to rest as a soteriological category. Contemporary debates on Hebrews 3–4, influenced by such giants as Käsemann and Hofius, have often focused on whether these chapters depict the *traveling* people of God or the *waiting* people of God, and the "rest" theme has been invoked primarily to substantiate one of these (or other) theories. The purpose of Laansma's book is to study both of these passages again, against the background of two OT themes: rest as it is related to the promised land and the end of the nomadic existence of the people of God, and rest as it is tied to the Sabbath theme of the OT.

In the lengthy second chapter, Laansma works his way through the most important OT passages dealing with these two themes. The rest tradition, Laansma asserts, is "a very prominent OT redemptive category" (p. 75), and tied to such themes as the temple, the Davidic kingship and weariness. The rest motif in the Sabbath passages is associated with redemption from bondage, and that is when it comes closest to the promise of rest in the land. There may be shadows of an "eschatological Sabbath," but more typically the hope of a future Sabbath is tied to a vision of "purified covenant life, free of hostile and profane interference" (p. 76). Laansma warns that the almost complete textual independence of these themes cautions us against reading one of these two traditions into the other. Nevertheless, he perceives a number of important thematic overlaps.

The third chapter focuses on the "rest" theme in the LXX (Laansma rightly recognizes that "LXX" is a useful label for what were probably multiple translation traditions), and is primarily an introduction of the important relevant words (*ἀναπαύω*, *ἀνάπαυσις*, *καταπαύω*, *κατάπαυσις*). Chapter four surveys the rest theme in other Jewish and Chris-

tian literature, and adds a brief appendix on rest in gnostic mythology. Among the important conclusions is that although the theme of "rest" is abundant in this literature, it is not stereotyped into one or two tightly defined streams, so there is no particular reason to press the NT passages into a particular second-temple tradition.

Chapter five examines Matt 11:28–30 and Matthew's ostensible wisdom Christology, along the way focusing not only on the target passage but also on Matt 11:19, 25–27; 23:34–39. Against the trend, but rightly in my view, Laansma denies that Matthew is actively advancing a wisdom Christology. In Matt 11:27, which is critical for the discussion, Matthew's aim is not to present the Son as wisdom, but to present the Son, "who is to some extent mirrored by Wisdom," as "the final representative of Israel, probably also as the one greater even than Moses" (p. 207). "The conclusion cannot but be that Matthew is not particularly interested to give Wisdom her own chair at the table of his Christology, though Wisdom speculation is one of the possible tributaries to his thought" (p. 208). That is exactly right. Moreover, Laansma's conclusions are reinforced by another recent doctoral dissertation, one by D. J. Ebert, "Wisdom in New Testament Christology, with Special Reference to Hebrews 1:1–4" (Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1998).

In chap. six, Laansma offers his positive exegesis of Matt 11:28–30. The offer of "rest" is not dependent on Sirach; there are closer parallels to OT texts. For Matthew, Jesus utters this critical logion as the Son of David "who himself claims to bring to fulfillment the oft repeated, OT promise of YHWH to his people, the promise of rest" (p. 251). Chapter seven is a lengthy study of Hebrews 3–4, carefully done. Occasionally I wished Laansma had developed a little more the canonical salvation-historical markers that *Auctor* uses to develop his discussion.

This is a valuable piece of work. It is essential reading not only for those working on Matthew and Hebrews, but also for those who are suspicious of the current fad-dishness of wisdom Christology (and for their opponents!), and for the broader field of Biblical theology.

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Luke-Acts: Angels, Christology and Soteriology. By Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis. WUNT 94. Tübingen: Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1997, xv + 357 pp., n.p. paper.

At one level this is a fresh history-of-religions approach to the theology of Luke-Acts. More narrowly, it seeks to establish that a theology of angels has informed Luke's Christology. Fletcher-Louis is not so naive as to think that Luke's Christology is accounted for by a reductionistic appeal to angels in the Jewish backgrounds that shape Luke's work. He argues, rather, that the contribution of angels to the complex synthesis has been ignored. Borrowing a category from J. Daniélou, Fletcher-Louis proposes to apply the term "angelomorphic . . . wherever there are signs that an individual or community possesses specifically angelic characteristics or status, though for whom identity cannot be reduced to that of an angel" (pp. 14–15). So although he accepts the contention of Michaelis that there is no "angel-Christology" in early Christianity—at least as that category is narrowly conceived—Fletcher-Louis contends that "a more versatile application" of the angelomorphic is demonstrable.

After an introduction that prepares the way for angelomorphic categories in Luke-Acts, Fletcher-Louis devotes the first part of his work to an exploration of such traditions in this corpus. He tends to proceed by "initial probings" that turn back on themselves

a little later in the book. Fletcher-Louis suggests that just as Jesus' post-resurrection identity is "somatic," so his predeath earthly existence is angelomorphic. Indeed, the characteristics of the "angelic life" feature not only in Jesus but in the righteous. Such a lifestyle includes "access to status and power, an ascetic—and particularly celibate lifestyle, the readiness for martyrdom and the mode of worship centred on Jesus" (p. 106). (This last element is almost incoherent: How does this apply to both Jesus and the righteous?)

Wanting to explore how far such traditions are not merely Christian but Jewish, Fletcher-Louis explores Jewish angelomorphic traditions in the second part of his book. Here he travels rapidly back and forth between Biblical traditions and what later Jewish writers made of them: kingship, priesthood, Hecataeus of Abdera, prophets (including the "angelization" of Zephaniah), and so forth. The literature of second-temple Judaism, he contends, is replete with angelomorphic presentation of Adam, the patriarchs, Moses, and many others. "Son of man" in Daniel 7 is analyzed in similar fashion.

Part III of the book returns to Luke-Acts, re-examining the material in the light of these angelomorphic traditions. Fletcher-Louis argues that Luke redefines Jewish angelomorphism, and that this redefinition is most comprehensively synthesized out of his understanding of "son of man." "There is . . . a sense in which this title functions to conceptually embrace otherwise disjointed aspects of the angelomorphic Christ. Supremely in Lk 12:8–9, the relationship between the earthly Jesus and the heavenly Son of Man provides the parameters within which the preexistent, present and future, human and divine Jesus can be understood" (p. 248). Perhaps. But if angelomorphism applies so readily to both Jesus and to the righteous, how does it account for the universal NT perception of Jesus' uniqueness?

Despite numerous suggestive passages, the book is marred by too many fuzzy categories and a want of believable controls. While rightly insisting that there are many elements that go into Lukan Christology, Fletcher-Louis does not usually provide the analytic care that demonstrates whether a particular element springs from this or that tradition. Too often the argument sounds like "heads-I-win-tails-you-lose." In discussing Luke's portrayal of Paul, for instance, Fletcher-Louis flags Vielhauer's complaint that Acts 17:24–31 presents a Paul committed to natural theology and borrowing from pagan authors, a presentation a long way removed from the "Lutheran" Paul of the epistles. Fletcher-Louis responds: "Though Paul's argument certainly draws on pagan authors, it remains to be seen whether in fact it is essentially indebted to stoic thought, as earlier scholarship, including Vielhauer's has assumed. If, rather, Paul is reliant on a thoroughly Jewish view of humanity as angelomorphic, and in that sense 'divine,' which he has then expressed in stoic language, then that would be entirely consistent with the very Jewish picture of Paul which is painted in Acts" (p. 31).

Yet the book is important, not, I think, because of its own synthesis, but because it is one of a small number of works that is drawing attention to an element of NT Christology still inadequately explored. For instance, though he several times briefly mentions "the angel of the Lord," the possibility that this enigmatic figure contributes to NT incarnational Christology is never really explored. There is more work to do in this area.

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The Things Accomplished Among Us. By Rebecca I. Denova. JSNTSup 141. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997, 260 pp., \$74.00.

Most studies of Luke-Acts address, in some fashion or another, H. Conzelmann's influential position that Acts was written to account for the crisis resulting from the delay of the parousia. For Denova, Conzelmann is her point of departure as she, following J. Jervell, rejects his often-accepted position. Our author understands her work as a "beginning, as a new way to approach the text" (p. 7), as she attempts to show that the structure and content of Luke-Acts is shaped by Luke's understanding that the life of Christ and the early Church fulfills prophecy. In this narrative-critical study, Denova utilizes this tool "in its broadest sense of understanding the narrative through the plot structure, and the way in which structural patterns are created and integrated by the author [Luke] to provide associative context" (p. 25).

The main thesis of this work is that the story of Jesus' rejection at Nazareth (Luke 4:16-30) contains the pattern and substance of Luke-Acts. This passage sums up Luke 1-3 and, just as importantly, prepares the reader for what is to come, especially as seen in the predictions of Isa 61:1-2; 58:6 and the stories of Elijah and Elisha in 1 and 2 Kings. The five injunctions that Jesus quotes from Isaiah are, for the most part, carried out in Jesus' life as described in the gospel of Luke and subsequently duplicated and completed in the disciples' lives in Acts. Moreover, the picture of Elijah-Elisha conveys the twin motifs of the master-teacher relationship and the rejection that the disciples and Paul encounter in the spreading of the gospel. Denova understands Luke 4:16-30 to demonstrate that Luke-Acts is a fulfillment of prophecy, beginning with John the Baptist and continuing all the way through Paul's mission to Rome. These two books, which combine to form the longest work in the NT canon, should be considered to be a "unified narrative." In essence, then, there is no theological change between Luke and Acts, and hence, no need to hold that Acts was written as a response to a crisis.

Overall, Denova provides a helpful study. She offers a fresh approach to the topic of Luke-Acts and the questions raised and conclusions argued by Conzelmann. She writes clearly and addresses many of the important arguments related to her topic. Since her main focus is Luke 4:16-30 it is a little puzzling that of the five injunctions found in the Isaiah quote she so easily relegates the phrase "acceptable year of the Lord" to a footnote (p. 134). Furthermore, I remain unconvinced that Jesus did not carry out the command "to proclaim release to the captives." To me this is one of his main concerns for Israel. But these observations aside, I recommend this book to anyone studying the theology and structure of Luke-Acts.

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The Paradox of Salvation: Luke's Theology of the Cross. By Peter Dobe. SNTSMS 87. Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1996, xiv + 272 pp., \$54.95.

The significance of the death of Jesus within Lukan soteriology was catapulted into the limelight of scholarly interest when H. Conzelmann announced that Luke-Acts contains "no trace of any Passion mysticism, nor is any direct soteriological significance drawn from Jesus' suffering or death. There is no connection with the forgiveness of sins" (*The Theology of Saint Luke*, 1960, p. 201; German original, 1953). Dobe's work—a revision of his 1992 dissertation at the University of Leeds, supervised by J. Keith

Elliott—amounts to a sustained and convincing refutation of the perspective of Conzelmann and others who suppose Luke lacks a theology of the cross.

The Paradox of Salvation is organized in three parts. Part I discusses “preliminary matters” such as the history of the allegation that Luke has no *theologia crucis*, and, by contrast, the presence in Luke-Acts of numerous texts highlighting the divine and Scriptural “necessity” (δεῖ) of the Messiah’s suffering. As for Luke’s sources, Doble plays down the importance of a synoptic theory (though he affirms Markan priority), but takes great interest in Lukan echoes of the δίκαιος model in Wisdom of Solomon.

Doble’s study focuses on three unparalleled elements in Luke 23:46–47; Jesus’ final word from the cross (v. 46), the fact that the centurion ἐδόξαζεν τὸν θεὸν, and the centurion’s declaration that Jesus was δίκαιος (v. 47). Doble takes issue with G. D. Kilpatrick’s rendering of δίκαιος in 23:47 as “innocent.” This forensic sense may be possible for δίκαιος, but it will not do in the Lukan context. Indeed, the focus of this entire monograph is on the meaning of δίκαιος in Luke 23:47.

In Part II the author presents detailed studies of the three elements from 23:46–47 noted above in which he strives to uncover the probable Lukan sense for each expression in light of Lukan usages and tendencies elsewhere. The reader is reminded that semantic analysis carefully distinguishes between language (what a word can mean) and speech (what it does mean in a given instance). Doble is not shy about the quest to recover an author’s intended meaning. Three of five chapters in Part II pursue the sense of δίκαιος in 23:47, with the conclusion that it connotes trust and loyalty toward God (this is so with individuals other than Jesus [cf. 18:14], and it is true as well with Jesus as *the δίκαιος*).

In Part III Doble seeks to identify “echoes of Wisdom” (i.e. not just allusions or explicit citations) in Luke’s theology of the cross. He scans the Lukan corpus and identifies numerous passages that both suggest a link with wisdom and weigh in favor of δίκαιος in 23:47 as connoting trust and loyalty toward God. The final chapter of the book seeks to describe the “paradox of salvation” in which “Luke’s *theologia crucis* turns out to be a subset of his *theologia salutis*” (p. 239). Jesus’ death takes its place in the scheme of things as a calling to walk in his way (so the parallels of Jesus’ and Stephen’s deaths), and as an assurance of the “amazing reversal” God accomplishes through him. “Luke probably intended to affirm that Jesus’ death stood in God’s plan of salvation as *that willing act of faithful response to God’s call which turned the ages*; and that sounds very like a coherent *theologia crucis*. Luke is not a Paul, nor is he a John, but his substantial, two-volume work offers a narrative theology of the cross, firmly rooted in Israel’s scripture . . . offering his own interpretation of Jesus’ story, particularly of his death” (p. 243; italics his).

Doble’s study has many strengths. His rejection of “innocent” as a translation for δίκαιος in 23:47 is convincing. Doble moves ably from exegetical detail to larger literary and theological issues, thus keeping a monograph centered on two verses from becoming tedious and obscure. Furthermore, the work is well-researched and clearly presented, and it will surely demand the attention of any serious student of Luke’s theology of the cross.

As for weaknesses, it was surprising to find no discussion of Acts 20:28 in this work. Also, the study seems to make its strongest points in Part II, and is less convincing in showing the significance of a connection with Wisdom of Solomon. But these are not great faults in what amounts to a solid, important monograph.

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The Discipleship Paradigm: Readers and Anonymous Characters in the Fourth Gospel. By David R. Beck. Biblical Interpretation Series 27. Leiden: Brill, 1997, 145 pp. + bibliography and indexes. \$65.00.

This interesting, well-written book advocates the thesis that anonymity functions in the fourth gospel as a literary device to highlight the ideal features of a given character in the narrative. Applied to the motif of discipleship, anonymity marks out a particular protagonist as exemplary in terms of that person's faith in Jesus. In his seminal work *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel*, R. A. Culpepper proposed more than 15 years ago that this device is operative in the case of the gospel's "disciple Jesus loved." The author of the present work has now applied this principle consistently to John's entire narrative.

Beck discusses the following anonymous figures "with extended portrayals and narrative significance" (p. 137) in the fourth gospel: the mother of Jesus (chap. 2); the Samaritan woman and the royal official (chap. 4); the infirm man (chap. 5); the woman caught in adultery (chap. 8); the blind man (chap. 9); and the disciple Jesus loved (chaps. 13, 19–21). For each of these characters, Beck attempts to demonstrate his thesis that the fourth gospel's significant anonymous characters model the "paradigm of appropriate response to Jesus," which Beck defines as "an active faith response to Jesus' word without a sign or the need to 'see' and bearing witness to the efficacy of Jesus' word to others" (p. 133). Moreover, Beck contends that the converse is also true: named characters, even where portrayed favorably, are not offered as models for reader emulation.

After having laid the groundwork for his study in the initial chapters, Beck launches his detailed investigation in chap. 4 with an analysis of the prologue, the witness of John the Baptist, and Jesus' call of his disciples. The first character significant for the author's thesis, the mother of Jesus, is treated in chap. 5. Beck sees in her a response of "faith and witness, even without full comprehension" (p. 58). This seems unobjectionable. But is the name Mary suppressed in order to encourage reader identification, as Beck contends? Or does the fourth evangelist not mention Mary's name because he assumes his readers' familiarity with it or for some other reason? And in any case, how plausible is the assumption that the gospel's first readers would have considered "the mother of Jesus" an "anonymous character"? Moreover, while the mother of Jesus is not "named" in John's gospel, does not the designation "mother of Jesus" still constitute a concrete identification that falls short of complete "anonymity"? Beck thinks that his exhaustive focus on reader impact renders any treatment of such issues unnecessary, since they are at least in part bound up with authorial intention. But may reader impact not be part of authorial intention? It seems that the dichotomy underlying Beck's attempted appropriation of reader-response theory is entirely too rigid to yield balanced and reliable interpretive conclusions.

But it is the infirm man of John 5 that presents the greatest obstacle for Beck's thesis (chap. 6). Contrary to the almost universal consensus of Johannine scholarship that views this man in negative terms, Beck strains to retain the notion of this man's positive characterization. Nevertheless, in the end Beck only manages to "choose[s] to retain the ambiguity of the man's portrayal" (p. 89). However, even if this assessment is granted, "ambiguity" still is different from a positive portrayal worthy of emulation. And what precisely are John's readers encouraged to imitate? Certainly not the man's "betrayal" of Jesus to the Jewish authorities (5:11). It seems doubtful whether Beck himself would have seen in the infirm man of chap. 5 a positive character if his thesis had not required him to construe this figure in such terms. Then again, when all is said and done, Beck concludes that "[t]he contrast between positive and negative assessments of the man's actions reflects different extratextual choices by readers" (p. 89). So who is to know? Positive, negative, or ambiguous—it is all in the eye of the beholder.

Despite these serious methodological concerns, I have benefited considerably from reading this book. The author's perceptive discussion of narrative detail has great potential for sharpening the apprehension of John's narrative intentions. Nonetheless, the volume raises serious concerns regarding the evangelical appropriation of reader-response criticism, which must now be addressed in further detail.

The first concern pertains to the author's apparent full embrace of reader-response theory. If Beck's endorsement of this approach is subject to any qualifications, one would not know from reading this book; no critique of reader-response theory is provided. At the very outset, Beck postulates that all any interpreter can ever claim to achieve is "a reading, not *the* reading of a text," referring to reader-response theorists such as Fish, Fowler, Iser and Segovia (pp. 3–5). Having thus banished himself at the very outset to an island of interpretive solipsism, on what basis does Beck expect his readers to keep reading? At best, he may commend his "readings" as suggestive, creative or interesting. But by failing to give due consideration to the determinacy of authorial intention as expressed in a given text for that text's meaning, he has abandoned any possibility of criteria for valid interpretation from the start. The exclusive consideration of reader impact and the consistent setting aside of authorial intent also appear to jeopardize the notion of the authority and morally compelling force of Scripture.

The second concern relates to the author's rigid insistence on reading John's gospel solely within its own frame of reference. At no level is any attempt made to relate the fourth gospel to the synoptics or the Christian canon as a whole, nor are matters of background engaged that are not explicitly referred to in the text. This self-imposed limitation to the text, nothing but the text, and only the text seems artificial, if for no other reason than that an emphatic "reading between the lines" is often required to pick up nuances or connotations conveyed by a given phrase. At times, Beck's refusal to entertain any notions relevant to interpretation not made explicit in a given text borders on the idiosyncratic (e.g. pp. 44, 46 regarding 1:19, 35–40 or pp. 113–114 regarding 13:23).

Third, while something can certainly be gained by focusing on anticipated reader responses, the question of checks and balances looms large. For example, what in the Samaritan woman does John enjoin his readers to imitate? Is it merely her believing response to Jesus and her telling others about him? Or does John intend this character to "strike a resonant chord with readers whose extratexts include the experience of disenfranchisement, either by gender, ethnicity, or consequential life choices—choices they may feel were beyond their control" (p. 78)? Again, it seems that, once authorial intention has been jettisoned as determinative for meaning, there are only "readings," with no criteria available to adjudicate between alternate interpretations.

Fourth, is the whole notion of "anonymity" adequately demonstrated in its ancient, first-century context, or is it a far more sophisticated literary notion arising from fairly recent genres such as the modern novel? How can Beck be sure that John's readers, or subsequent readers over the centuries (not to speak of John's authorial intention itself, which, of course, is of no concern for Beck in the present study), even so much as recognized "anonymity" in those terms as significant? This, of course, is only one particular instance of overexegesis and anachronism that I find characteristic of much of literary-critical methodology in general.

Fifth, when Beck identifies a name as a barrier for reader identification, what about other characteristics such as the designation "the mother of Jesus" or "a man born blind"? To cite but one example: When Beck states regarding the "disciple whom Jesus loved" that "[n]othing is revealed of his familial relationships, social standing, occupation, physical condition, or his past," this characterization is reminiscent of the book of Hebrews' casting of Melchizedek as "without father, without mother, without gene-

alogy" (7:3; p. 136). Yet Melchizedek is *named*; it is simply that several *other* significant characteristics are not provided in the respective narrative, an omission that enlarges the potential for a given reader to fill in the narrative space with imagination. For this reason a theory that focuses unilaterally on the presence or absence of a name at the exclusion of other identifying traits appears unduly narrow.

Sixth and last, is Beck's thesis correct? I am not certain that it is not, but I have considerable doubt that it is. To begin with, the sample size of only seven significant anonymous characters in the fourth gospel—six if the adulterous woman of chap. 8 is eliminated, and she should be on textual grounds—is very small, which renders a definite verification of Beck's hypothesis precarious. Moreover, in light of the above stated reservations, a more nuanced assessment seems called for. It is *probable* that "the disciple Jesus loved" has ideal aspects encouraging reader identification; it is *possible* that the mother of Jesus, the Samaritan woman, the royal official and the blind man do; but it is *doubtful* whether the infirm man does. Of course, Beck himself is not interested here in the question of how anonymity relates to authorial intention. But for those of us who are, reality turns out to be more complex than Beck's monolithic theory. To be sure, at times John may refrain from naming a given character for the purpose of reader identification; at other times, however, he may do so for other reasons, such as the insignificance of the person's name, his reader's presumed familiarity with it, or his ignorance of it; or a combination of these factors may be at work. And who is to say that John sought to discourage reader identification (positive or negative) in the case of *named* characters (such as Jesus or Judas) or unnamed *groups* (such as the disciples or "the Jews")? These questions remain.

If a work is as strong as its thesis, this book falls short of persuading. If a work is as reliable as its methodological foundation, I have serious reservations. If a work has some redeeming value if it is well-written and yields some interesting insights, this book may still benefit those unconvinced by its thesis or skeptical regarding its method.

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The Beloved Disciple. By James H. Charlesworth. Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1995, xxv + 481 pp., \$30.00.

This work is primarily an attempt to discover the identity of the anonymous "disciple whom Jesus loved" in the gospel of John. Charlesworth discusses 22 different positions held on this question by scholars, and says that experts now generally hold that the Beloved Disciple was one of the following: (1) one of the unnamed disciples mentioned in John 21:2, (2) Lazarus (cf. John 11:3, 5, 36), (3) a narrative fiction or *typos*, or (4) John the son of Zebedee. He quickly disposes of the last two views (even Schnackenburg and Brown no longer accept the traditional Johannine view, he notes), and proceeds to a narrative criticism of the gospel.

First, Charlesworth concludes that three men were involved in creating the gospel: (1) the Beloved Disciple, who provided the oral "witness" to Jesus' words and works (21:24), (2) the evangelist, who wrote the gospel in two editions (adding chaps. 15–17 and references to the Beloved Disciple in the second edition) and (3) an editor who added chap. 21 as an appendix. The gospel is a Jewish composition, written before AD 100 in

western Syria or Palestine. The Johannine community was undergoing three social crises: (1) Johannine Jews were being expelled from the synagogues, (2) the community was divided by a schism, concerning whether Jesus did come in the flesh and (3) the Beloved Disciple, who was a real person and an eyewitness of the Jesus tradition, had recently died, which was unexpected and traumatic to the community (cf. 21:23).

Next, Charlesworth attempts an exegesis of the passages in which the Beloved Disciple appears (in John 13, 19, 20, 21). He must be one of the disciples listed in 21:2; Peter and the sons of Zebedee are immediately ruled out, leaving only Nathanael, Thomas and an anonymous disciple. Since chap. 21 was composed by an editor at least partly to clarify the identity of the Beloved Disciple, he cannot remain anonymous; he must therefore be either Nathanael or Thomas. In addition, chap. 19 depicts the Beloved Disciple as the only male disciple present at Jesus' crucifixion, and the only one to see a soldier pierce Jesus' side with a spear (19:34–35).

On Easter morning when Peter and the Beloved Disciple entered the empty tomb, the latter "saw and believed" (20:8). This cannot represent a belief in Jesus' resurrection (though almost every modern commentator disagrees), for several reasons: the next verses state that neither disciple understood what the Scriptures said about Jesus rising from the dead, they left Mary Magdalene crying at the tomb and went to their own homes (rather than to announce the resurrection to the other disciples), and the Beloved Disciple (who is the "ideal witness") abruptly disappears from the story (excluding the appendix, chap. 21). How can the "leading character" exit the drama without a profession of faith in Jesus' resurrection?

Charlesworth solves this problem by concluding that the Beloved Disciple is none other than Thomas, who makes the final and most profound confession in the book: "My Lord and My God" (20:28). Thomas did not "doubt" Jesus' resurrection; he merely demanded clear evidence on which he could base his future witness. And the fact that he wanted to place his hand into the wounded side of Jesus (20:25) shows that he was present at the cross; the only disciple who saw the wounding of Jesus' side was the Beloved Disciple. Thomas is thus the disciple *par excellence* who could provide a witness to the fact that the precrucifixion Jesus was the same as the post-resurrection Jesus. The entire gospel is tied together by this witness: Jesus, the Word from God, became flesh, died, then rose again with the same flesh, now glorified.

There is a prodigious amount of research and minute exegesis in this book. It will take its place alongside the recent works of Brown, Culpepper, Hengel and Schnackenburg on the Johannine question, but may not garner much support. The author admits that his thesis is novel and that it has not been proposed by any other scholar working purely within the exegesis and context of John's gospel. It is unfortunate that he dismisses the traditional position so easily. He follows probabilities with possibilities, carrying the reader along on waves of very sparse evidence.

The argument focuses so heavily on narrative-critical methodology that only what is stated in the narrative is allowed to influence the exegesis. For example, many of the disciples may have watched Jesus die, so the fact that Thomas knew about the wound in Jesus' side may be insignificant. In fact, even if the Beloved Disciple were the only disciple present, would he not describe the scene to the others later that day? Yet, since the narrative says nothing of these possibilities, Charlesworth makes Thomas' knowledge of this event a key factor in his identification. This separation of narrative exegesis from historical probability severely limits the credibility of his proposal.

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The Inspired Body: Paul, the Corinthians, and Divine Inspiration. By Allen Rhea Hunt. Macon: Mercer University, 1996, viii + 168 pp., \$19.95 paper.

This volume is a reworked dissertation written under the direction of Wayne Meeks at Yale. Hunt's writing style is a model of organization and logical flow of argument. The reader is never at a loss to understand and follow the author's development of his thesis. Hunt's thesis is that Paul adopted Greek terms and motifs related to inspired speech and divine inquiry and utilized these terms and ideas to form a view that the human search for the divine mind is pursued through "corporate inspiration" (pp. 10, 71). This body approach to how God operates is one of Paul's methods to address the problem of factionalism within the Corinthian community. Corporate inspiration is available to all Christians and thereby places all believers on an equal spiritual base. Hunt finds evidence of his thesis in 1 Corinthians 2, 3, 12 and 14. The result of Hunt's evaluation of Paul's use of language in these texts revises the traditional understanding of divine inspiration by shifting it from a Pauline claim of conveying inspired speech into spiritual words (1 Cor 2:13) to a Pauline promotion that all Christians have equal access to inspired speech and therefore have equal access to the mind of God. Hunt sees this as Paul's master stroke against privatized divisions within the body. No one person or group can claim authority over another but instead God reveals himself to the believing community as a whole.

Hunt develops his thesis by correlating the ancient Greek search for divine knowledge with Paul's presentation of knowing God's mind. Hunt does not insist upon an exact match but builds an argument by analogy. In chap. 1, he endeavors to locate Paul in the Greek tradition by surfacing key Greek words and concepts of inspiration in the literature from Plato, Plutarch and other writers on this theme. Chapter 2 continues this theme by investigating the Jewish side via Philo, Josephus, the Septuagint and apocalyptic traditions. Hunt gathers a helpful data base to illustrate the presence and nature of a search for divine mind in the ancients. Then, in chaps. 3-7, he claims that Paul's adoption of similar language and themes argues that Paul is merely a continuing part of that search. The new twist that Hunt brings is his endeavor to argue that Paul's interest in inspiration is communal not individual, to put down factionalism not to present an authoritative apostolic revelation from God (cf. pp. 11, 80, 86, 91).

While Hunt has provided an interesting theory for further thought, it seems to me that his thesis, although skillfully presented, is not proven. Several key issues are not adequately engaged in his reconstruction. First, the question of 1 Corinthians as an intense polemical interchange between Paul and a variety of factional groups is not adequately considered (cf. Fee). If the historical context of a challenge by some at Corinth to Paul's apostleship and thereby his teaching authority is valid, then the polemical flow of 1 Corinthians 1-4 places 2:6-16 in the light of a defense of the origin of Paul's teaching. The message of the cross is not Paul's own idea, it is by revealed authority (2:10). This revealed "mystery" was particularly conveyed to Paul and thereby to the community. Second, Hunt does not adequately account for the force of 1 Cor 14:37-38. Here Paul unequivocally correlates his speech with God's speech. It is an appeal to individual apostolic authority to which the community must conform or render itself without knowledge (14:38).

Hunt's reconstruction is engaging and informing reading, even if the reader remains unconvinced by the overall thesis. This volume provides the interpreter of 1 Corinthians with much to think about and trajectories for further research.

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Exploring the New Testament World. By Albert A. Bell, Jr. Nashville; Nelson, 1998, xiv + 322 pp., \$14.99.

The present survey of relevant backgrounds for the study of the NT has been written by a professor of classics and history at Hope College in Holland, Michigan. Following a rather idiosyncratic introduction, there are chapters on Judaism and the Greco-Roman world, whereby the latter is given significantly more attention, including chapters on politics and history, law, religion, philosophy, structures of society, morality and personal relations, and time, distance and travel. While amassing much helpful material, the work has several weaknesses that limit its usefulness.

To begin with, the book suffers from a lack of focus, having been written for the elusive "general reader" (so B. Metzger in his foreword, p. ix). In Bell's case, this may be the motivated college student, which would account for the colloquial tone of the author's introductions and the frequent personal, down-to-earth examples in the text. At the same time, Bell includes extensive, up-to-date subject bibliographies at the end of every chapter that make his work valuable also for the more serious student (I found this to be the most outstanding feature of the book).

Also, the treatment of various areas of background is grossly imbalanced. As mentioned, only one chapter is devoted to Judaism (37 pp.), while the bulk of the book (or seven out of ten chapters) deals with the Greco-Roman world (225 pp.). This may reflect more the author's area of expertise than a conscious presupposition concerning the preeminence of a Greco-Roman over against a Jewish background for the NT. Nevertheless, it would have been helpful to acknowledge this focus at some point in the volume as well as in the title of the book.

Moreover, the work is sketchy at places. To give but one example, the door is left open that the Pastorals "may have been written by someone other than Paul but circulated under the apostle's name." As the author informs us, "In antiquity people sometimes put the names of famous persons on their works to gain credibility. Such a tactic was considered a tribute of respect rather than forgery" (p. 150, n. 7). No further discussion or evidence is provided. But this cursory treatment of an issue with far-reaching implications hardly qualifies as serious scholarship.

For the above reasons, I recommend that this book be used with caution and as a supplement to more reliable guides to the NT world. Owing to its user-friendly features (including quotes in sidebars and the above-mentioned subject bibliographies) and its non-threatening way of presentation, college teachers may consider Bell's work as a text, perhaps together with B. Metzger's collection of primary source documents of the NT. As far as level of scholarship and even-handedness is concerned, however, Bell's book does not rival E. Ferguson's *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*.

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