

## BOOK REVIEWS

*The Nature of Biblical Criticism.* By John Barton. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007, x + 206 pp., \$24.95 paper.

John Barton is Oriel and Laing Professor of the Interpretation of Holy Scripture, University of Oxford. Barton has been studying about and writing on the subject in view for close to thirty years. His book contains a foreword, introduction (chap. 1), five other chapters (“Difficulties in the Text,” “The ‘Historical-Critical Method,’” “The Plain Sense,” “The Origins of Biblical Criticism,” and “Biblical Criticism and Religious Belief”), a conclusion (chap. 7), bibliography, and an index of authors.

The book is relatively short, dealing with a subject I have studied a good bit, so I was surprised the book turned out to be a rather challenging read, due mainly to two factors: (1) the complexity of the subject that demands explanations that are, by their very nature, convoluted; and (2) the painstaking approach Barton takes to present a truly analytical approach to the subject, something he believes has not really been done (p. 7).

Barton’s intent and approach are quite clear from the introduction. Up front, he reflects how foundational the problems are in understanding biblical criticism by discussing varied ideas about definition. He states his own position succinctly: “Biblical criticism comes down to attention to the plain meaning of the biblical text” (p. 3). He then summarizes possible models (reflecting varying definitions different from his own) indicating how, chapter by chapter, he will deal with each one. He then provides ten theses that summarize the wider implications of his basic view. These theses are key ideas that “emerge as the discussion proceeds” (p. 5).

One could describe Barton’s work as an irenic apology for biblical criticism, rightly understood and practiced. He is convinced that the typical antipathy toward critical studies has resulted from a caricature of the approach. So, for example, critical study of the Bible may be perceived to be focused almost exclusively on finding and highlighting apparent problems and difficulties in the text. Barton’s response (chap. 2) is to assert that good readers of the Bible have always reflected a literary sensitivity that causes them to ask questions of and about the text. In a real sense, then, “critical” issues have been in view from the earliest times, well before the rise of classical historical studies and the Enlightenment. He also emphasizes that the crucial issue in criticism is “how these difficulties are perceived, and what kinds of hypotheses are developed to account for them” (p. 10), thereby implying some inherent positive qualities in its true nature. Barton’s study follows this same pattern throughout the bulk of the book: description of typical perception, explanation of true nature (historical survey and examples), and conclusion.

I am convinced that Barton’s apology, as a whole, is quite effective and can be both challenging and useful, but not without qualification. First, his view that one must set aside any assumption of the truthfulness of a given text in order to do legitimate critical study (e.g. pp. 6, 58, 172, and all of chap. 6) is a major problem. At the same time, he has raised legitimate questions about the tendency of interpreters to read their theological presuppositions into texts as opposed to interpreting what texts mean.

Second, Barton’s view that authors of the texts did not intend specific meaning for readers to discover (pp. 71–72) is also a problem. Barton does not elaborate on this

position in the present volume (cf. his *Reading the OT*, rev. and enlarged ed., 1996, pp. 147–51 for a fuller treatment), so it is a less important issue than the first. But given the fact that he does not discuss at all any idea of inspiration, something evangelicals would typically view as central to the issue, readers should take notice of its implications.

Walter E. Brown  
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, New Orleans, LA

*Reading the Old Testament with the Ancient Church.* By Ronald E. Heine. Evangelical Ressourcement Series: Ancient Sources for the Church's Future. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007, 204 pp., \$18.99 paper.

In recent years there has been a resurgence of interest in patristic studies from numerous theologians and biblical scholars. Many are now contributing to this field because of perennial debates that remain unresolved while others are engaging new issues that have surfaced. Yet some are exploring this subject because they are convinced a theological disconnect exists between the rich doctrinal heritage of the early church and the larger evangelical community. This is why many specialized volumes are now being published that offer updated treatments of the Church Fathers.

One series that is aiding this cause is known as the Evangelical Ressourcement. The purpose of this collection is to foster a general awareness of the theological contributions bequeathed by the Greek and Latin Fathers, which have fallen on hard times since the dawn of the Enlightenment and the rise of classical liberalism. D. H. Williams, who is professor of Religion at Baylor University in Waco, Texas, serves as the senior editor, and so far four volumes have been produced. The first two were written by Williams with subsequent works by other authors.

The newest monograph is entitled *Reading the Old Testament with the Ancient Church* and covers the early church's perspectives on how the OT functioned as Christian Scripture. It is written by Ronald E. Heine, professor of Bible and Christian ministry at Northwest Christian College in Eugene, Oregon. Heine has displayed his expertise in patristics already by furnishing previous volumes on topics such as Montanism, Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, and Jerome. In the present work, he intends to examine how the early church saw itself as the legitimate heir of the teachings of the OT. To accomplish this, he offers six chapters that deal with various ways in which early Christian thinkers interpreted the major segments of the OT canon.

The first two chapters are the most critical insofar as they cover some of the basic means by which the early church expressed its reverence for the OT. Chapter 1 does this by dealing with the privileged position and textual preservation of the OT. Heine initially underscores how early Christian sources recognized the OT as an explicitly Christian corpus of literature. He then elaborates upon the critical versions of the OT that were most accessible to the church, including Hebrew manuscripts, the Septuagint, other Greek and Latin texts, and Syriac and Aramiac translations. Moving to chapter 2, Heine discusses the perplexities the early church encountered in synthesizing a Christian view of the Mosaic Law. This indeed was a critical concern to the post-apostolic church, and Heine captures its importance by dealing with how patristic theologians addressed it. He also mentions the difficult controversies caused by influential Gnostics who rejected any continuity between the Law and Christ.

Following these concerns, Heine turns his attention in chapters 3–6 to an analysis of how the Church Fathers interpreted the OT as a whole. One way he assesses this is by showing how the OT was read Christologically. Heine rightly argues that patristic thinkers interpreted the OT essentially as typological storyline that found its culmi-

nation in the life of Christ. As examples, Heine discusses how the exodus event and traditional messianic passages in the Prophets were foundational to how early Christians supported their beliefs in the person and work of Christ. In addition, Heine describes how the Church Fathers read the OT devotionally as well. He appraises how they used the Psalms as a paradigmatic guide for the spiritual discipline of prayer and examines how the recorded events in OT narratives were often treated as allegorically referring to the church so they could be deemed theologically applicable to each new generation of believers.

In summary, this book sets a high standard for this series because it is accessible to a broad scope of readership. Heine's analysis contains insights that are useful for those in academic or pastoral settings, and at the same time curious laity can easily follow Heine's prose in order to receive a reliable primer on how early Christians perceived the OT. This does not mean, however, that there are no deficiencies in this volume. Heine's exempting of certain thinkers at given points does occasionally neglect the immense diversity of Christian viewpoints that existed in the first four centuries regarding the OT. Another weakness is the absence of any serious discussion about how Christian thought gradually became antagonistic toward the Jewish roots of the OT. These are critical issues that deserve more attention. But in the end, these shortcomings do not hinder the book's objective, which is to survey some of the approaches the Church Fathers adopted to cultivate a Christian reading of the OT.

Everett Berry  
The Criswell College, Dallas, TX

*Exploring the Old Testament: A Guide to the Historical Books.* By Philip Satterthwaite and Gordon McConville. Exploring the Old Testament 2. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2007, xvi + 295 pp., \$25.00.

This second volume of InterVarsity's Exploring the Old Testament series deals with the historical books. Other OT volumes in the same series provide surveys of the Pentateuch, the Psalms and Wisdom literature, and the Prophets. The authors of this volume are Philip Satterthwaite, who teaches at Biblical Graduate School of Theology in Singapore, and Gordon McConville, who teaches at the University of Gloucestershire. Satterthwaite wrote the first two thirds of this volume (chaps. 1–7) and edited the entire work; McConville wrote the final third (chaps. 8–11) and edits the series. The authors have produced an introduction to the OT historical books that is solid in content, fully abreast of modern OT scholarship, sensitive to the needs of beginning students, and attractive in layout and presentation. This volume makes an excellent choice as an introduction to this portion of the OT for those beginning their academic study of these books.

Several features of this guide to the historical books are especially noteworthy. First, as one might expect in a work of this sort, the text of each biblical book is clearly and effectively summarized. The histories covered include Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, Ruth, Esther, Ezra, Nehemiah, and 1 and 2 Chronicles. Since each of these books belongs to the genre of history-writing, the authors have selected them for inclusion. For each biblical book there is a discussion of key themes and a summary of the key literary-critical and historical issues associated with it. Though brief, the discussions are consistently well done. Students who carefully read this text will come away with a perceptive overview of the content of this portion of the OT.

Second, the authors are alert to literary and theological features of the biblical text. Readers are introduced to such matters as plot, point of view, and characterization

when these features contribute significantly to an understanding of the biblical text. The authors address key theological themes in these books, and at times they lead the reader to reflect on theological tensions to be found here (e.g. the ethics of war and killing, divine sanction of extermination of the Canaanites). I appreciated the thought-provoking manner in which these matters were addressed.

Third, the authors are adept at making academic biblical scholarship accessible and understandable for readers who may have only limited experience in academic OT study. They offer a survey of recent scholarship dealing with these histories, situating this corpus in its ancient Near Eastern context and then exploring various literary-critical approaches to it. Their own approach is more indebted to narrative criticism than to other forms of biblical criticism. Text-critical issues are seldom discussed, with the exception of the book of Esther. Further help here, particularly with the textually difficult books of Samuel, would be helpful. The authors also briefly summarize ancient Near Eastern history (1550–63 BC). Where appropriate, they inject into their presentation helpful archaeological information (e.g. ancient Near Eastern conquest accounts, the Merneptah stele, the Moabite stone, and the Amarna letters). They give some attention to modern scholarly theories of Deuteronomistic historiography (e.g. the views of M. Noth, F. M. Cross, and R. Smend). Occasionally they seem to realize some readers may find the discussion a bit tedious in places, as, for example, when they ask, “Are you still awake?” (p. 208). The bibliographies they present are useful in suggesting further reading, although, as one might expect in a treatment of this sort, they cite only works written in English.

Fourth, the pedagogical approach the authors take is one of gently encouraging careful reflection on the biblical text. They point out various areas of tension or difficulties of interpretation with regard to the historical books. However, they are not overly quick to indicate their own opinions. Rather, they repeatedly ask the reader what he or she thinks about such matters. At times, readers are given brief assignments intended to set them on a path of personal discovery. Throughout the book there are twenty-six shaded panels entitled “Think about” (e.g. Jephthah’s vow, Saul’s séance, and comedy in the Bible) and thirty other shaded panels entitled “Digging Deeper” (e.g. a fifteenth-century vs. thirteenth-century conquest, the evil spirit from YHWH, and form criticism and the Elisha narratives). Many other shaded panels provide summaries of topics or background information. Some attention is also given to contemporary application. At times, readers are asked with regard to interpretive options, “Do you find this plausible?” (p. 257) or “Do you agree?” (p. 92). This encouragement to think deeply about issues rather than glibly accept predigested solutions is a valuable feature of this book. When the authors present interpretive opinions, they do so in a fair-handed way that does not dictate conclusions to the reader. There is throughout a good balance between guiding readers along and allowing them to reach their own conclusions.

This book has my warm recommendation as a good, up-to-date introduction to the historical books of the OT for university or seminary students.

Richard A. Taylor  
Dallas Theological Seminary, Dallas, TX

*Sealed with an Oath: Covenant in God’s Unfolding Purpose.* By Paul R. Williamson. New Studies in Biblical Theology 23. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2007, 242 pp., \$23.00 paper.

Paul Williamson’s *Sealed with an Oath* is a convincing explanation of the relationship of the various OT and NT covenants. The book is well organized, containing author

and Scripture indices and an appendix. The preface is so succinctly written that the summary below is excerpted from it. Williamson aims to “highlight the significance of covenant for biblical theology, and explore the role of the concept within God’s unfolding purpose” (p. 11) by tracing covenant from its primeval conception to its consummation in the new heaven and new earth, arguing that covenant is the “bonding agent in the cement that unites Scripture as a whole” (p. 13).

The work consists of nine chapters, with the first two serving to set the work in its theological and research context. Chapter 1 develops a history of research, producing a working definition of “covenant” as “a solemn commitment, guaranteeing promises or obligations undertaken by one or both parties, sealed with an oath” (pp. 11, 43). Chapter 2 “sets the covenant idea into its biblical-theological context, namely, God’s purpose to extend his rule and blessing throughout the world—a divine plan jeopardized but not eradicated by human rebellion” (pp. 11–12).

Chapters 3–7 explore the five major OT covenants. God’s covenant with Noah (chap. 3) is all-encompassing and serves to guarantee the survival of God’s creation in the face of humanity’s rebellion. The patriarchal covenants (chap. 4) begin with God’s promises to Abraham and reflect the dual agenda of nationhood and international blessing (cf. Gen 12:1–3). The major theme of the patriarchal narratives is nationhood, which begins to be fulfilled in the growth of Israel in Egypt as well as in the exodus and conquest. The national covenant with Israel (chap. 5) sets out Israel’s covenant obligations and begins to fulfill God’s national promise to Abraham. Israel may mediate Yahweh’s blessings to others only by modeling the kingdom of God and living in obedience to the Mosaic Law. Despite many renewals, this covenant seems ultimately to have failed because Israel failed to fulfill its obligations. This seemingly jeopardized the fulfillment of God’s international agenda. God’s covenant with David (chap. 6) focused particularly on the royal seed God had promised to Abraham (cf. Gen 17:6, 16). This royal seed serves as a bridge between national and international ancestral promises. The royal covenant highlights the Abraham narrative’s royal and international trajectories, identifying more specifically the seed through which the international blessing would come. Various prophets anticipated a reconstituted Israel (chap. 7) defined by spiritual descent rather than biological ancestry. Jeremiah 31:31–34 emphatically describes how the new covenant will maintain God’s future relationship with his people so history does not repeat itself. Other prophetic texts allude to an everlasting future covenant God will establish with his people (Isaiah 40–66; Jeremiah 32–34; 50:5; Ezek 11:16–20; 16:60; 34; 36–37; Hos 2:14–23).

The NT (chap. 8) portrays Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of all previous divine-human covenants. The gospels perceive Jesus as the climax of the OT covenantal promises. He is anticipated by the Pentateuch; he is the royal descendant of David; he is the one through whom the new covenant blessings will be experienced (pp. 184–85). Acts “presents Jesus as the fulfillment of the Old Testament’s messianic hope and the church as the people of God, the genuine heirs of the covenant promises in the Old Testament” (pp. 185–86). The apostle Paul portrayed Christ as the founder of the new covenant, which he ratified by his death. Those receiving God’s promises to Abraham were born of the Spirit rather than biological descendants of Abraham. These heirs of those promises are free from the legalism of the Mosaic covenant. The Book of Hebrews contrasts the old and new covenants, emphasizing the new covenant’s “superiority of promises, sacrifice, mediator, blessing” (p. 207). The consummation of God’s new covenant (chap. 9) “is fulfilled in . . . Jesus Christ,” but “the ultimate . . . eschatological reality . . . [will be] the New Jerusalem” (p. 210) where God will again dwell among his people.

*Sealed with an Oath* is a “must read” for anyone exploring the covenants of the Bible. This is largely because of its service as an organizing principle. Whereas other works survey the various biblical covenants and explore their similarities and dissimilarities,

this work's focus on the appropriate linkages among the different covenants makes it especially useful in understanding how covenant may be read through the entire Bible.

Randall C. Bailey  
Faulkner University, Montgomery, AL

*Daughters of Miriam: Women Prophets in Ancient Israel.* By Wilda C. Gafney. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2008, x + 222 pp., \$22.00 paper.

Gafney's study is motivated by the continued marginalization of women by "some Jewish and Christian religious communities [that] still restrict the role of women in proclamation, leadership, and presence in the pulpit on what they call biblical and traditional grounds" and seeks to "challenge the existing body of scholarship on Israelite prophecy" (p. 1). In the introduction, she discusses definitions of biblical prophets and surveys recent studies on the role of women in prophecy and ancient Israelite religious institutions.

In chapter 1, terms used for biblical prophets are examined. Gafney eschews the typical focus on oracular prophecy (p. 25) and intentionally omits a "technical definition of prophecy" (p. 26), but nonetheless concludes that "[t]he proclamation of the divine word is the dominant component of prophetic activity" (p. 41). Chapter 2 is a survey of women prophets in Mari, Emar, and Nineveh.

Chapter 3 is a discussion of identified women prophets in the Hebrew Bible—Miriam (Exod 15:20), Deborah (Judg 4:4), Huldah (2 Kgs 22:14), the anonymous woman prophet in Isa 8:2, and No'adiah (Neh 6:14)—and three passages mentioning women as or among prophetic groups: Ezek 13:17–23; Joel 3:1–2; and 1 Chr 25:1–8. Gafney concludes that women prophets functioned during all periods of Israelite history based on references to them in all three Hebrew canon portions (p. 115–16). Also, "the majority" of the female prophets functioned within some sort of guild or community (p. 116); Deborah and Huldah are the notable exceptions. In chapter 4, Gafney examines the musical/funerary guild and the scribal guild as related to female prophetic guilds and finds there a reevaluation of scholarly assumptions about Israelite society: "The term *patriarchy* is an inadequate description of Israelite society, as it cannot account for the guilds under consideration" (p. 130).

Chapter 5 surveys rabbinic and (briefly) Christian trajectories on women prophets. Gafney shows how the rabbis reshaped the list of biblical women prophets, including some not identified as such in the Bible (e.g. Sarah, Hannah, Abigail, and Esther) and demeaning others (e.g. Deborah and Huldah) based on their "gender stereotypes" (p. 132). In chapter 6, based on her preceding analysis, Gafney proposes several hitherto unrecognized women prophets or prophetic groups in the Hebrew Bible: the matriarch Rebekah (Gen 25:21–23); the "women warriors" (Exod 38:8); the unnamed mother of King Lemuel (Proverbs 31); the mourners guild (Jer 9:16–21); and numerous women prophets "obscured" by Biblical Hebrew's default masculine gender marking for mixed-gender groups.

Gafney blames many segments for the neglect of women prophets in ancient Israel, from the "narrow, sectarian, and androcentric" biblical text (p. 6) to the stereotyping rabbis (p. 132) to the "androcentric, patriarchal, and misogynist translations" (p. 6) to the androcentric and misogynist modern biblical scholars. However, the ancient Israelite culture receives no similar censure. Gafney never entertains the possibility that ancient Israel might have been quite patriarchal and women prophets scarce, or that modern study of biblical prophecy is not misogynistically "dismissive" of women prophets but simply focused on the large corpus of prophetic oracular material in the Bible.

Gafney makes several assumptions without justification: the paucity of identifiable women prophets in the Hebrew Bible is treated as a self-justifying premise for her study; women prophets are assumed to be abundant or at least “unremarkable” in ancient Israel but suppressed by later scribes or scholars (pp. 1, 6); the standard definitions of prophecy are assumed to be too narrow (or androcentric) to be helpful (pp. 24–25). She also construes ambiguous data as support for her presumed conclusion. If women prophets were so commonplace in ancient Israel, is it justified that Gafney single them out as a distinct “group of biblical prophets” (p. 21) or write of “female prophetic guilds” (p. 119)?

I commend Gafney for making her study available to a wide audience by defining unclear concepts, including a glossary of technical terms, and transliterating and translating Semitic and Greek terms. Finally, I note several curious typos, apparently the result of typesetting errors: “Chricle” for the verb “chronicle” (p. 29); “Chrology” for “chronology” (pp. 8, 18, 50); “Chrological” for “chronological” (p. 76); and “asynChrouS” for “asynchronous” (p. 105).

John A. Cook

Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, KY

*Watching a Biblical Narrative: Point of View in Biblical Exegesis.* By Gary Yamasaki. New York: T & T Clark International, 2007, vii + 230 pp., \$130.00.

This book is quite helpful for those biblical narrative critics who want to continue to develop their narrative criticism skills and to move beyond the standard books on narrative criticism produced over the last twenty years. In his introduction, Gary Yamasaki notes that while biblical scholarship has leaned heavily on secular literary criticism for its narrative approaches, secular literary approaches focus more on analysis whereas biblical narrative critics are usually ultimately interested in interpretation and meaning. This is particularly true in regard to “point of view.” Thus early in the book, Yamasaki promises to provide an in-depth discussion of “point of view” from the perspective of biblical narrative criticism. He promises that in his book he will connect the “point of view” analysis to exegesis and theological meaning. Next, he provides a brief definition of “point of view” and a justification for employing this somewhat modern concept in the analysis of ancient texts.

In chapter 1, Yamasaki discusses the history of “point of view” in English novels from the eighteenth century up to the present. He also presents an overview of the major contributions to the theory of “point of view” within the field of literary criticism. Although Yamasaki discusses several different works on this topic, it is Boris Uspensky’s work *A Poetics of Composition: The Structure of the Artistic Text and Typology of a Compositional Form* (University of California Press, 1973) that he embraces as the standard approach to understanding “point of view.” Throughout the book, Yamasaki will refer repeatedly to Uspensky’s five planes on which “point of view” operates: spatial, temporal, psychological, phraseological, and ideological.

Chapter 2 provides a brief summary of contributions to the study of “point of view” from the field of linguistics. Surprisingly, neither here nor in the chapter on OT narrative criticism does Yamasaki mention Robert Longacre’s helpful discussion on “participant reference in dialogue” (*Joseph: A Text Theoretical and Textlinguistic Analysis of Genesis 37 and 39–48*, Eisenbrauns, 1989), a topic directly related to “point of view.”

Chapters 3 and 4 are devoted respectively to discussing how NT narrative critics and OT narrative critics have addressed or have failed to address “point of view.”

Basically, Yamasaki evaluates these biblical narrative critics against Uspensky's approach, including the use of terminology. He notes that the field of OT narrative criticism is much more advanced in regard to "point of view" analysis than is NT narrative criticism, but concludes that both fields would produce better narrative analysis if they employed Uspensky's five planes of "point of view" correctly.

In Chapter 5, Yamasaki presents a methodology for analyzing "point of view" in biblical narratives. He takes Uspensky's five planes and explains how each category applies to biblical narrative. Based on Meir Sternberg's discussion of "gaps and ambiguity" (*The Poetics of Biblical Narrative*) Yamasaki adds a sixth category—"informational"—but does not discuss the full range of implications the discussion has for "point of view" analysis.

Chapter 6 applies Uspensky's five planes of "point of view" to Luke 19:1–10 (the Zacchaeus pericope) in a verse-by-verse example of how "point of view" analysis helps in exegesis. The final chapter offers a brief summary and a call to incorporate "point of view" analysis into standard exegetical commentaries. The book then ends somewhat awkwardly with a disconnected discussion of Genesis 22.

The strengths of this book are many. Yamasaki has provided a helpful tool that furthers our understanding of how "point of view" works in biblical narrative. My central criticism, perhaps overly picky, is that Yamasaki does not seem to have a good feel for the rich complexities of biblical narrative. Uspensky's five planes of "point of view" is a good general starting point, but the text is often more complicated than that, as Sternberg's discussion on "gaps and ambiguities" suggests. In applying "point of view" techniques to Luke 19:1–10, for example, Yamasaki fails to place the pericope in its narrative context (the theme of justice in 18:1–8; the favorable portrayal of a tax collector in Jesus' parable of 18:9–14; and the clear and stark contrasts of Zacchaeus with the Pharisee of 18:9–14 as well as the rich ruler of 18:18–30). The pericopes preceding the Zacchaeus story are tightly interwoven, and this interconnection affects (and complicates) our understanding of "point of view" in the Zacchaeus pericope.

Having said this, let me hasten to add that this is still the best book I know of that addresses "point of view" from an exegetical perspective. I found it interesting, well written, and filled with helpful insights. I recommend it heartily to those serious narrative critics (both NT and OT) who want to continue to improve their narrative criticism skills in reading and interpreting Scripture.

J. Daniel Hays

Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia AR

*The Early Monarchy in Israel: The Tenth Century B.C.E.* By Walter Dietrich. Translated by Joachim Vette. SBL Biblical Encyclopedia 3. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007, 396 pp., \$47.95 paper.

Walter Dietrich's study is divided into four parts: Part I, "The Biblical Account of the Time Period"; Part II, "The History of the Early Monarchy"; Part III, "The Literature of the Time Period"; and Part IV, "Theological Conclusions." Each division includes a comprehensive bibliography. Sixteen maps, diagrams, and illustrations are included in the work, which concludes with two indices.

In Part I, Dietrich reviews the biblical account of the early monarchy in two stages. First, he reviews how the Deuteronomistic redaction, which he dates to the exile, adapted the history of the early monarchy for its literary opus by expanding and modifying the material (pp. 8–26), and then he seeks to reconstruct the account from what he iden-

tifies as a pre-exilic textual layer that was known to and used by the Deuteronomistic redaction (pp. 26–98). Dietrich does regard some of the material he attributes to the Deuteronomist as “fictional” (e.g. Moses’ proclamation of the Torah, in his 120th year, in a single day) or otherwise retrojecting exilic or postexilic ideologies (e.g. regulations for kingship, Deut 17:14–20). Exilic or post-exilic materials are also added onto the pre-exilic materials by the Deuteronomist in order to create special relevance for Israel’s postexilic concerns. For example, Solomon’s entire prayer for the dedication of the temple (1 Kgs 8:22–53) and the subsequent theophany (1 Kgs 9:1–9) are either Deuteronomistic or post-Deuteronomistic (p. 97). However, while Dietrich does make these distinctions, the text is not focused on source critical analysis, but instead on the narrative, and especially on the characters who inhabit that narrative.

In Part II, Dietrich first explores basic historiographic issues and concludes that while the authors of the books of Samuel and Kings undoubtedly intend to write history (p. 106), “the description of history in the Bible followed different dictums than those governing modern historiography” (p. 103). Accordingly, Dietrich discusses the relationship between history and faith (pp. 106–9) and the basics of historical reconstruction (pp. 109–10). He then proceeds to review three lines of evidence for the early monarchy. First, Dietrich reviews the indirect witnesses to the formation of the state, which include comparisons to earlier and later periods (pp. 112–16) and analogies (pp. 116–20). Second, he reviews material witnesses from Iron Age IIA, including city architecture and administrative buildings (pp. 122–37) and settlement structures in the country and their relationship to the formation of the state (pp. 137–44). Third, Dietrich reviews written evidence for Israel’s kings, including extrabiblical evidence (pp. 145–54) alongside biblical sources (pp. 154–62). Having assessed the various kinds of evidence and their degree of usefulness in reconstructing the history of the early monarchy, he devotes the remainder of this chapter to actually reconstructing the history itself in all its details (pp. 162–226).

Part III treats the literature of the time period, including the several smaller and larger works of historiography postulated by scholars, such as the succession narrative, the narrative of David’s rise, the Solomon narrative, the ark narrative, and the narrative of Samuel’s youth. Dietrich acknowledges that “all these histories, including their own sources and layers of redaction, are no more than hypothetical entities. We can hardly prove their once-independent existence, no more than we can prove that they actually originated during the early monarchy and are thus credible as eyewitness accounts” (p. 227). Yet, he argues that “the refusal to perceive and acknowledge the undeniable signals of textual growth leads to an abandonment of the historical, political, and societal contexts of the text” (p. 228) and can lead instead to simplistic readings. Dietrich, therefore, assesses all of the aforementioned sources (pp. 228–98) and then seeks to reconstruct his own narrative history of the early monarchy (pp. 298–316).

In Part IV, “Theological Conclusions,” Dietrich reviews the early monarchy and biblical history, and then explores specific topics already important “for the early, pre-Deuteronomistic textual layers,” but that also have an abiding relevance for modern readers. These topics include state and divine rule (pp. 320–26), election and rejection (pp. 326–35), men and women (pp. 335–40), and violence and refraining from violence (pp. 341–49). Bringing the book to a close with these theological conclusions reinforces the idea that the biblical story of the early monarchy in Israel is not just a subject for historical study, but that it has endearing significance as the bearer of divine revelation.

*The Early Monarchy in Israel* is a cogent treatment of its subject by an author with a long and solid track record of publishing in this area. While some readers of *JETS* may disagree with some of Dietrich’s critical operating procedure, the author’s high view of Scripture will be appreciated. The book’s well-organized, systematic, and thorough

treatment of its subject will make it a useful tool for those working with the subject of the early monarchy.

Ralph K. Hawkins  
Kentucky Christian University, Grayson, KY

*The Templeless Age: An Introduction to the History, Literature, and Theology of the "Exile."* By Jill Middlemas. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007, x + 174 pp., \$24.95 paper.

Jill Middlemas (Dechow) is associate professor of the faculty of theology at Aarhus Universitet in Denmark. This book stems from a series of lectures she gave at Oxford, which in turn incorporated some of her dissertation work at the same institution.

The goal of this book is twofold: (1) to provide an up-to-date introduction to the historical, literary, and theological insights of the "exilic period"; and (2) to reframe the designation of the age after the destruction of Jerusalem in 587 BC.

With respect to the book's first purpose, Middlemas provides an overview of the history of the "templeless age," which she delineates as 587–515 BC. This section includes a thoughtful discussion regarding the use of the biblical documents in historical reconstructions of this period. Middlemas advocates a cautious integration of the history in the Bible, since it provides "information about the way the biblical writers conceived of and understood their past" (p. 10). After the historical overview, Middlemas summarizes literary and theological features of the biblical documents associated with this period. The identification of these texts generally accords with the standard conventions of critical biblical studies: Lamentations, various psalms, the Deuteronomistic History, Jeremiah (A, B, C), Ezekiel 1–39 and 40–48, Isaiah (1, 2, 3), Haggai, Zechariah 1–8, and the Holiness Code.

The second aim of this book is perhaps its most valuable contribution. Middlemas gives five reasons for her call to redesignate the "exile" as the "templeless age": (1) there were three separate Judean exiles; (2) some people chose to flee; (3) "exilic" represents only the Babylonian perspective while there were diverse communities; (4) the "exilic" perspective uncritically adopts the "myth of the empty land"; and (5) the "exile" falsely represents a period with a clear beginning and end (pp. 3–5).

For the most part, Middlemas provides careful and judicious treatments throughout this volume. However, on a few occasions she could have sharpened her presentation. For instance, in the section concerning Deutero-Isaiah she says, "Up until the collapse of Jerusalem, Yahweh was considered supreme among many gods (monolatry rather than monotheism)" (p. 106). Even though this is an introductory text that by necessity simplifies complicated topics, statements such as this are not helpful. To be sure, there were probably many within ancient Israel, Judah, and beyond that were in fact monolatrous, but the landscape is far more complicated than Middlemas's statement implies. Many scholars believe monotheism was alive and well before the fall of Jerusalem. Not only did the infamous religious reformation under Akhenaten take place in the Late Bronze age, but monotheism may even have been a feature of certain segments of Neo-Assyrian religion. On this topic Simo Parpola remarks, "On the surface, then, Assyrian religion, with its multitude of gods worshiped under different names, appears to us as polytheistic; on a deeper level, however, it was monotheistic, all the diverse deities being conceived of as powers, aspects, qualities, or attributes of Assur, who is often simply referred to as '(the) God'" (*Assyrian Prophecies*, p. xxi; this position is somewhat controversial, with many scholars such as Jerrold Cooper [*JAOS* 125/3, pp. 430–44]

rejecting Parpola's view, while others such as David Weisberg [personal conversation] are much more favorable). Even if the Akhenaten reforms and aspects of Neo-Assyrian religion were not full-blown monotheism, they display strong tendencies in this direction. Therefore, we should not reject out of hand the notion that certain pre-exilic citizens of ancient Israel and Judah could display monotheistic beliefs.

*The Templeless Age* issues a clear and persuasive call to redesignate the "exilic period" as the "templeless age." Middlemas corrects deeply ingrained misperceptions of the variegated landscape of this time. Furthermore, she provides an accessible point of entry for undergraduate students to the standard viewpoints of contemporary scholarship regarding the literary and theological features of the "templeless" biblical material.

Charles Halton

The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY

*Gender, Power, and Persuasion: The Genesis Narratives and Contemporary Portraits.*  
By Mignon R. Jacobs. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007, 272 pp., \$21.99 paper.

I have reviewed this work on the basis of the conviction that all Scripture is God-breathed and therefore authoritative in every field of knowledge upon which it touches. Thus, the only proper approach to Scripture is an exegetical approach—that is, with a mind submitted to the authority of the text and allowing it to set the agenda. In my review, I have therefore focused most intensely upon the author's method, and upon her underlying presuppositions and agenda as revealed in her method.

Mignon Jacobs states the purpose of her work in the introduction as follows: "This book is proposed as part of the necessary conversation and realization of the significance that the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament (hereafter Old Testament) has had in shaping contemporary understandings of the female-male dynamics in all arenas where issues of gender, power, and persuasion are involved" (p. 15).

In the preceding paragraph Jacobs states, "For many, religious commitments inform or define their ideologies and their perspectives on female-male relationships" (p. 15). However, in the same paragraph she concedes, "The appeal to biblical principles has contributed to the challenges and ambiguity concerning the nature and essence of female-male dynamics, specifically as these challenges relate to leadership and relational equity" (p. 15). In other words, from the author's perspective, the manner in which biblical teaching has been interpreted and applied has confused rather than clarified the relational dynamics between men and women, particularly in arenas that involve authority, submission, and chain-of-command. Thus, Jacobs's goals in this work include, apparently, the unfolding and clarifying of the teaching of the Genesis narratives so as to contribute positively to an understanding of the relational dynamics between men and women in such arenas.

The author concludes the introduction with a paragraph in which she summarizes her methodology (p. 19). There she states that her approach to the biblical text is a blend of a variety of methods, "including historical, literary, concept analysis, feminist, form, psychological, postcolonial, and ideological criticism." She then states that her approach "is an invitation to enter the narratives through the eyes of the narrator." Her intention is "to facilitate further insights into the relevance of the OT narratives to discussions about female-male relational and behavioral dynamics." She concludes her paragraph on methodology with a list of four items that describe "the mechanics of presentation," one of which is the following: "The variations in the designation of

God are recognized (God, Yhwh, Lord, etc.), but instead of attempting to account for the various designations in each narrative, ‘the Deity’ is used interchangeably with ‘God’ to speak of the divine agent vis-à-vis humans” (p. 19).

This aspect of the author’s methodology is most unfortunate, for, as persuasively argued by Umberto Cassuto in his monograph entitled *The Documentary Hypothesis*, a key factor in interpreting each of the Genesis narratives is the divine name or names employed by the narrator. Cassuto convincingly argues that, rather than being an indication of various distinctive sources, the divine names are a function of the content of the narrative, and they are therefore important to its interpretation.

I summarize my review of *Gender, Power, and Persuasion* by characterizing this work as a case study in eisegesis, that is, a reading into the biblical text of prejudicial concepts and agendas that originate in the mind of the reader. This is in contrast to exegesis, which allows the text to set the agenda. Eisegesis is often the product of a mind set in authority over the biblical text, whereas exegesis is the product of a mind that is submitted to the authority or at least to the essential reliability of the text. The higher critical approach to Scripture, being the product of Enlightenment thinking, is characterized by eisegesis, whereas the Church Fathers and the Reformers approached Scripture by way of exegesis.

A reader committed to the modern, higher critical, eisegetical approach to Scripture would probably regard Jacob’s handling of the biblical text as insightful, innovative, and edifying in terms of acquiring wisdom for the successful handling of interpersonal relationships between men and women in the home and in the workplace.

Within my chosen framework for reviewing this work, however, Jacob’s methodology is fundamentally flawed in that she fails to recognize what the text is declaring regarding the nature and character of Yahweh Elohim, the divine being introduced in the opening chapters of Genesis. She obscures the nuances of the divine names actually employed in the narrative and instead refers to the divine being as “the Deity,” an impersonal “it” (pp. 57, 220). Moreover, she presumes to psychoanalyze and judge the character of “the Deity” (e.g. pp. 219–20).

This methodological error is compounded by her failure to practice the principle she asserts in chapter 8, namely, that power or authority is not a function of essence but rather of one’s functional identity in a given domain (p. 211). The implication of this assertion is that authority and chain of command are disconnected from essential worth and are merely practical instruments for getting things done. As one who is evidently committed to the feminist agenda, Jacobs conflates subordination with essential inferiority, which is logically inconsistent with her assertion regarding power or authority. Accordingly, as I read this work within the biblical framework to which I am committed, I found it to be fraught with defective logic, meandering, tedious, repetitious, confused, and only slightly edifying.

Peter Briggs

Trinity Southwest University, Albuquerque, NM

*Sin, Impurity, Sacrifice, Atonement: The Priestly Conceptions.* By Jay Sklar. Hebrew Bible Monographs 2. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2005, xi + 212 pp., \$85.00.

In this dissertation-turned-monograph, Jay Sklar sets out to determine why the Hebrew word *kipper* is used in the priestly literature in contexts both of sin (resulting in forgiveness) and impurity (resulting in purification). In part 1 (chaps. 1–3), Sklar examines the use of *kipper* in contexts of sin. Intentional sins, Sklar argues in chapter 1,

usually resulted in the punishment of death, delivered upon the guilty party either by Yahweh or the nation of Israel. Unintentional sins had the potential to result in death, but could be atoned for (*kipper*) by means of a sacrifice.

In chapter 2, Sklar argues for a relationship between *kipper* and the noun *kōper*, and thus sets out to define *kōper*. He determines it can be used in a negative sense to refer to a bribe, or in a positive sense, with the following definition:

a legally or ethically legitimate payment which delivers a guilty party from a just punishment that is the right of the offended party to execute or to have executed. The acceptance of this payment is entirely dependent upon the choice of the offended party, it is a lesser punishment than was originally expected, and its acceptance serves both to rescue the life of the guilty as well as to appease the offended party, thus restoring peace to the relationship (p. 78).

He suggests that “ransom” and “appeasement” are the best English translations of *kōper*.

Sklar then explicates in chapter 3 the relationship between *kipper* and *kōper* in sin contexts by examining words commonly found in the same contexts as *kipper*: *sālah* (often translated “to forgive”) and the collocation *nāsā’ ‘āwōn*. He concludes that in sin contexts, *kipper* refers to the effecting of a *kōper* on behalf of the guilty party.

In part 2 (chap. 4), Sklar examines the use of the verb *kipper* in contexts of impurity. To accomplish this he looks at contexts in which purification (*ṭhr* and *ḥṭ’*) and consecration (*qdās*) are expressed. Noting similarities and differences between how *kipper* is used and how *ṭhr*, *ḥṭ’* and *qdās* are used, Sklar concludes that *kipper* “is used in purification and consecration contexts to express the effecting of purgation on behalf of a person or object, which results in that person or object being purified or consecrated” (p. 127). He also concludes that consecration is related to purification in that it is a stronger form of purgation.

In part 3 (chap. 5), Sklar clarifies the relationship between sin and impurity in order to explain how *kipper* can be used in both contexts. He demonstrates that sin pollutes and impurity endangers one’s life, with the result that a *kōper*-payment which has purifying effects is necessary in both instances, i.e. a blood sacrifice.

Sklar completes his study in part 4 (chap. 6) with an examination of the role of blood in the *kipper*-rite, primarily focussing upon Lev 17:11. He argues that the blood of a sacrificial animal contains life, which is able both to ransom and to purify. Therefore, in contexts both of sin and impurity, a *kōper*-purgation is needed that is effective on account of the blood from the sacrificial animal.

Sklar’s investigation of the verb *kipper* in the priestly literature is excellent on the whole. He demonstrates well a synchronic approach to lexical analysis, particularly evident in his discussion of the noun *kōper* in chapter 2. He appropriately considers both syntagmatic and paradigmatic issues which influence word meaning, and also demonstrates a prudent concern for an appropriate English translation of *kōper* (p. 77), a concern similarly evident throughout his discussions of other words. Sklar fairly and respectfully presents the arguments of scholars with whom he disagrees. His use of chapter and section summaries is particularly helpful in guiding the reader through this highly technical discussion.

Even in this outstanding piece of scholarly literature, a few criticisms should be raised. First, there are two lexical analyses that evidence confusion between the consequences and the meaning of a word or phrase. The first instance is when Sklar recognizes the fact that Hebrew terms translated “sin” can be used as a metonymy for the punishment that results from that sin. Due to the fact that *nāsā’ ‘āwōn* is often followed by a specific punishment, Sklar argues that this Hebrew phrase can be appropriately translated, “to bear punishment” (p. 23). However, in Lev 5:1, 17, *nāsā’ ‘āwōn* appears in contexts where sacrificial means are provided to obtain forgiveness. This

suggests that the phrase itself only describes the guilt which weighs upon the violator of the law, which may result in punishment or forgiveness. The second instance is when Sklar translates *kipper* differently in contexts of sin (“the effecting of a *kōper*-payment,” p. 184), and impurity and consecration (“to effect purgation,” p. 135), even though a *kōper* payment was necessary in both cases (p. 135). Sklar’s translation in contexts of impurity and consecration has placed the emphasis upon the consequences of the *kōper* payment, rather than upon the meaning of *kipper* itself.

Second, Sklar suggests translating the verb *’āšam* as “to suffer guilt’s consequences,” a suggestion that has at least two significant problems. First, he argues for “consistency of translation” (p. 41) between Lev 4:3 and 13, implying throughout his discussion that *’āšam* occurs in both instances. The verb *’āšam* does indeed occur in v. 13, but in verse 3 it is the noun *’asmāh*. One should not assume that a verb and a noun that share the same root must, for that reason, share the same semantic range (see Barr, *Semantics*). Second, the examples that Sklar uses for the consequential meaning of *’āšam* are all from non-priestly sources.

Sklar has written a superb monograph that evidences careful scholarly research. While interaction with Gane’s recent monograph *Cult and Character* would have been interesting, most likely this work was not available at time of publication. Anyone who has the capacity to wade through Sklar’s technical study will be deeply enriched. It is an excellent contribution to the scholarly study of sin in the Scriptures.

Mark J. Boda  
McMaster Divinity College, Hamilton, ON

Benjamin J. Baxter  
Oakridge Bible Chapel, Oakville, ON

*Judges*. By Susan Niditch. Old Testament Library. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008, xxviii + 290 pp., \$44.95.

Susan Niditch is Samuel Green Professor of Religion at Amherst College. She is perhaps best known for her work in orality in ancient Israelite literature, *Oral World and Written Word* (1996), and her short book *Ancient Israelite Religion* (1998).

The commentary’s format is consistent with that of other OTL volumes, a series that expressly aims to be readable while discussing the most significant linguistic, literary, historical, and theological elements in the biblical text. In this regard, Niditch’s work is a model of uncluttered, focused discussion of the text, peppered with concise summaries of interpretive options and succinct judgments. The bibliography covers fourteen pages, and introductory matters of redaction, textual history, epic characterization, and literary structure are held to thirty pages.

Niditch does the reader a service by stating her presuppositions and aims clearly. After reviewing the standard models for approaching *Judges*, Niditch adopts “a theoretical approach that is interested in history and takes seriously the idea that *Judges* includes material that would have been meaningful in some form to Israelite audiences before there were kings in Israel” (p. 8). She adds that her approach does not involve “matching narrative details with specific historical events or testing for historical verisimilitude” (p. 8). The conquest narratives are the result of the work of pro-monarchical writers adapting “epic-bardic” poetry to suit their agenda (p. 9). Aside from epic poetic material, two other voices come through for Niditch: the “voice of the theologian” and the “voice of the humanist” (pp. 10–12). The former is the familiar Deuteronomist, whose

stories are judgmental with respect to loyalty to Yahweh. This voice should not be confused with biblical theology. The commentary offers next to nothing in that regard. The latter voice is a teller of olden tales whose material is fictional and non-critical, aiming only to preserve ancient stories.

Niditch's commentary offers not one but two new translations of Judges. One translation, sensitive to "oral and aural aspects," opens each chapter. This translation "seeks to aid comprehensibility and readability by converting the Hebrew syntax to a more standard word order" (p. 25). The second translation, more literalized than the first, appears in an appendix at the end of the book. This translation "retains the Hebrew word order and even more closely conveys the register of the Hebrew" (p. 26).

Each chapter translation is followed by a short technical section that deals with textual, grammatical, syntactical, and literary issues. These notes are footnoted in the translation. For those interested in grammatical-historical interpretation, these notes are the meat of the commentary. Lastly, Niditch summarizes the content of the chapter in traditional commentary style. Her summations are not broken into pericope units, but are instead organized by grouping verses together for analysis. The emphasis in the explanatory section is clearly on literary features and observations of inter-textuality. The streamlined format and presentation make the commentary quite easy to scan to discern whether or not the author has something to say about a particular verse, phrase, or word. There is nothing in the commentary that reflects a homiletic aim.

Readers who know Niditch for her work in Israelite religion will be disappointed with this commentary. Judges offers a number of passages that could be illumined against ancient Near Eastern religious practice. The most obvious are the angel of Yahweh appearances. It is telling that Niditch regularly translates "the angel of the LORD" as "an angel of the LORD." It is a basic rule of Hebrew grammar that a definite *nomen rectum* dictates a definite translation of the noun in construct. Her translation seems to convey a bias against the normative rendering for an unstated reason and disconnects this figure in Judges to his appearances in other biblical references—linkages useful for formulating a canonical theology. The reference in Judg 4:5 to Deborah sitting under a tree of divination gets only a note telling us the tree was considered sacred (p. 62), which is hardly enlightening. The stars fighting "from their courses" are awkwardly referred to as fighting "from their orbit" (p. 75), though stars do not have orbits. Some insight into how this fairly obvious reference to astral religion may have served a polemical purpose for the writer would be in order. Numerous other examples occur where toponyms, personal names, and other phrases that are cultic in nature and deserve explanation in terms of religious worldview receive little attention in that regard. Sadly, Niditch is too concerned with literary analysis to the neglect of her other strengths.

For its economy of presentation of technical notes, the volume is useful for the reader adequately prepared with Hebrew. However, it should be used alongside a more substantial commentary on Judges, such as that by Block (NAC, 1999).

Michael Heiser  
Logos Bible Software, Bellingham, WA

*The Book of Psalms: A Translation with Commentary.* By Robert Alter. New York: W. W. Norton, 2007, xl + 518 pp., \$35.00.

Robert Alter has done it again. Following his previous "commentaries" on Genesis (1996), 1 and 2 Samuel (1999), and the Pentateuch (2004), comes his close reading of the Psalter. Writing on biblical poetry is hardly new for Alter, but this engagement with

the entire Psalter may prove to be his most enduring contribution. As in earlier works, Alter presents an introduction followed by a fresh translation and accompanied by random notes.

At its core, the distinctive of his close reading is an approach that views the text as (1) an object of meaning and beauty; (2) prioritizing linguistic movement over the author as the source of interpretation; and (3) emphasizing literary context rather than cultural fields of reference. Somewhat polarizing, this approach explains why some evangelicals use his work with genuine respect while others ignore it altogether. How one uses Alter's work makes all the difference, as will be noted below.

The introduction covers five areas: Historical Contexts (pp. xiii–xviii); Assembling the Book (pp. xviii–xx); The Poetry of the Psalms (pp. xx–xxviii); The Challenge of Translating Psalms (pp. xxviii–xxxv); and The Text of Psalms (pp. xxxv–xxxviii). Understandably, here one finds Alter's presuppositions, aims, influences, and concerns. Careful reading of the commentary inductively illustrates his focus, skills, and presuppositions. Alter is as up front about his suspicions as he is about his affirmations. For example, Davidic authorship for Alter "has no credible historical grounding" and preserves several ambiguities (p. xv). Alter suggests an intriguing, though hardly novel theory that "there were professional psalm poets in the vicinity of the temple from whom a worshipper coming to Jerusalem could have purchased a psalm that he would recite to express his own particular need" (p. xvii). As for genres, Alter sees a predominance of thanksgiving and supplication psalms (pp. xviii, xx). He wants more fluidity than traditional form-critical categories allow, and commendably demonstrates this need for further nuance, describing Psalm 12 as "a prophetic supplication," Psalm 95 as "prophetic acclaim-rebuke," and Psalm 91 as an "amulet psalm" (because of its use as an apotropaic text in the mid-first century; e.g. 11QApPs).

Alter is at his best in his description of Hebrew poetry. He is not convinced by methods of counting syllables or phonetic units. Instead, following Benjamin Hrushovski, Alter embraces a system of "semantic-syntactic-accentual parallelism" (p. xxi). This combines an equivalence of semantic meaning and stressed syllables that animate parallel syntactic structures. As he often notes, this produces the rhythmic compactness and semantic momentum of Hebrew poetry with its typical concretization of the ensuing cola (p. xxiii). He illustrates this well in Ps 8:4–6, noting that "the speaker's exclamation of astonishment hurtles downward in the cosmic hierarchy from the heavens above . . . to man down below" (p. xxvi). Time and again, Alter highlights the imaginative energy of the poetry.

Throughout, what Alter says and illustrates regarding translation of poetry is worth the price of the book. Emphasizing rhythm, structure, and antique coloration, he strives to bring a greater sense of the personality of poetry into English. (He chooses to follow the MT versification.) In his words,

What I have aimed at in this translation—inevitably, with imperfect success—is to represent Psalms in a kind of English verse that is readable as poetry yet sounds something like the Hebrew—emulating its rhythms wherever feasible, reproducing many of the effects of its expressive poetic syntax, seeking equivalents for the combination of homespun directness and archaizing in the original . . . making more palpable the force of parallelism that is at the heart of biblical poetry. . . . This translation is an effort to reground Psalms in the order of reality in which it was conceived, where the spiritual was realized through the physical, and divine purposes were implemented in social, political, and even military realms (pp. xxxi, xxxiv).

What emerges is a translation filled with semantic insights, sensitivity to syntactic contour, reveling in imagery, and astute rendering of word plays. Literary techniques

such as inclusion, chiasm, alliteration, poetic kenning, collocations, puns, and reverberating semantic expressions are frequent in his discussions; this is Alter's craft. He notes a pun in the phrase "nothing can hide from his heat" (Ps 19:7), stating that "heat, *hamah*, is also another name for the sun" (p. 61). Alter constantly breaks with English convention, boldly rendering Hebrew fronting (i.e. inversion). Instructively, the phrases of his translation are meaningfully construed in semantic layout. He is correct when he claims that a world view is actually at stake (p. xxxi)—English readers are guests seated at an ancient table of poetry. Throughout, he remains sensitive to cosmology and mythology, describing "Zion, My holy mountain" as a geo-theological paradox (Ps 2:6). He proposes that the difficult "babes and sucklings" of Ps 8:3 has in view God drawing strength from the weakest of his image-bearers.

*JETS* readers should not read Alter's work by any traditional standard. His analysis is not interested in Christian interpretation, biblical theology, or homiletic ideas. Eschatology in particular is not his concern, since he believes the verb *hoshi'a* and its derivatives are "strictly directed to the here and now" (p. xxxiii). He has high esteem for H.-J. Kraus (1978, trans. 1988), but is puzzled by the routine "odd little Christological flourish" (p. 517). He makes occasional asides to acknowledge Christian and Jewish interpretation. But committed more to philological fidelity, Alter is sensitive to freighted theological terms (e.g. "iniquity," "transgression," "sin"), preferring "offenders" to "sinners" (Ps 1:1).

Alter's ability to read and turn a phrase puts him in a unique class. Given that the church is now neither literate nor literary, there is much to commend this analysis by a literary master. Like the contribution of Othmar Keel to psalmic symbolism and iconography (Eisenbrauns, 1997), Alter's text also has a role to play in Psalms scholarship. In a genre poached for proof texts and tolerated for its imagery, Alter restores the honor and literary eloquence of psalmic poetry. All translators of the Psalter should definitely consult this book. Moreover, English teachers will find a gold mine of examples of biblical poetry.

Andrew J. Schmutzer  
Moody Bible Institute, Chicago, IL

*Interpreting the Psalms: An Exegetical Handbook*. By Mark D. Futato. Handbooks for Old Testament Exegesis. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007, 234 pp., \$20.99 paper.

*Interpreting the Psalms: An Exegetical Handbook* is an easy-to-use and helpful guide to those wanting to explore the book of Psalms. Organizationally, it follows the pattern of other books in the *Handbooks for Old Testament Exegesis* series. It has six chapters, each one devoted to a different aspect of the exegetical process, and each one adding information, tools, and skills needed for that process.

The first chapter is entitled "Appreciating the Poetry." Here the author provides a simple and accessible introduction to Hebrew poetry, such as one might find in many introductory texts on OT literature, though with the benefit of reference to the Hebrew text.

In the second chapter, "Viewing the Whole," the author gives an extended (60 pages) description of the literary shape of the book of Psalms. Psalms 1 and 2 function as the introduction to the book and direct the reader to the book's purpose (Psalm 1) and overarching message (Psalm 2). The Book of Psalms is an instruction manual or "guidebook along the path of blessing" (p. 60), and its dominant theme is the kingship of God.

Chapter 3 is shorter and aimed at “Preparing for Interpretation.” In it, the author covers briefly a number of topics, including various ways of understanding the historical setting of psalms, their intentional timelessness, and text criticism. He also provides an excellent bibliography on the Book of Psalms, some of which is annotated.

Chapter 4 is entitled “Interpreting the Categories.” Here the author discusses genre and its importance in interpretation. He describes three primary categories of psalms (hymns, laments, and songs of thanksgiving), and three minor categories (songs of confidence, songs of divine kingship, and songs of wisdom). He also explains the value of reading each category as words being “spoken by Christ and as speaking about Christ” (p. 174).

The focus of chapter 5 is “Proclaiming the Psalms.” The author proposes a four-step process that starts with “Getting Oriented” by reading and asking questions about the text in question. The next step, “Focusing on the Details,” examines parallelism and imagery in the psalm in question, and the third step, “Shaping your Presentation,” describes various ways of outlining the text. The fourth step is “Reflecting on your Text and Life.” The goal of this step is to connect the ancient text with a contemporary situation and audience.

The last chapter of the book is entitled “Practicing the Principles.” Here the author applies to Psalm 29 the tools and skills he has described in the first five chapters. The book concludes with a glossary of key terms used in the book.

*Interpreting the Psalms* offers in one volume both an introduction to the literary features of Psalms and also a straightforward method for understanding the meaning of the book. This dual focus is a distinct advantage, since many introductions to the book of Psalms focus on explaining its meaning without helping the reader develop skills to elucidate that meaning. Particularly valuable is the chapter on “Viewing the Whole.” The author does an excellent job of painting a picture of the overall structure of the book of Psalms, in a way that is beneficial for the many readers who tend to view the psalms as individual units rather than as “chapters” in a purposefully organized book. The use of Hebrew makes the book valuable for students trained in that language, though even those without such training can also benefit, since both the Hebrew and the English texts are referenced. The book is therefore appropriate for a range of students, both undergraduate and graduate.

Some features of the book raise questions. For example, one wonders why Futato chose to use Psalm 29 as the example for “Practicing the Principles.” This psalm is identified as a song of divine kingship, which is one of the minor categories of psalms. Why not use one of the three categories the reader is most likely to encounter, and that the author identifies as from a major category, such as a hymn, lament, or song of thanksgiving?

Also, why does the Christocentric meaning of the psalms receive so little attention? In the closing section of chapter 4 (pp. 173–81), the author describes “what the categories have to do with Christ.” However, in the final two chapters of the book, in which the author develops his method and applies it to particular examples, he does not address in any detail how to make sense of or to proclaim the psalms as “spoken by Christ and as speaking about Christ” (p. 174). In a similar way, terminology developed in chapter 1 (“Appreciating the Poetry”) is not always integrated into discussions in the later chapters of the book.

*Interpreting the Psalms* nonetheless stands as a useful and usable guide to exegesis of this theologically rich book, and deserves widespread use as a course textbook.

Eric W. Bolger  
College of the Ozarks, Point Lookout, MO

*Encountering the Book of Isaiah*. By Bryan E. Beyer. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007, 303 pp., \$26.99.

*Encountering the Book of Isaiah* (EBI) is a splendid addition to Baker's Encountering Biblical Studies series. EBI is designed to guide students who have completed a survey of the OT through their first systematic study of Isaiah.

Beyer begins by introducing students to the features of EBI. Particularly useful is that most of the descriptions include study suggestions to maximize learning. Each chapter begins with a chapter outline and objectives for the student to keep in mind during reading. The text of each chapter includes photographs, maps, and sidebars of related topics, all in grayscale. Each chapter concludes with a few study questions and a list of key terms from the chapter that are in boldfaced type in the text.

The first chapter introduces Isaiah, the man and the book. The main part surveys all 66 chapters of Isaiah (chaps. 2–19). The last three chapters examine the relationship of Isaiah to the OT, the NT, and the Great Commission. (These chapters are not to be missed!) EBI concludes with endnotes, glossary, select bibliography, and Scripture and topic indices.

The main part of EBI summarizes Isaiah section by section. Key texts and words are treated in detail. For example, Beyer devotes nearly five pages to the discussion of the controversial Isa 7:14. He explains the difficulties of word meanings, syntax, NT understanding, and modern interpretation (pp. 73–77). Beyer also covers historical details where needed. The Syro-Ephraimite War as a backdrop to Isaiah 7 receives thorough treatment (pp. 70–73). His handling of the chronology of Isaiah 36–39 is particularly good, laying out the evidence, presenting various problems and proposed solutions, and then explaining why the order is as it appears (pp. 142–45).

Theological-hermeneutical issues are discussed as well. For example, Sidebar 5.3 identifies three categories of fulfillment of OT prophecy in the NT: direct, secondary, and "filled full" fulfillments. Beyer points out that scholars may debate whether such distinctions were present in the minds of the NT authors, but such an analysis is helpful for the modern interpreter (pp. 74–75). This point acutely applies to the interpretation of Isa 7:14 and whether Jesus' birth is a direct fulfillment of Isaiah's words. Beyer lays out three evangelical views and allows students to draw their own conclusions. This open-ended solution will not satisfy those holding dogmatically to one particular view, but is certainly sound pedagogically.

Bible study tools and techniques are occasionally introduced. In chapter 1, a tool as elementary as a concordance is described and used (e.g. Sidebar 1.5 concerning the term "Holy one of Israel," p. 34). Comparison of passages is an important technique applied to intra-Isaianic texts (e.g. Isaiah 5 and 27, p. 119), intertestamental texts (e.g. Isaiah 65–66 and Revelation 20–22, pp. 237–42), and comparisons with other ancient Near Eastern literature (e.g. Isaiah 15–16 and the Mesha stele, pp. 101–2). Proper word study techniques are often demonstrated, e.g. "Servant" in Isaiah and "Messiah" in the OT (pp. 175, 182).

The study questions are helpful and often probing. Answers for some might be drawn merely by summarizing the treatment in EBI. For example, one study question asks students to compare and contrast the use of Isa 6:9–10 in all the NT passages after Beyer has already discussed for each the wording of the quotation, the NT context, and the application of the text made in the NT. Of course, instructors might require additional readings rather than mere summaries of Beyer, but even taking notes of such summaries has pedagogical value. Other study questions, however, require students to do more advanced thinking. For example, one question asks the student to compare the Song of the Vineyard in Isaiah 5 with Jesus' parable in Matt 21:33–44. The final

question in the book asks readers to explore the extent to which Jesus' Great Commission is new based on everything they have read in Isaiah.

Finally, Beyer does an excellent job of helping the modern reader apply lessons learned from Isaiah to life. Such applications are frequent in both the main text and in many of the sidebars. One particularly good example is Sidebar 19.1 "Why Are the Poor Especially on God's Heart?" (p. 232), which is adapted from other sources. God's teachings in Isaiah about the proper treatment of the poor and warnings to oppressors are joined with a list of spiritual advantages the poor have over others. Certainly these teachings are relevant for modern American Christianity.

There are some matters EBI does not cover. EBI does not include an overview of propheticism, which readers are assumed to have had already in a survey course. Nor is there any systematic treatment of prophetic genres, though genres are mentioned where relevant. Eschatology is not treated in a theologically systematic fashion. Occasionally, times of blessing are understood as referring to the time of Jesus' Second Coming without considering whether the passages might be figurative for the church age (e.g. pp. 137–38). Finally, EBI spends little time on the details of critical introductory matters. However, such details at the beginning would wear out the student eager to study the text. Waiting until chapter 12 to deal with authorship issues on Isaiah 40–66 is wise.

EBI is a splendid choice as a textbook for undergraduate or seminary students who have completed some survey of the OT. Since it is not a full commentary, college courses may want to supplement the book with an appropriate commentary. Teachers of adult church Bible classes will find Beyer's work invaluable. Beyer is neither overly technical (e.g. all Hebrew words are transliterated for the reader who does not know Hebrew; *aleph* and *ayin* are not even distinguished) nor is he overly simplistic. Beyer treats Isaiah from a thoroughly evangelical Christian perspective. Those who share his presuppositions will richly benefit from his excellent guidance. Those who do not can still learn much about the content and Christian understanding of Isaiah through this presentation.

Lee M. Fields

Roanoke Bible College, Elizabeth City, NC

*Zechariah*. By Richard D. Phillips. Reformed Expository Commentary. Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2007, xiv + 351 pp., \$29.99.

This volume in the Reformed Expository Commentary stands as a well-crafted and engaging exposition of the book of Zechariah by Richard Phillips who, along with Philip G. Ryken, is also editor of the series. According to these editors, this commentary series has "four fundamental commitments" (pp. ix–x): (1) integrated exposition of biblical texts (this is not a technical exegetical commentary); (2) a Reformed doctrinal stance informed by the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms; (3) a redemptive-historical focus centered on the unity of Scripture and the core message of salvation in Jesus Christ; and (4) a practical outlook that seeks to apply the text to contemporary issues. The volumes are to be written by experienced pastor-scholars.

These stances are clearly represented throughout Phillips' work. In chapter 1, he lays out the main lines of his interpretive approach: historical, doctrinal, Christological, and practical (pp. 6–7). In fact, the author notes, "When we get to the book of Zechariah, Christ is barely concealed but often blatantly revealed to the eyes of those trained by

the later revelations of the New Testament" (p. 7). The general postexilic historical situation is also clarified from the outset (pp. 7–10). Overall, the author notes that "Zechariah presents a people whose record has been disgraced by sin and whose covenant with God lay broken" (p. xiii). This central theme in Zechariah shows how this OT book is a relevant text for the situations of believers in a postmodern world, and particularly for people who have experienced a "spiritual collapse" (p. xiii).

The exposition is divided into three major sections: (1) "the eight night visions," covering Zechariah 1–6 (about 150 pp.); (2) "the delegation from Bethel," covering Zechariah 7–8 (about 40 pp.); and (3) "the oracles of Zechariah," covering Zechariah 9–14 (about 125 pp.). Scripture and subjects/names indices conclude the work. Each section is divided into chapters that span the major units of text in Zechariah (e.g. chap. 22, "Strong in the Lord," a study of Zech 12:1–9).

By way of general observation, each unit is strengthened by the following common threads. First, Richards writes in a way that is clear, well-organized, and edifying for the envisaged reader; eliciting response on the basis of the biblical text is a common feature. This is a carefully edited product. Second, balance is usually struck between helping a reader understand the flow of a given text in Zechariah, any interpretive difficulties (such as the discussion of the imagery in the initial visions of the book), and the relationship of the text to the overall message of Zechariah. The underlying Hebrew text is sometimes mentioned in transliteration when needed for clarification.

Also, in keeping with the tone of the series, the author makes good use of illustrative quotes from various writers (e.g. Calvin, Owens, Edwards, Spurgeon, Lloyd-Jones and others). Contemporary illustrations are also given; an interesting parallel, for example, is drawn between modern military armored units and the horsemen in the vision of 1:7–11. Furthermore, a strong biblical-theological concern is present throughout the book. This is a decidedly confessional, Christ-centered reading of the text. The author helps the reader make connections to other pertinent texts in both testaments and to practical issues of Christian living. The discussion of the vision in Zechariah 3 (the cleansing of the high priest Joshua) or the final vision in Zechariah 14 (the visions of final judgment and blessings) are strong examples in this regard.

As a specific illustration, Zechariah 7 is presented under the rubric of "True Fasting." The discussion generally follows the breakdown of the chapter (vv. 1–7, 8–10, 11–14) and proceeds through three main points (pp. 155–66): (1) reproving false religion—seen in the Lord's challenge of the motivation for fasting; (2) exhorting towards true religion—seen in the prophetic word affirming justice and mercy; and (3) warning against unbelief and hardness of heart. This section puts forth Zechariah's "call to true spirituality," which the author defines as "a life in imitation of God, a life of truth and love for others, and a life of faith in the Bible, applying its teachings in practical ways as God's Spirit works in us" (p. 163).

In the end, some readers may find themselves disagreeing on certain aspects of the interpretation, such as the discussion of the "angel of the Lord" as the preincarnate Christ. Also, those coming at this work from dispensational perspectives will likely find areas of disagreement, such as the discussion of the final states in Zechariah 14. However, this is a carefully composed work that should encourage a majority of readers to vigorously consider, and respond to, the claims of Zechariah in all of their biblical and theological dimensions.

J. Nathan Clayton  
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, IL

*The Development of Greek and the New Testament: Morphology, Syntax, Phonology, and Textual Transmission.* By Chrys C. Caragounis. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006, xx + 732 pp, \$75.00 paper.

This edition is a paperback reprint of a Mohr-Siebeck original (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), with minor corrections and bibliographic updates by Caragounis, Professor of New Testament Exegesis at Lund University, Sweden. Readers who want a quick prospectus of the book and its argumentation should look to pp. 565–82 for a helpful summary chapter. It is difficult in the span of a short book review to do justice to this detailed and well-researched work.

Part 1 (chaps. 1–2) puts the Greek language in historical perspective. Since Greek has been essentially the same language from its earliest times, familiarity with all its phases (even the later ones) is essential for NT study. Caragounis would dispute the idea that all the native speakers of ancient Greek are dead, challenging the assumption (as a native speaker himself) that the ancient and modern forms of Greek are so different as to make the later phases irrelevant.

The second major part of *Development* covers the shift in morphology (phonology is treated in part 3) and syntax. Chapter 3 treats the transition from Attic (classical) to Neohellenic (modern). The major thesis of the book runs through this chapter: Greek today, Caragounis says, is the result of historical developments that began as far back as the fifth century BC (the temporal locus of the shift in pronunciation as well; see chap. 6). In the NT era, “simplification” (p. 103) was well underway. Thus Greek is essentially the same, though many elements of Neohellenic are but atrophied remnants (e.g. infinitive, dative) of the Attic dialect.

Chapter 4 is the most disappointing chapter in the book, mostly for lack of comprehensiveness. It is clear that Caragounis deliberately limits his discussion of syntax to selected topics, but this is just the point at which the book could make an even more valuable contribution. I suppose this would be expecting a historical Greek grammar, but hopefully this is the direction into which Caragounis is headed. That complaint aside, some useful nuggets await the reader, such as a discussion of the difficulties of spelling: the conjunction ἢ (“or”) and the adverb ἦ (“really”).

Chapter 5 explores the implications of historical development for NT exegesis. Some may object at the theoretical level to Caragounis’s general approach. After all, the priority of synchronic over diachronic study avoids anachronism. Yet Caragounis for the most part uses a diachronic method soberly by marshalling good substantiation of development. For instance, this evidence proves fruitful in handling the vine and branches metaphor in John 15 (pp. 247–61). Traditional exegesis takes ἄμπελος as “vine” and κλήμα as “branch.” However, Caragounis offers linguistic evidence from later Greek authors to the effect that ἄμπελος should be taken to mean “vineyard” and that κλήμα should be taken to mean “vine.” The imagery of the metaphor changes when seen in this light, though the essential relationship between Jesus and the disciples remains the same (p. 261). However, the validation rests on more than just later Greek evidence (the earliest is Aesop’s *Fable* 42). The point of comparing both earlier and later Greek usage, as elsewhere in the book, is to demonstrate the trajectory of a language in flux. Later Greek usage may help illuminate the position of the NT on the continuum of linguistic development and enable the careful use of data from all periods of Greek.

Neglect of a diachronic approach, Caragounis says, affects how scholars approach some areas such as verbal aspect. This appears first in criticism of the basis for C. H. Dodd’s realized eschatology (pp. 261–77) and later in his criticism of Porter’s (and to a much lesser degree, Fanning’s) view of the tense/aspect relationship (pp. 316–36). It is here that he seems to imply that Porter has offended a certain sense of Greek national pride: “Aspect is not something that Greeks learn first at school; they learn it from their

mother" (p. 317). This tone pervades this section, even though many of his objections are worth considering. Caragounis augments his criticism of Porter by pointing to many examples of what he calls errors, ranging from Porter's misrepresentation of his opponents to mistranslations of Greek authors. Yet Caragounis's main criticism is methodological: "the advocates of 'aspect only' have a tendency to choose as their Greek examples on which to base their theory either the secondary moods . . . or a few odd or special cases of the indicative" (p. 331). Rather, scholars should focus on "the ordinary indicative that represents the great majority of verbal occurrences" (p. 332). He remains committed to the traditional position that Greeks encoded both tense and aspect in verb forms.

The third part of *Development* consists of a discussion of phonology, acoustics, and textual transmission. Chapter 6 on the "Historical Greek Pronunciation" (*HGP*) is of particular interest, especially for those who teach beginning Greek. The heart of this chapter emphasizes the continuity (as implied by the name *HGP*) of pronunciation between ancient and modern Greek. The case for this thesis rests primarily on inscriptional and papyrological evidence, but also on word play and transcription to and from foreign languages (especially Latin). Though this latter category of evidence is more problematic (and less convincing), Caragounis makes a good case that should receive attention and refinement. This chapter's outset helps correct a widespread misunderstanding of the basis of the Erasmian pronunciation of Greek. Erasmus was deceived into the pronunciation named after him by the Swiss scholar Loritus. Though Erasmus himself abandoned this pronunciation when he learned of the fraud, it nonetheless (mostly because of the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople) gained ascendancy as the supposed correct pronunciation of Greek. After reading this chapter we should be more inclined to acknowledge that the way Greeks spoke in NT times was far closer to the modern pronunciation than to the Erasmian.

Chapter 7 explores the application of ancient rhetoric to the NT, particularly euphony. Though NT authors do not seem to use recognized rhetorical devices consistently, there is evidence that Paul, for instance, was somewhat influenced by aesthetics in composition. In this chapter, too, the *HGP* reveals examples of wordplay that would otherwise escape notice. Here he admits, though that the Erasmian pronunciation allows in many cases just as effectively for paranomasia and parachesis (pp. 473–74).

Chapter 8 applies the *HGP* to textual criticism. Though it seems the general consensus is that the earliest manuscripts were not produced in scriptoria, pronunciation affected the orthography of individual scribes who wrote the early papyri. Caragounis focuses on the orthographical errors of these papyri as a platform from which to ask NT scholars to abandon the "inaccurate and misleading term *itacism*" (p. 501). For Caragounis, this term obscures many textual problems from serious consideration, because several interchanges of vowels ("e.g., ai with e and vice versa, o with w and vice versa . . ." [p. 500]) and pronunciation of diphthongs and some consonants cannot properly be called "itacism." Perhaps Caragounis should complain of an inaccurate and misleading *application* of the term or at least of a generalization of the term. Nevertheless, Caragounis takes up several problems where scribal interchange of forms of ἡμεῖς and ὑμεῖς (because of identical pronunciation) make some of them "practically insoluble" (p. 520). More importantly, Caragounis says, scholars seem to take up pronunciation only as "a last resort" when instead it "should receive its rightful importance by taking the first place in considering" situations like this (p. 525). Practically speaking, the problems raised by pronunciation may tend somewhat to mitigate the witness of even the most respected manuscripts (e.g. 1 John 1:4 ἡμεῖς/ὑμῖν . . . ἡ χάρις ἡμῶν/ὑμῶν [pp. 530–33]). In some cases, it seems such a situation might make genealogical connections between the manuscripts in the major textual traditions less weighty (e.g. ἔχωμεν vs. ἔχομεν in Rom 5:1 [pp. 541–43]). While scholars may differ on the particulars,

Caragounis has a point well taken for internal considerations. The chapter closes with a valuable discussion of the rather complicated textual problem of 1 Cor 13:3 (καυθήσωμαι vs. καυχῆσωμαι).

Above all, Caragounis encourages students of the NT to develop a healthy, broader, historical sense for the Greek language both forwards and backwards beyond the first century. He also brings us in contact with the work of inaccessible or overlooked modern Greek scholars, opening some important avenues for discussion in this valuable contribution to NT scholarship. Perhaps our diet of Greek reading should include more authors over a longer span of time.

J. William Johnston

Dallas Theological Seminary—Houston Extension, Houston, TX

*The Jesus Legend: A Case for the Historical Reliability of the Synoptic Jesus Tradition.* By Paul Rhodes Eddy and Gregory A. Boyd. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007, 479 pp., \$24.99 paper.

*The Jesus Legend* is a thorough refutation of the increasingly popular idea that the Jesus of the Gospels is a myth or legend. Eddy and Boyd deal with all the variations of this thesis. For example, some, like Bruno Bauer or G. A. Wells, believe that the Jesus of the Gospels is virtually, if not entirely, fictional. Others, like Rudolf Bultmann and Burton Mack, believe that a person named Jesus existed, but we know almost nothing about him. Still others, like Robert Funk and J. D. Crossan, argue that while we do know something about Jesus, what we know of him is significantly different than the image(s) presented in the NT.

In part 1 the authors deal with naturalism, the historical-critical method, and the influence of Hellenism on Judaism. Eddy and Boyd offer convincing critiques of western “ethnocentric” scholars, who approach historical studies with an unshakable presupposition of naturalism. They discuss what they believe are anachronistic approaches to textual and oral traditions, critiquing radical literary critics like Derrida and Foucault. The authors also convincingly point out the errors involved in the supposed parallels between Jesus and ancient hero legends or between Jesus and ancient dying and rising savior gods.

Eddy and Boyd propose their own “open historical-critical method,” which includes five facets: (1) that evidence must be drawn from a global pool of human experiences; (2) that assumptions must be held tentatively, with presuppositions being fair game for criticism; (3) that the burden of proof lies with any scholar making a claim about history; (4) that historical-critical work becomes “messier” since it calls for the dethronement of the Western naturalist worldview; and (5) that their method has limitations.

The authors argue that a “truly critical historical method” must also be critical of naturalistic presuppositions about miracles, which to a large extent are the basis for the legendary Jesus thesis. They insist, however, that this does not mean an uncritical acceptance of miracles. All things being equal, natural explanations must be preferred over supernatural ones.

Part 2 addresses the issue of the relative silence about the historical Jesus on the part of ancient historians and Paul. Jesus theorists affirming a legendary position argue that, if Jesus really existed, Paul and various pagan writers would have mentioned Jesus’ works and teachings. Eddy and Boyd argue that Paul was not nearly as silent about the historical Jesus as these theorists seem to think. Using evidence from Paul’s letters, they convincingly demonstrate that Paul considered Jesus to be a real person who lived in the recent past.

Part 3 discusses the transmission of oral tradition between the time of Jesus and the writing of the Gospels. Since Jesus theorists affirming a legendary position base many of their arguments on the form-critical theories of Rudolf Bultmann and his followers, Eddy and Boyd devote a significant amount of space critiquing those theories.

For example, the authors argue that most folklore experts have now abandoned, as factually in error, the form-critical assumptions that folk traditions were transmitted in short isolated units by communities rather than individuals. In addition, contrary to the form-critical assumption that the earliest Christians had little interest in passing on biographical information about Jesus, the authors demonstrate that the NT writers actually placed a significant emphasis on the importance of teaching and bearing witness.

Part 4 discusses the genre of the Synoptic Gospels and their use as historical sources for Jesus. In the final analysis, the authors agree with J. D. Crossan that, while the Gospels do not entirely fit the genre of history, they contain history, and, while they do not entirely fit the genre of biography, they contain biography. In some senses they appear to be *sui generis*. What they really are is good news. Against those who would argue that ancient biographers and historians are biased and often unreliable, Eddy and Boyd counter by demonstrating that ancient historians actually often exhibited a good degree of skepticism.

Eddy and Boyd also critique the misuse of redaction criticism, which has often increased skepticism toward the Gospels. Over against the supposed creativity proposed by the redaction critics, Eddy and Boyd apply to the Gospels six broad questions historians ask of ancient documents in order to assess their historical reliability. The authors provide evidence to show that the Gospels meet each of the six conditions, thus demonstrating that we do indeed have reason to believe that the Gospels are historically reliable.

While *The Jesus Legend* is an outstanding book, the authors raise some issues that could have been addressed a bit more clearly. First, Eddy and Boyd point out that some scholars are beginning to place such emphasis on the significance of oral cultures and multiple oral performances that they are now questioning whether it makes sense to talk about “original autographs” at all. When evangelicals, however, speak of inerrancy, they typically talk about inerrancy in “the original autographs.” It would have been helpful to know how this emphasis on oral cultures and oral performances in the Gospels affects the authors’ thinking on inerrancy.

Second, Eddy and Boyd bring up Celsus who, they admit, was part of an orally dominant culture, and yet Celsus found a significant number of problems in the text of the Gospels. Eddy and Boyd argue that Celsus was “an unsympathetic outsider evaluating a religion primarily on the basis of its written texts, without the benefit of the rich oral tradition and shared communal knowledge that would have provided the illuminating context to the often apparently conflictive data in the texts” (p. 437). That is undoubtedly true, but the question is: If the oral culture arguments explain as much about the historical reliability of the Gospels as Eddy and Boyd suggest, why would it even occur to someone like Celsus—who lived so close to the first century and was so immersed in oral culture—to criticize the written text of the Gospels like a post-Gutenberg critic, especially if being immersed in oral culture so thoroughly explains the apparent problems? Would that not be a bit like a fish questioning its wet environment? The author’s response is that Celsus was in many ways as far removed as we are from the “integrated schemata” of the oral tradition of first-century Christians. Yet Celsus still lived in an oral culture in the second century AD. We live in a post-Gutenberg culture nearly 2,000 years removed from the time of Jesus. How could Celsus possibly be as far removed as we are from the “integrated schemata” of first-century oral tradition, and does Celsus’s criticism of the text not undermine, at least to some extent, the author’s oral performance arguments?

*The Jesus Legend* is a truly outstanding book. It is well argued, well written, and well documented. The authors not only succeed in thoroughly debunking the theories viewing Jesus in terms of legend, but they also issue such serious blows to the form-critical and redaction-critical theories that it will be hard to take seriously the work of modern critics who do not interact with the material in this book.

Dennis Ingolfsland  
Crown College, St. Bonifacius, MN

*Jesus and the People of God: Reconfiguring Ethnic Identity.* By Joseph H. Hellerman. New Testament Monographs 21. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2007, xii + 381 pp., \$95.00.

Hellerman contends that a critical component of the aims of Jesus concerned transforming the identity of the people of God from an ethno-nationalistic enterprise to that of a surrogate family. Jewish identity as it emerged from the Maccabean crisis forms the critical context for Hellerman's reconstruction. Antiochus IV proscribed certain practices that, in defiance of Antiochus, became the defining marks of Jewish identity as God's chosen people. These markers included practices related to sacred times (e.g. Sabbath), sacred space (temple mount), and sacred food (table fellowship with Gentiles). Jews came to understand the initial victories within a broadly Deuteronomic framework or what Hellerman labels within the particulars of their historical context as "Maccabean ideology." That is, they came to understand Antiochus's triumph as God's judgment upon them because of faithless Jewish elites who had abandoned these Jewish traditions. By the same token, subsequent Jewish successes against Antiochus under the Hasmoneans were regarded as God's response to Jewish martyrs who embodied faithfulness to their social distinctives. As a result, Judeans of Jesus' day were highly preoccupied with maintaining these features as a means to bring about God's deliverance from their Roman overlords. It is this ethno-nationalistic focus that Jesus sought to deconstruct. At the same time, he worked to reconstruct God's people in alternate terms as a surrogate family. Hellerman further posits that these two strategies, particularly the former, paved the way for full inclusion of Gentiles within God's people by Jesus' later followers.

Hellerman lays out this argument over ten chapters prefaced by an introduction and followed by a summary chapter that also explores the implications of his thesis for Jesus studies. The first chapter helpfully surveys how non-Judeans understood Jews, how Jews understood themselves based on the Hebrew Scriptures, and the impact of Hellenization on Jewish self-understanding. Chapters 2 and 3 examine Jewish nationalism in post-Maccabean historical writing as well as the Jewish literature that retold biblical narratives from a post-Maccabean perspective. Both bodies of literature reveal a widespread "Maccabean ideology."

Chapter 4 treats matters of methodology and approach, arguing for the importance of recognizing "implicit cultural scripts" within the original context of Scripture for the interpretive process. Furthermore, Hellerman explains the relationship of his understanding of Jesus to the New Perspective on Paul. Although maintaining a focus on "badges" of Jewish identity like the New Perspective, Hellerman argues that for many Jews these badges not only set them off from others, they also took on a meritorious element within soteriology (contra the New Perspective). According to Hellerman, for some Jews, maintaining the Jewish social distinctives earned them favor in God's sight. He describes this as "meritorious nomism."

Chapters 5 through 7 examine respectively Jesus' approach to the sacred times, sacred space, and sacred food that were vital to the ethnic identity of Jesus' contem-

poraries. In each case, Hellerman finds that Jesus relativizes these identity markers and concludes that it was part of Jesus' intentions to subvert and renegotiate these boundaries from the form they assumed after the Maccabean era.

In chapter 8, Hellerman responds to what he sees as the primary challenge to his thesis, namely that Jesus' post-Easter followers wrestle with issues of these boundary markers in a manner that indicates they had no knowledge of Jesus' transformative intentions regarding the same. Hellerman contends that Jesus' followers operated in a complex environment where Jewish nationalism was reinforced by the presence of imperial Rome, making the tendency to cling to traditional markers of social identity in a conservative society even stronger. This accounts for the early church's somewhat awkward handling of matters related to Jewish law.

The heart of Hellerman's argument lies in chapter 9, where he describes Jesus' efforts to form a family of surrogate siblings with God as their father. Two threads of the Gospel traditions form the substance of Hellerman's reconstruction. First, he reviews the sheer amount of material related to Jesus' characterization of his followers in kinship terms. These efforts to form a surrogate family, Hellerman claims, are at the center of Jesus' "social agenda." Second, Hellerman examines the passages where Jesus critiques family structures (e.g. "Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me"; Matt 10:37). Hellerman contends that such passages must be given their full force. Jesus calls for loyalty to himself and this new surrogate family that transcends that given to a person's blood relations.

The final chapter examines Hellerman's claims about Jesus in terms of contemporary theories of ethnic identity. Jesus and his contemporary Judeans offered competing interpretations of their narrative of origins, each attempting to shape an identity for God's people. Jesus' efforts to undermine the narrative emerging from the Maccabean era and reform the people of God in different ethnic terms, cast him as an "ethnic entrepreneur." For Jesus, observing the law was not the means to bring about God's intervention. God was already intervening and the kingdom arriving in his own person. Jesus, therefore, sought to define God's people for this new chapter of God's dealings with his people.

Hellerman is nothing if not ambitious. This monograph leaps into several significant and tumultuous debates within NT studies. These include disputes over Jesus' aims, the reliability of the Gospel materials, and the connections between the historical Jesus and the "Jesus movement" that followed after him. In this post-Holocaust era, however, arguments concerning opposition to Jewish ethnic identity in the NT era prove particularly controversial. Given the focus on ethnicity and the sweeping nature of his argument, I will focus my comments on these two issues.

Hellerman handles theoretical issues related to ethnicity in an informed and careful manner. Furthermore, framing Jesus' disputes with Jewish leaders as debates over matters of identity makes good sense of these events in their social context. Two factors related to how Hellerman construes Jesus' aims regarding ethnicity will prove more contentious.

First, Hellerman works with a contrast between an ethnocentric Judaism and what would become an inclusive Christianity, a distinction with a long history that has come under severe criticism in our post-Holocaust era. For example, Caroline Johnson Hodge, in a work on Paul and ethnicity (*If Sons, Then Heirs: A Study of Kinship and Ethnicity in the Letters of Paul* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007]), targets this very dichotomy. Johnson Hodge works within a quite different theological perspective than Hellerman, but she demonstrates a much deeper awareness of the potential problems with such a distinction.

Second, Hellerman emphasizes that Jesus' attempts to construct a new identity for God's people provide a framework within which others later developed a thoroughgoing openness to Gentiles. Yet one looks for a fuller definition of just what Jesus himself was

after. Does Jesus' attempt to reshape God's people create a universal people whereby distinctions such as ethnicity become obsolete? If so, what are the implications for our current moment when forces of ethnic identity are resurgent?

In terms of the nature of Hellerman's argument, what should follow now are two tasks. First, Hellerman acknowledges that his study of Jesus is not comprehensive but examines only one aspect of Jesus' ministry. I would like to see him integrate this work into a larger picture of Jesus' overall aims. For example, if the opening chapters of Luke-Acts are anything to go by, divine intentions surrounding Jesus' life, death, and resurrection involved the restoration of Israel. How would Hellerman relate his reading of Jesus to the largely Isaianic vision of Israel's renewal that frames the Synoptic Gospel accounts of Jesus' mission? Second, as with any programmatic interpretation of Jesus, further testing of the thesis against the Gospel evidence must be conducted in order to ascertain its strengths and weaknesses. We await additional studies prompted by this work from both Hellerman and others.

None of these comments should be taken as negative criticisms. Rather, they reflect the provocative (in the best sense of that term) nature of this well-argued thesis.

James C. Miller

Asbury Theological Seminary, Orlando, FL

*Jesus and the Origins of the Gentile Mission.* By Michael F. Bird. Library of New Testament Studies 331. London: T & T Clark, 2006, xi + 212 pp., \$120.00.

Did the mission to Gentiles, which features so centrally in the rise of early Christianity, have its genesis in the ministry and mission of Jesus? This question provides a focus to the larger question of the relationship between the historical Jesus as a leader of a movement that remained firmly within Judaism and the early Christian movement that fairly rapidly came to be dominated by Gentiles and identifiably distinct from Judaism. In this revised version of a Ph.D. thesis accepted by the Religious Studies Department of the University of Queensland in 2005, Bird argues "that Jesus' intention was to renew and restore Israel, so that a restored Israel would extend God's salvation to the world" (p. 3). Thus, although Jesus did not commence a mission to Gentiles, it is nevertheless possible to trace the origins of the Gentile mission to Jesus.

In arguing that a Gentile mission is "implied" within the aims of Jesus, Bird seeks to overturn the dominant view that a mission to Gentiles, in the words of Harnack, "cannot have lain within the horizon of Jesus." At best, Jesus would have simply shared in the expectation of other Jews that Gentiles would be saved at the eschaton as an act of divine power, unassisted by human heralds and agency following Israel's salvation, a position elegantly set forth in Jeremias's still-influential book, *Jesus' Promise to the Nations* (Naperville: Allenson, 1958). Yet against the idea that Gentile inclusion—not to say Gentile mission—would simply follow Israel's eschatological redemption in salvation-historical sequence, Bird seeks to show how various actions and sayings of Jesus, understood within the context of Jewish restoration eschatology, imply that an active mission to Gentiles had a place within Jesus' intentions.

The attempt to understand Jesus as a prophet of Israel's restoration is not unique to Bird. Rather, Bird develops what has, especially since the work of B. F. Meyer and E. P. Sanders, become an increasingly important stream within historical Jesus studies. Because it is often misunderstood, it is important to note, as Bird does, that to view Jesus within this framework does not commit one to a supersessionist view of Israel. It is not the replacement of Israel that is at stake but the definition of Israel in terms

of a representative group in whom and through whom God's purposes in restoring Israel are fulfilled. Although Bird's survey of the Jewish material is unsatisfyingly brief, he suggests that "generally speaking" the material does suggest a common expectation that Israel's restoration would include the salvation of the Gentiles. Given that the hope of Israel's restoration commonly entailed inclusion of Gentiles, Bird suggests that the inclusion of Gentiles was implicit within Jesus' proclamation that Israel's restoration was now coming to fulfillment. Moreover, if Jesus believed that Israel's restoration was in progress, then it was, even within Jesus' ministry, already "becoming possible for Gentiles to share in the benefits of Israel's restoration" (p. 58).

Bird buttresses this significant claim by arguing that although Jesus' mission was focused on Israel, his vision of Israel's restoration not only included Gentiles as beneficiaries of Israel's restoration but also generated the Gentile mission within the movement that his own mission spawned. He begins by arguing that Jesus' critical comments about Gentiles (e.g. Matt 5:7; 6:7, 22; 18:17; Mark 10:42–43) simply reflect the common Jewish repugnance toward stereotyped Gentile immorality. Yet in this he differed not at all from the prophetic tradition, which could denounce pagan ethics while maintaining an earnest expectation for the salvation of the Gentiles. Similarly the restriction of his mission to Israel, explicit, for example, in Jesus' words to the Syrophenician woman, fits into a pattern found within Jewish restoration eschatology whereby Gentile salvation follows the restoration of Israel and restored Israel becomes the means by which God's salvation would be revealed to the world.

Bird is sympathetic to the view of Dale Allison that Jesus' expectation that "many will come from east and west" (Luke 13:28–30/Matt 8:11–12) refers, in the first instance, to the eschatological regathering of diaspora Jews. However, Bird cites a number of texts in which this expectation is closely correlated with the eschatological pilgrimage of the Gentiles, implying that the regathering of Israel was coordinated with an ingathering of Gentiles in the expectation of Jesus. Moreover, against Allison, Bird believes that the saying subverts the expectation that the scattered twelve tribes will return from the Diaspora. The strongly realized element in Jesus' eschatology means that the return of the Diaspora is already in process albeit not as a literal regathering of Jews from other lands. Rather, the regathering of Israel has taken the form of a liberation from metaphorical exile already taking place through Jesus' ministry and already incorporating Gentiles.

Jesus' encounters with Gentiles provide further evidence for his willingness to include Gentiles within the kingdom that he was inaugurating. Though Jesus' own periodic forays into Gentile territory may not be regarded as intentional mission to Gentiles—he went only for respite from the demands of his mission to Israel—he nevertheless responds favorably to Gentiles who come to him, bestowing on them the blessings of Israel's salvation.

Finally, Bird argues that Jesus has taken up certain elements from Israel's sacred traditions that make Israel the instrument of God's universal purposes. He notes the ways in which Jesus began to describe his followers with terms normally used to describe Israel while criticizing the association of Israel's election with national identity. However, there are also indications that Jesus believed that this restored and renewed Israel represented by his followers would bring to fulfillment the universal role of Israel anticipated within Israel's sacred tradition. This restored Israel would be the light of the world (Matt 5:16). The expectation of Jesus that Israel would fulfill its universal role among the nations finds expression also in Jesus' belief that the time had come for the temple to become a house of prayer for all nations. Because Gentiles were denied full access to the worship of God in Herod's temple in favor of a nationalistic impulse to exclude and expel Gentiles, the temple was coming under God's judgment. Jesus' action in the temple symbolizes this judgment of the temple for failing to be the eschatological

house of prayer for all nations. Jesus does not push this hope for a new temple into the future but instead designates his followers as the new temple within which the Gentiles would find salvation.

There is much to commend in this very fine study, which provides us with what is now perhaps the most developed analysis of Jesus' view of the Gentiles from the vantage afforded by the emerging understanding of Jesus as a prophet of Israel's restoration. If Jesus believed both that Gentiles would be included in Israel's restoration and that Israel's restoration was coming to fulfillment in his ministry, then the influential view of Jeremias that Jesus simply expected the salvation of the Gentiles at the eschaton loses much of its force. Bird's greatest contribution is that he sets Jesus within a recognizably Jewish eschatological framework in which the salvation of the Gentiles is no longer simply a sequel to Israel's salvation but is part of Israel's salvation. Bird goes further than most in seeking to locate the inclusion of the Gentiles within the realized aspects of Jesus' eschatology. If this raises difficulties that are not fully resolved, it also credibly explains why the belief that the time had arrived for the Gentiles to be saved was never disputed in the early church.

Bird's emphasis on the realized aspects of Israel's restoration, including the salvation of the Gentiles, is distinctive, but one does not gain so strong a sense of what, for Jesus, remained not yet. If Jesus believed that the time for Israel's restoration had come and that the salvation of the Gentiles was part of that restoration, then why did his mission remain focused only on Israel? Bird is reluctant to attribute this to Jesus' sense of salvation-historical progression. He states that Jesus went only to Israel simply because he was a prophet sent to Israel. Jesus would not have denied that the time for Gentile inclusion had arrived. Yet a mission to Gentiles was not his task, and he refused to allow himself to be distracted from his singular vocation. It seems that Jesus did not pursue a mission to Gentiles simply because this was not his assigned task. At least in part, Bird resists the tendency of Schnabel to attenuate the exclusiveness of Jesus' mission to Israel and is reluctant to attribute Jesus' focus on Israel to his sense of what constituted an appropriate salvation-historical sequence. This moves the discussion in the right direction. As Bird correctly notes, Jesus does not undertake an exclusive mission to Israel simply because he believes that the Gentiles will be saved later. Rather, the particularism of Jesus' mission to Israel arises out of a broad Jewish expectation of "the salvation of the Gentiles in God's design through the mechanism of a restored and renewed Israel" (p. 57).

Bird is aware that the demonstration of an expectation of Gentile inclusion as an entailment of Jesus' proclamation of Israel's incipient restoration does not explain the genesis of a centrifugal mission to the Gentiles, which became a dominant feature within a few years of Jesus' own mission to Israel. If Bird's work convincingly demonstrates the former, it is less satisfying in showing how a centrifugal Gentile mission has its roots in Jesus' mission to Israel. He briefly highlights elements within Israel's sacred traditions that may adumbrate a mission to the Gentiles, but it is not clear that these elements are picked up by Jesus. He notes especially Jonah's mission to Nineveh, though I doubt very much that Jonah was regarded "as one who preached repentance to Gentiles" (p. 165) either in Jewish tradition or by Jesus. Closer to the mark may be Bird's emphasis on Jesus' own itinerant ministry. Still, Bird could usefully explore the way in which Jesus' itinerancy was not just a new mission method "replicated by various circles of disciples" (p. 167) in a Gentile setting but was inherent to Jesus' understanding of the way in which the kingdom is restored to Israel. The restoration of Israel is realized neither through violent revolt nor through a sudden, dramatic assertion of God's universal sovereignty but rather through proclamation and call. There is every reason then to expect that Jesus' followers would have naturally pursued the inclusion of Gentiles within restored Israel in the same way.

Finally, Bird rightly notes along with Schnabel and others that the early church never debated the propriety of mission to Gentiles, only the terms of their inclusion. Yet why was this case? From his brief exploration of Jesus' practice of inclusive table fellowship, Bird infers that Jesus would have welcomed Gentiles at table. Bird assumes that Gentiles possessed a purity status equivalent to Jewish apostates. Whatever the purity status of apostates, I doubt very much that Gentiles were universally regarded as ritually impure within first-century Judaism. However, the possibility of table fellowship with Gentiles did become an issue as the Gentile mission began to take shape, suggesting that Jesus' acceptance of tax-collectors and sinners at table had not settled the question. The most acute challenge to the Gentile mission was not that Gentiles were regarded as ritually impure—the work of Jonathan Klawans and Christine Hayes suggests that they were not—but rather that they were common. That the early church still struggled with the terms of Gentile admission into the holy people of God suggests that a mission to Gentiles cannot be reliably traced to the pre-Easter period. Yet, as Bird shows, a mission to Gentiles can be confidently placed within the effective history of Jesus. Bird's demonstration of the continuities between Jesus and the Gentile mission is thus to be welcomed as an important contribution to our understanding of the indispensable role of Jesus in the rise of early Christianity.

Steven M. Bryan  
Ethiopian Graduate School of Theology, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

*The Torn Veil: Matthew's Exposition of the Death of Jesus.* By Daniel M. Gurtner. SNTSMS 139. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, xxii + 297 pp., \$90.00.

*The Torn Veil* presents the results of Daniel Gurtner's doctoral research, completed under the supervision of Richard Bauckham at the University of St. Andrews. Throughout this very fine study, Gurtner brings fresh data to bear on Matthew's presentation of the death of Jesus, often with illuminating effect.

Gurtner's opening chapter offers a survey of the history of interpretation of the *velum scissum* that is admirable both for its sweeping scope and its succinct presentation. Along the way, his thoughtful interaction with and critique of these readings—"as diverse as they are creative" (p. 21)—hints at the shape Gurtner's own study will take. He describes his approach as both historical-critical and composition-critical.

Chapter 2, which examines the terminology used for veils in the OT, finds that there are three different curtains translated *καταπέτασμα* in the LXX. Some important patterns, however, may be discerned: first, the Hebrew tradition consistently describes the inner veil that marked off the holy of holies as the פרכת; second, the Greek always renders פרכת with *καταπέτασμα*. While *καταπέτασμα* can also be used where פרכת was not, in such cases syntactical evidence helps to determine which curtain is in view. Gurtner argues that, in the LXX, "καταπέτασμα is the 'default' term for the inner veil (פרכת)" (p. 46) and that, when *καταπέτασμα* refers to any other curtain, it is always qualified syntactically in some way, usually by a locative genitive. He concludes: "Since the synoptic locative genitive of *καταπέτασμα* (τοῦ ναοῦ) clearly does *not* make such distinction, we are left to suppose that the evangelists, like their LXX 'source', are referring to the inner veil by their use of *καταπέτασμα τοῦ ναοῦ*" (p. 46).

Chapter 3 turns to a consideration of the functions of the three curtains translated *καταπέτασμα* in the LXX: the curtain of the entrance of the courtyard; the screen of the door of the tent of meeting; and the veil between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. Gurtner's investigation demonstrates that of these curtains, only those that translate

פרכת are granted any cultic function in the OT. The function of this veil was “to effect separation (בדל) between the most holy and the less holy”—a separation “executed by means of the veil’s prohibiting physical and visual accessibility to the God enthroned in the holy of holies” (p. 70). The presence of cherubim woven into the veil offers a graphic depiction of this prohibition (cf. Gen 3:24). This conclusion will be especially important for Gurtner’s primary thesis; as he notes, scholars who reach divergent conclusions about Matthew’s understanding of the torn veil nonetheless agree that its rending signifies the cessation of its function.

When Gurtner examines the function of veils and curtains in Second Temple and rabbinic texts in chapter 4, he argues that the veil features prominently in the heavenly sanctuary in at least one Qumran text (11Q19) but also that the veil “began to evolve an ideology of its own” (p. 96), whether as a symbol of the temple (Sir 50:5) or as something to be concealed as sacred itself (*Jos. Azen.* 10:2). Already in apocalyptic texts and in Josephus, in anticipation of the rabbinic tradition where this connection becomes firmly established, the veil is associated with the heavenly firmament (cf. Gen 1:6). Here the veil conceals heavenly secrets. This association was widespread enough that Gurtner thinks it developed from a much earlier tradition, the first stages of which must already have been in place in Matthew’s day.

In chapter 5, Gurtner focuses his attention squarely on Matthew’s Gospel, examining the evangelist’s presentation of the temple and of the death of Jesus. Both, he suggests, function as hermeneutical keys to the interpretation of Matthew’s rending of the veil. The portrait of the temple that emerges in this narrative, Gurtner argues, is consistently positive. Matthew affirms both the validity of the sacrifices (5:23–24; 8:1–4; cf. 17:24–27) and the presence of God in the temple (23:21) and mutes elements in his Markan *Vorlage* that could be understood as anti-temple. Matthew’s Jesus does issue sharp warnings about the temple’s impending doom but, even here, the problem is not the temple *per se* but Israel’s corrupt leadership, which has elicited God’s judgement. The death of Jesus looms before the reader from the earliest portions of the narrative but receives its richest explication at 26:28, where Matthew’s reader learns that Jesus lays down his life of his own will, for the forgiveness of sins. Jesus’ death is an “atoning act by which people are rescued from their sins” (p. 137).

When he turns, in chapter 6, to Matthew’s *vellum scissum* pericope, Gurtner concludes that the torn veil offers striking commentary on the death of Jesus. The tearing of the curtain becomes the occasion for an apocalyptic opening of the heavens with its ensuing vision. Dismissing “historicising conjectures” that “seem to create more problems than they solve” (p. 152), Gurtner offers an apocalyptic reading of 27:51–54 that aims to unpack the meaning of the vision’s symbolism by patiently exploring a series of OT allusions (most notably to Ezekiel 37) in dialogue both with the evangelist’s redaction of Mark and with motifs emerging from the wider Matthean narrative. “Matthew,” he concludes, “is . . . proclaiming that the reality that Ezekiel intended to convey . . . is occurring in heaven at the time of the death of Jesus. Moreover, Jesus’ death has occasioned the eschatological turning of the ages depicted by the special material as revealed by the *vellum scissum*” (p. 169). If the tearing of the veil opens the heavens for this apocalyptic vision, it also signals the end of its function. Here Gurtner finds no sign of judgment on the temple but instead the removal of the barrier that prevents both entrance into the presence of God and vision of God, since this was precisely how the (inner) veil functioned: “The accomplishment of atonement by the death of Jesus necessarily leads to the accessibility of humanity to God, depicted in Matthew not just as a person entering God’s presence (as in Hebrews, and below), but also as God’s being ‘with us’ (Emmanuel, 1:23)” (p. 189).

The preceding summary hardly does justice to Gurtner’s work, which repays close study at nearly every turn. Occasionally, however, one wonders whether Gurtner’s thesis is driving his reading of individual Matthean texts instead of emerging from

them. Is it really the case, for example, that 5:23–24 demonstrates that Matthew views the temple as “*still* a place to offer sacrifices” (p. 99; italics his)? Does Jesus’ citation of Isaiah at 21:13 (“My house will be called [κληθήσεται] a house of prayer”) really “affirm the legitimacy of [the temple’s] function and a desire on the part of Matthew to see that function restored”? Should one conclude on this basis that Matthew thinks the temple “has a future” (p. 110)? (Oddly, Gurtner claims that this reading ἰδὲ οἶκος μου οἶκος προσευχῆς κληθήσεται) is “found in neither Isa. 56:7 nor Isa. 60:7.”) Is it in fact the case, as Gurtner argues, following Telford, that in Matthew’s version of the cursing of the fig tree, “[t]he story has been removed from the sphere of judgment and eschatology, and is treated as if it were a normal miracle story” (p. 113)? Does 12:6 carry the emphasis in Gurtner’s work that it does in Matthew’s?

These concerns, however, hardly detract from the value of the work. The book is meticulously researched and carefully argued. Gurtner marginalizes neither historical nor literary concerns (even if the accent falls squarely on the former) as he demonstrates the value of a close reading of the *vellum scissum* pericope against the backdrop both of the narrative world that emerges in this Gospel and the historical world that gave rise to it. In short, Gurtner’s *Torn Veil* succeeds admirably in pulling back its own curtain—the one that has obscured understanding of Matt 27:51–54 for so many of us.

Wesley G. Olmstead

Briercrest College and Seminary, Caronport, SK

*From Q to “Secret” Mark: A Composition History of the Earliest Narrative Theology.*  
By Hugh M. Humphrey. New York: T & T Clark, 2006, v + 170 pp., \$29.95 paper.

The author, Professor of Religious Studies at Fairfield University in Connecticut, here offers a brilliant, creative, and patristically informed study of the writing of Mark that all future studies of how Mark was composed will have to take into account. Each of the five chapters methodically addresses one aspect of the thesis that Mark composed his Gospel in two distinct stages, then edited the whole.

He states his thesis in a brief introduction in which he spells out the focus of his study. Relying particularly on Clement of Alexandria’s comment that Mark wrote “several different works,” he indicates that he will first review the patristic witness to the Gospel of Mark, then defend the hypothesis that Mark first wrote a narrative account of Jesus’ sayings (“QN”) in Rome, then later a passion narrative (“PN”) in Alexandria. He is not interested in Mark’s sources or a proto-Mark but rather in how Mark began with a focus in QN on Jesus as Son of God and in PN on the suffering Christ, then in combining the two divisions emphasized the theme of lessons for discipleship.

Humphrey’s first chapter surveys the patristic evidence for his argument, especially the comments of Papias, Clement of Alexandria, and Jerome. Modern readers find the patristic evidence confusing because they assume the Church Fathers were referring to our present canonical text when they suggest that Mark was written in both Rome and Egypt, dependent on or independent of Peter, who was “disinterested” in what Mark was doing or approved of what he did. The solution, Humphrey says, is that “they were referring to various stages” (p. 9) of the composition of Mark. When Papias writes of “the things said and done by the Lord” (p. 36), for example, he was not speaking of our Mark but an earlier version (QN) that was not in order and lacked a passion narrative, whereas when Clement of Alexandria speaks of Mark’s “Gospel,” he is speaking of Mark’s passion narrative (PN). Mark wrote QN in Rome when Peter was still alive,

but then Mark went from Rome to Alexandria where he preached, founded a church, and, Humphrey suggests, composed PN. Later discipleship materials were added to his Gospel.

Humphrey then devotes a chapter to the narrative version of Mark's account of Jesus' sayings and deeds. He first notes parallels between Mark and Q in seventeen places; for example, Mark 1:2-3 is Q 3:2-4. He concludes that "the verbal contacts are strong enough to assert that the Markan tradition knew the sayings also reported by Q" (p. 43), but only in Mark 1:2-13:32. Furthermore, he notes that the distinctive vocabulary of QN is almost absent from the other parts of Mark and that it contains a low Christology with no messianic emphasis, "Christ," "kingdom of David," or "king of the Jews" vocabulary, unlike the later PN. Such a Christology means that Q must come from the late 30s or early 40s before Paul's writings. The chapter includes 33 pages devoted to the actual text of Mark's narrative version of Q, with transitional seams in italics and reflections of Q wording in bold print. Humphrey rejects the idea that Mark is the John Mark of Jerusalem because Mark is educated in the forms of Hellenistic rhetoric and affluent enough to afford writing materials. Because he uses the LXX, Mark is probably part of a largely Jewish-Christian community outside Palestine, possibly in Alexandria.

Chapter 3 is devoted to Mark's passion narrative. The author argues that the focus and themes of the PN are entirely different from QN. It consists of one basic account and two substantial elaborations. QN portrays Jesus as "a prophetic figure, the last emissary of divine Wisdom" (p. 89); PN portrays him as "the presence of God, whose death on the cross can have redemptive value, taking away the sins (plural) of humankind" (p. 90). The chapter contains nine pages devoted to the actual text of "the earlier passion narrative in Mark 14:1-15:46," to which Mark later adds 8:31, 9:31, and 10:33-34. These verses form an orally preached account that outlines what later becomes part of Mark's PN. Philippians 2 and Romans 5 with their portrayal of Jesus as the second Adam, Humphrey believes, have influenced Mark's PN. However, a number of passages in Mark 14-16 are "secondary" and intrusive, including the anointing in Bethany, the prediction of a resurrection appearance in Galilee (14:28), Peter's "failed discipleship," the centurion's reaction (15:38-39), and the return to Galilee (16:7). In fact, any interpretation is secondary if it is theological. Because Mark can mention Golgotha and "Eloi, eloi . . ." without explaining what they mean, his early PN reflects a "largely, if not entirely, *Jewish Christian*" community, one that, unlike the QN community, is "not apocalyptic" (p. 114). Humphrey sees references to "the Son of Man" as resulting from Second Adam Christology and Jesus as a teacher in the wisdom tradition, though he does admit that there is "an apparent effort to invoke an allusion to the Son of Man in Daniel 7" (p. 115) in Mark 14:62 with its reference to "coming with the clouds of heaven."

Humphrey devotes the next chapter to the final redaction of Mark's Gospel, which he sees as a third stage in Mark's narrative line in which QN and PN are "assimilated." At this stage an effort was made to integrate Son of God Christology and the kingdom of God in QN with Christ Christology in PN by an emphasis on Jesus' death and resurrection as a model for discipleship. To support his hypothesis, the author analyzes in some detail nineteen passages from Mark. For some reason he sees Mark's emphasis on Jesus' teaching in QN ruling out the opposition of the Pharisees in such passages as 2:13-3:6, which he sees as a later intrusion. Though he repeatedly says that Mark wrote his Gospel in stages, he sees this stage as the work of a later redactor. He speaks of this version of Mark's Gospel as "nearly identical" with our Mark but applies the term "the Secret Gospel of Mark" to it and suggests that this is the stage that Clement of Alexandria calls "secret" to the majority of Christians because it suggests that discipleship involves obedience to the will of God even if it means death. The redactor of "Secret Mark" has inserted and expanded the earlier stages by adding some nineteen "explanatory glosses" that Humphrey feels he can see as later because they do not

reflect the themes of QN or PN and contain theological appraisals of Jesus. The eschatological recedes and discipleship is underlined, the giving of everything (as John the Baptist, the widow, and the woman who anointed Jesus did).

The fifth and final chapter briefly reviews the composition history of the Gospel of Mark. "Mark composed his Gospel for diverse audiences and at different moments in the life of the evangelist and his communities," though Humphrey does admit that whether QN or PN are earlier "cannot be unquestionably determined" (p. 139). He does assert, though, that theological development in the latter does suggest a later date. Mark wrote down Peter's oral teaching as early as 41–49 because both men were leaving Rome. Thus if PN dates to that period, QN could be as early as the late 30s and come from Peter. Mark went back to Alexandria to establish the church there. "Hence, the author composed most of the present text of this Gospel in three separate stages during some fifteen to twenty years, as his understanding of Jesus' significance and the meaning of his death and resurrection deepened through reflection and the passing of time" (p. 141). For some reason Humphrey argues that Mark could not have written the persecution sections of the Gospel, because "it would have been utterly inappropriate and unintelligible" (p. 145).

The volume contains two appendixes that deal with tangential issues. The first is a brief treatment of Goulder and Goodacre's "Mark without Q" hypothesis, which he criticizes for its "easy dismissal of Q" (p. 149). The second is a brief assessment of the quest for a proto-Mark, particularly by Burkett and Boismard. Humphrey concludes, as might be expected, that "the present text of Mark results from the ever-maturing theological reflection of the Christian tradition's first evangelist, Mark" (p. 162).

Humphrey has minutely examined the text of Mark's Gospel and is familiar with the early Church Fathers' comments about Mark in a way most NT scholars are not. His novel thesis that Mark composed his Gospel in stages is one that every commentator on Mark in the future will have to take into account. However, his work suffers from the same unjustified assumptions that also plague Q studies, that such themes as crucifixion, resurrection, and atonement do not appear in Jesus' teaching and that themes in Jesus' teaching do not appear in the accounts of Jesus' passion. Yet how could themes such as the kingdom of God appear in accounts of Jesus' passion? Also, how could Jesus in his teaching talk about atonement through his death? The subjects are almost totally different, so it is not surprising that the vocabulary of Mark is different in each section. To argue that a new beginning for *all* humankind can be deduced from the "many will be made righteous" of Rom 5:19 is a *non sequitur*. Also, if the Christologies of QN and PN are different, would that not suggest two different authors? Yet, are the Christologies really all that different? Could Jesus not be both a prophetic wisdom teacher *and* a suffering and atoning Messiah? Humphrey admits that to defend his thesis he has to say Mark 8:27–10:45 has to be "left aside." Despite these qualifications of the book's thesis, Humphrey has provided a fascinating study of the origins of Mark's Gospel.

Leslie Robert Keylock  
Evangelical University and Seminary, Plant City, FL

*The Testimony of the Beloved Disciple: Narrative, History, and Theology in the Gospel of John.* By Richard Bauckham. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007, 313 pp., \$29.99 paper.

The only thing more impressive than Richard Bauckham's award-winning study, *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), is its author's refusal to rest content in its warm reception. Bauckham's most recent work explores further some

lines of thought already developed at some length in *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses* as well as in various previous publications. Indeed, twelve of the thirteen chapters are reworked publications from earlier research. Nevertheless, the collection as a whole, while not a tightly progressing argument, provides a unified, integrated, and convincing portrait of the Gospel of John that diverges in numerous ways from recent prevailing trends. Bauckham has just concluded a long and fruitful tenure as Professor of New Testament Studies and Bishop Wardlaw Professor at the University of St. Andrews, Scotland.

The aim of *Testimony of the Beloved Disciple* is to challenge what Bauckham labels “the dominant approach” of Johannine study since the 1970s, inaugurated by J. Louis Martyn’s study *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968) and significantly advanced by Raymond Brown throughout the 1970s. The opening pages of the introductory chapter outline seven characteristics of this approach: (1) a neglect of patristic voices; (2) reading John as theology, not history; (3) a confidence in source criticism; (4) seeing a Johannine community as central to the Gospel’s formation and reception; (5) viewing the Gospel as having emerged from this Johannine community; (6) an impulse to reconstruct this community’s history through accounts in the Gospel; and (7) a belief that the Johannine community was predominantly Jewish. Bauckham divulges that in recent years (due largely to the influence of Martin Hengel) he has been “abandoning one by one all of these elements of the dominant approach” (p. 12). He then crystallizes his own perspective: “the Gospel is an integral whole, including both the prologue and the epilogue, and was designed as such by a single author. I have returned to the traditional view that the distinctiveness of the Gospel . . . is due . . . primarily to a theologically creative and literarily skilled author” (p. 12). Insisting that the Gospel’s genre be put front and center of any serious study, Bauckham writes that “what most Johannine scholars have notably failed to take seriously is that *the Gospel’s theology itself requires a concern for history*” (p. 14; italics his). The remainder of the introduction summarizes what is to follow in the chapters ahead, divided into discussions of the Gospel’s authorship (chaps. 2–3), genre (chap. 4), audience (chaps. 5–6), historicity (chaps. 7–10), theology (chaps. 11–12), and literary unity (chap. 13).

Bauckham first examines external and internal evidence to suggest that the author of the Fourth Gospel—the “beloved disciple”—is not John son of Zebedee but John the Elder, a Jerusalem disciple (though not one of the Twelve), who served as high priest for a short time. Chapter 2 inspects external evidence from Polycrates and Papias, while chapter 3 turns to internal evidence, commending an understanding of the beloved disciple not as ideal disciple but as ideal witness. Challenging the common maxim that John’s Gospel is not history but theology, chapter 4 observes traits of ancient historiography to argue that this Gospel, on the contrary, would “have looked considerably more like historiography than the Synoptic Gospels would” to a competent first-century reader (p. 112). Chapter 5 upends another alleged misunderstanding of the Fourth Gospel, fueled largely by J. Louis Martyn: that it was produced by and for a specific sectarian community, unlike the more broadly oriented Synoptic Gospels. Bauckham argues that John is actually more universal in scope than the Synoptics, writing not only to the entire Christian community but also to unbelievers. Chapter 6 adds that John wrote to Jews and that his light/darkness imagery ought to be rooted not in a similar dualism found in the Dead Sea Scrolls but in the Hebrew Bible.

Moving to issues of historicity, chapter 7 proposes that Nicodemus was a member of the wealthy Gurion family, independently referenced by both Josephus and rabbinic sources, both of which are meticulously analyzed. In chapter 8 Bauckham asserts the historicity of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus in John 11–12, appropriating Gerd Thiessen’s “protective anonymity” hypothesis to explain the absence of this striking miracle story from the Synoptics. Based on internal evidence, comparisons with the Synoptics, and patristic sources, chapter 9 defends the historicity of Jesus’ washing his disciples’ feet

in John 13—a study that provides much food for thought for any pastor preparing to teach on this passage. Chapter 10 demonstrates that “John knew pre-70 Jewish Palestine accurately and intended to set his story of Jesus plausibly within that chronological and geographical context” in order to argue that this Gospel is more reliable than the Synoptics not only historically but also in its portrait of first-century Jewish messianic expectations (p. 238).

Transitioning from history to theology, chapter 11 develops some elements of Bauckham’s study *God Crucified* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), identifying seven signs, seven “I am” predicate statements, and seven “I am” absolute statements. Bauckham proposes Deuteronomy 32 and Isaiah 40–55 as the soil from which these “I am” statements have sprouted (rather than Exod 3:14). Chapter 12 explores the holiness of Jesus in this Gospel and how that holiness extends to his disciples in light of Jewish understandings of sanctity and purity. Chapter 13, finally, tackles the perplexing issue of the significance of the 153 fish in John 21, suggesting that this number can be seen on multiple levels to affirm this final chapter as part of the original Gospel.

Many strengths of this work could be mentioned. First, Bauckham conscientiously places himself under the text, submitting his own thinking to the aims and theological substructures of the biblical writer. This willingness to observe and receive the biblical text rather than look through and reconstruct it, echoing one of the core convictions of Adolf Schlatter a century ago, is a methodological word-in-season to contemporary biblical studies. Second, these studies consistently exhibit the extensive grasp of both primary and secondary material that we have come to expect from Bauckham (without flaunting this knowledge in a wearisome or counterproductive way). Third, in his analysis and explication of the primary sources, particularly the patristic material, Bauckham expertly combines meticulous care with unimpeachable good sense, making his proposals very convincing indeed. Fourth, he writes in clear and uncluttered prose, rendering his lines of reasoning traceable even to the uninitiated.

The cumulative value of this collection of essays makes the identification of weaknesses uncomfortable indeed. Beyond the well-known identity of the author of the Fourth Gospel as John the Elder, a thesis few in Johannine scholarship appear to be swallowing, I will mention just one. Despite a valiant attempt to alleviate such concerns (pp. 283–84), Bauckham’s proposals regarding numerical significances at times stretch the credulity of even the most open-minded reader. Noting, for instance, that the Hebrew numerical value of “John” is 129, he writes: “The 129th word from the beginning of the Gospel’s epilogue is the first word (ὁ) of the phrase ‘that disciple whom Jesus loved’ . . . which is the first reference to the beloved disciple in the epilogue (21:7). By means of the techniques of word-counting and gematria the name of the beloved disciple has been cryptically encoded in the narrative” (p. 282). The breathtaking discernment such a claim requires of the reader (or worse, hearer!) of John’s Gospel may indicate eisegetical ingenuity more than exegetical insight.

The bottom line, however, is that the collective force of these thirteen studies paves a way forward in Johannine scholarship. Bauckham’s work navigates the Scylla of pre-1970 scholarship, which frequently ascribed the source of John’s theological categories to Greek thought (Dodd, Bultmann), and the Charybdis of post-1970 thinking, which often envisioned the Fourth Gospel as generated by and written to a small sectarian movement cut off from the Jewish synagogue (Martyn, Brown), all the while blowing the trumpet for a theologically informed yet historically trustworthy reading of the Fourth Gospel. If Bauckham’s thoughtful exploration receives what it deserves, it will be widely read and appreciated.

Dane Ortlund  
Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL

*Challenging Perspectives on the Gospel of John*. Edited by John Lierman. WUNT 2/219. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006, xii + 369 pp., €69.00 paper.

In the field of Johannine studies, as is the case in all areas of scholarly endeavor, there has always been on the one hand mainstream scholarship that represents the “established” perspective on the way things are and on the other hand those dissenting voices that raise questions and doubts about that so-called “established” perspective. For example, Walter Bauer and German liberal scholarship in the early 1900s had their conservative nemesis in the person of Adolf Schlatter, who dared to give his book on the life of Jesus the provocative title *The History of Christ (Die Geschichte des Christus)*, thus intentionally challenging the “established” perspective represented by Bauer and others that there was a sharp distinction between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith. Prior to the Bauer and Schlatter debate, in the 1800s, D. F. Strauss and Karl Gottlieb, who represented a mainstream continental theology that questioned the traditional authorship of the Gospel of John, had as their nemesis the great conservative British scholar B. F. Westcott. Westcott developed a line of argument in favor of the traditional authorship of John’s Gospel—an argument that still carries much weight today and continues to be referenced in recent commentaries. In our own era, J. Louis Martyn’s Johannine community hypothesis (and later variations of it) was embraced by mainstream scholarship to the point that recent authors like A. D. Callahan (*A Love Supreme: A History of the Johannine Tradition* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005]) simply assume its validity. Just fifteen years ago, Martyn’s hypothesis was dubbed by Robert Kysar as the “lasting contribution” of 20th-century Johannine scholarship. The process of undermining the Johannine community hypothesis, however, began as early as 1993 with Martin Hengel (*Die johanneische Frage* [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1993]) and continues to this day with Richard Bauckham (*The Testimony of the Beloved Disciple* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007]).

It is in the same counterpoint tradition as Schlatter, Westcott, Hengel, and Bauckham that John Lierman has edited *Challenging Perspectives on the Gospel of John*. This volume, which brings together a collection of essays presented originally at a conference in 2006 at Tyndale House (Cambridge, England) under the direction of the International Center for Biblical Research, offers significant challenges to some of the dominant contemporary approaches to the study of the Gospel of John.

The first essay by David Wenham, entitled “Paradigms and Possibilities in the Study of John’s Gospel,” serves not only as an introduction for this volume but also gives an overview of specific areas of Johannine research that merit exploration—areas that revisit old questions and explore new approaches. Wenham’s essay serves as an insightful way forward for those interested in challenging the current assumptions of the research of the Fourth Gospel.

The essays that follow Wenham’s fall into one of three categories. The first category includes essays that take on mainstream perspectives on the historical setting and social context of the Gospel of John (essays by Peter Ensor, Richard Bauckham, Andreas Köstenberger, Andrew Gregory, and Charles Hill). Peter Ensor’s essay, “The Johannine Sayings of Jesus and the Question of Authenticity,” addresses at least one mainstream assumption employed in the quest for the historical Jesus by scholars such as Albert Schweitzer and more recently by Gerd Lüdemann (*Jesus after 2000 Years: What He Really Said and Did* [Amherst: Prometheus, 2000]), that the sayings of Jesus in John’s Gospel cannot be historical because they are much different from the typical form of Jesus’ sayings in the much more historically authentic Synoptic Gospels. Ensor seeks to develop a more sophisticated understanding of the concept of authenticity than that often suggested by mainstream scholarship. At the end of the day, he suggests that a more nuanced understanding of authenticity, which allows for some stylistic license

on the part of the author of John's Gospel, results in many similarities between the sayings of Jesus in John and the sayings of Jesus in the Synoptics.

Andreas Köstenberger's essay "The Destruction of the Second Temple and the Composition of the Fourth Gospel" is quite simply a *tour de force*, which presents what ought to be received as perhaps the most clearly articulated alternative to the Johannine community hypothesis. After critiquing the Johannine community hypothesis in a section of the essay entitled "The Johannine Community Hypothesis Undermined," Köstenberger argues that the primary motivation for the writing of John's Gospel is the destruction of the temple in AD 70. Köstenberger highlights aspects of John that offer a Jewish-Christian response to the destruction of the temple. This really is quite a forceful study, drawing from, among other sources, Paul M. Hoskins's *Jesus as the Fulfillment of the Temple in the Gospel of John* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2006).

In addition to the essays by Andrew Gregory ("The Third Gospel? The Relationship of John and Luke Reconsidered") and Charles Hill ("The Fourth Gospel in the Second Century: The Myth of Orthodox Johannophobia"), Richard Bauckham's essay ("Messianism according to the Gospel of John") continues the process of eroding the Johannine community hypothesis by comparing the messianic expectations uttered by the crowds and others in John with those found in the extant pre-AD 70 extrabiblical literature. He argues that the references to Messiah in John reflect a sophisticated knowledge of pre-AD 70 Jewish-Palestine messianic expectations—a feature of John "all too neglected by those many scholars who read it as reflecting the situation of the 'Johannine community' in relation to its local synagogue at the end of the first century" (p. 35).

The second category of essays includes those that explore narrative approaches to the Gospel of John (essays by Mark Stibbe, Steve Motyer, Gary Burge, and Gabi Renz). Of particular interest, not only for its content but also for its creative flair, is Burge's essay "Revelation and Discipleship in St. John's Gospel." In this essay Burge explores the relationship between the understanding that happens with the giving of the Spirit and the misunderstanding of the mystery of what Jesus does and who he is. At the end of the day, Burge concludes that revelation (or what he calls "prophetic illumination") forms a central feature of discipleship in the Fourth Gospel. The concluding section of the essay, titled "Theological Implications," includes a humorous discussion of the concept of multivalent meanings set in the context of a theatrical presentation. The performance itself is a dramatic discussion between Hippolytus, Origen, Valentinus, Montanus, Anthony Thiselton, and Kevin Vanhoozer. Suffice it to say that this closing section is itself well worth the read.

The essays in the third category of the volume propose readings of the Gospel of John through the lens of a dominant theme (essays by John Lierman and Bill Salier). Lierman's essay, entitled "The Mosaic Pattern of John's Christology," is a summary of his published doctoral dissertation *The New Testament Moses: Christian Perceptions of Moses and Israel in the Setting of Jewish Religion* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004). He explores the significance of Moses in first-century Judaism and relates that to the strategy of the writer of the Fourth Gospel. The point that Lierman makes is that Moses Christology in the Gospel of John is much deeper than simply Jesus as the prophet like Moses. Moses is appraised in first-century Judaism not only as the prophet, but also in other categories—categories that the writer of John's Gospel applies to Jesus to demonstrate that Jesus is greater than Moses. These other categories, when paralleled with John's presentation of Jesus, produce a much richer Moses Christology than what is typically thought.

Lierman and the contributors are to be commended for this volume, which will serve as a resource to more conservatively minded students of the Gospel of John as they seek to engage the positions held within the mainstream of Johannine scholarship. Quite simply, those who have relished the works of Schlatter and Westcott in previous eras,

as well as Hengel and Bauckham in our own, will appreciate the contribution of this volume, as it indeed challenges various perspectives held by mainstream Johannine scholarship.

C. Scott Shidemantle  
Geneva College, Beaver Falls, PA

*The Sheep of the Fold: The Audience and Origin of the Gospel of John.* By Edward W. Klink III. SNTSMS 141. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, xvi + 316 pp., \$101.00.

The book is a revised doctoral thesis written at the University of St. Andrews, Scotland and supervised by Richard Bauckham. The research was done in 2002–2005. Klink is assistant professor of New Testament at Talbot School of Theology. In short, Klink argues that the “community” concept in the historical depiction of the Gospel audiences should be abandoned, using John’s Gospel as “test case.” In this he is seeking to assist in “taking off the shackles” (i.e. the “Johannine community hypothesis”) that have hindered research in this area in the past. Put succinctly, the contribution of this work to the field can be assessed in this way: “Nice, but not new.”

Klink’s thesis is that John’s Gospel “was never intended for a local, geographical ‘community’ or ‘network of communities,’” in part because there is no external evidence supporting this theory (p. 248; see already Hengel). The “theory of Gospel ‘community’ reconstructions has been carried to its outer limit and has been proven inadequate” (ibid.; see already Bauckham). Klink seeks to demonstrate the validity of his thesis by pursuing four major lines of inquiry: (1) the term “community”; (2) Gospel audiences and patristic exegesis; (3) the nature and function of Gospel genre; and (4) the Gospel’s implied readers. He concludes that the Gospels were written for an “indefinite audience,” not an individual church or network of churches disconnected from the rest of the early Christian movement.

Against J. Louis Martyn, who proposed a “two-level” reading strategy of John’s Gospel (peering beneath the surface of John’s story of Jesus to an alleged “history of the Johannine community”), Klink contends that the Gospel is best read with, and was read by its first readers with, a “realistic”—i.e. “literal”—reading strategy. Against Martyn and Raymond Brown, he argues that the Gospel does not represent stages in the community’s history and that the references to the “expulsion from the synagogue” in John’s Gospel have been overplayed. Against various sectarian readings, Klink asserts mission as a *leitmotif* [sic] (p. 250) in the Gospel. The Gospel assumes a varied readership, from relative novice to experienced reader, and is aimed at different “layers of faith.”

At the end of the book, Klink lists three general conclusions: (1) the “community hypothesis” (using John’s Gospel as a “test case”) does not match the data (including the external evidence) well; (2) reconstructions of a “Johannine community” result in interpretations of the Gospel that are internally inconsistent; (3) most likely, the Gospel’s audience was general; it is historically implausible that the readership moved from an isolated sect to a general audience in a short period of time. For these reasons, the “community” concept in historical reconstructions of the Gospel audiences should be abandoned.

How should Klink’s contribution be assessed? It is fitting to begin with acknowledging some of the strengths of his work (which are considerable). The monograph is clearly written and well argued, and the author’s thesis convincing. The work would make a good orientation aid for students desiring a primer in this area of Johannine studies, were it not for the price of the book (\$101.00). Klink understands the issues well, is con-

versant with the relevant literature (up to a certain date; see below), and is clearly an up-and-coming scholar in the field. Scholarly support for a sane assessment of the data in this (or any) area is always welcome, and for this I, for one, am very grateful. At the same time, as mentioned above, Klink's work is "nice, but not new." A few observations must suffice in this regard.

First, Klink's conclusion is essentially negative: the "Johannine community" hypothesis should be abandoned. He says he wants to assist in "taking off the shackles," and this is commendable, but beyond this he does not offer any major (or even not so major) new paradigms to replace the old. It takes more to dislodge an old paradigm than pointing out its weaknesses. A new, better paradigm must be proposed to take its place, and this Klink has not done (see further below).

Second, Klink's conclusion is not new. Ever since the early 1990s, critiques of the "Johannine community hypothesis" have begun to mount. Martin Hengel's *The Johannine Question* (Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1989) and *Die johanneische Frage* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1993), Andreas Köstenberger's *The Missions of Jesus and the Disciples according to the Fourth Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), Richard Bauckham's *The Gospels for All Christians: Rethinking the Gospel Audiences* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), and others have raised serious concerns. Others, such as Robert Kysar, have renounced the theory they once held. As noted, the views of Martyn, Brown, and others were sufficiently critiqued by others in the past. At the risk of overstatement, Klink is here trying to drive a nail in the coffin of a patient who had already been pronounced dead and given a proper burial by some of the leading scholars in the field.

Third, what little Klink offers in terms of a way forward are citations of Moody Smith, Charles Moule, and C. H. Dodd (pp. 252–55). Are these the "fresh avenues of research" that are now possible (p. 251)? This sounds more like an advocacy of going back to the old, "pre-Johannine community reading" than a bold and daring advance into the future of Johannine studies. The only more recent contribution Klink mentions is Steven Motyer's work *Your Father the Devil?* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 1997), and even it is 10 years old by now.

Fourth, one notes the conspicuous absence of references to the destruction of the temple as a possible occasion for writing the Fourth Gospel. This fails to consider a whole spate of recent monographs on the subject by Mary Coloe (2001), Alan Kerr (2002), Paul Hoskyns (2006), Stephen Um (2006), Andreas Köstenberger (2004, 2006), and others. To be fair, in some cases these writings were published after Klink's research was completed (though in most cases the material was available, at least in form of dissertations published or papers given). In any case, the field has moved on considerably in the past 10 years (see the volume edited by Tom Thatcher, *What We Have Heard from the Beginning* [Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2007]), and Klink's work is hardly cutting-edge.

Fifth, and finally, there is one other area that is not addressed by Klink: the author of John's Gospel. What about the role of the Gospel's author in determining the Gospel audience? Is this question completely irrelevant, as the topic's conspicuous absence from Klink's work seems to suggest? This is unlikely. An exclusive focus on implied readers, the Gospel genre, and internal textual clues cuts off the third leg of the three-legged stool of interpretation (author, text, and reader; see, e.g., Grant Osborne's *The Hermeneutical Spiral* [Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1991], especially App. 1 and 2). Is interpreting a given document such as John's Gospel really all about identifying its implied readers? If there were no author, there would be no text, and without a text, no readers. Hermeneutically, I question whether the author is as dispensable to resolving the question of the Gospel audience as Klink seems to suggest.

In conclusion, while I agree that the "Johannine community hypothesis" in its various permutations has serious defects, I believe the way forward is not by positing

rather nebulous general alternatives but by providing more plausible *historical* reconstructions that, while tentative and of necessity conjectural (is this not the nature of scholarship?), offer concrete alternatives to the Martyn-Brown-style “Johannine community hypothesis.” (For my part, I have attempted to do this in an essay in *Challenging Perspectives on the Gospel of John* [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006], which is reviewed elsewhere in this issue of the *Journal*.)

The above points of critique should not detract from the fact that I find myself in sympathy, even large agreement, with Klink’s work. In fact, I am very grateful for his sound assessment of the “Johannine community hypothesis.” I also look forward to future contributions to the field by this promising scholar that move beyond what may be inevitable in dissertations: a certain captivity to the constraints of such a work, which perhaps makes it unrealistic to expect a seminal contribution from someone seeking to earn a terminal degree in a given field of study.

Andreas J. Köstenberger

Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, NC

*The Letters to Timothy and Titus.* By Philip H. Towner. NICNT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006, xlviii + 885 pp., \$52.00.

A flurry of major commentaries have been published in recent years on 1, 2 Timothy, and Titus (e.g. those by I. H. Marshall [1999], J. D. Quinn and W. C. Wacker [2000], W. D. Mounce [2000], L. T. Johnson [2001], and R. F. Collins [2002]; see also A. J. Köstenberger in the revised *Expositor’s Bible Commentary* [2006]). Readers might wonder why another one needs to be added to the mix. Philip Towner provides us with an answer for this volume from a convergence of two histories: (1) he was asked to fill the historical gap that existed in the NICNT series; and (2) his extended personal history with these letters convinced him that more needed to be said.

Towner, Director of Translation Services for the United Bible Societies, is certainly well qualified to write this massive volume for the NICNT. In many respects, this book is his *magnum opus*, culminating many years of study on 1, 2 Timothy, and Titus. His most notable previous works on these letters include a revision of his doctoral dissertation, *The Goal of Our Instruction* (JSNTSup 34; Sheffield: JSOT, 1989) and a collaborative effort with I. H. Marshall on his volume in the ICC series (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1999). Towner has also written a smaller commentary (IVPNTC; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1994) and several articles on various subjects in these epistles.

The commentary follows a similar format as that found in the other volumes of the NICNT series. The informative 90-page introduction is comprised of four major sections: (1) Introduction and Agenda; (2) The Letters to Timothy and Titus in the Earliest Centuries; (3) Readings of the Letters in the Modern Era; and (4) Reading the Letters in Historical Context. The commentary also contains six helpful excursuses: (1) Conscience in the Letters to Timothy and Titus; (2) The “Trustworthy Saying” Formula; (3) Godliness and Respectability; (4) Self-Control; (5) Good Deeds; and (6) The Epiphany Concept.

Towner argues strongly and helpfully that 1, 2 Timothy, and Titus should be viewed as individual compositions rather than as an “indivisible unit” (p. 89; cf. also pp. 2–3). Following the lead of L. T. Johnson and R. Fuchs, he urges us to say “farewell” to the term “Pastoral Epistles.” He says that this label, probably first applied to all three letters by Anton in 1753, has forced them “into a restrictive interrelationship that they were never intended to have” (p. 88). Thus, he insists—rightly, I think—that the letters to Timothy and Titus should each be interpreted within their respective contexts, and Towner “practices what he preaches” throughout his commentary. When the need exists

to refer to the letters in another way as a cluster to distinguish them from Paul's other letters, he uses the designation "letters to coworkers" (p. 88).

Towner maintains that Paul is the author of these letters "however much or little others contributed to their messages and composition" (p. 88). He remains open on the process of their authorship. Given the complexity of the authorial process in the Pauline corpus, he believes there is "nothing to be gained by insisting on a particular theory" for how these letters were composed (p. 88). He dismisses theories of pseudonymity for these letters largely as assumptions, but with a little uneasiness finds I. H. Marshall's theory of "allonymity" somewhat attractive, noting that the jury continues to deliberate. My own deliberation on allonymity is that the proverbial jury will likely come back with the [Scottish] verdict: "not proved" (see my *Pseudonymity, the New Testament, and Deception* [Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2004]).

For Towner, the theological perspective of 1 Timothy is formed by the idea of *oikonomia theou*, "a divinely organized pattern of life—God's ordering of reality." Timothy's task is to communicate this concept in the church at Ephesus. This task will involve correcting opponents, instructing in doctrine, and adjudicating in matters of administration and church leadership, "all in the effort to ensure that this church will effectively be God's household in society" (p. 70). In short, the message/theme of the letter is "ordering and organizing God's household," the *oikos theou*.

In Titus, Paul's coworker is to remain on Crete to complete the work already started through the beginning stages of church planting and to correct certain problems that have arisen. According to Towner, the key to the theological strategy of Titus "lies in recognizing the opening reference to 'the God who does not lie' (*ho apseudēs theos*; 1:2) as a polemical challenge to the Cretan story" (p. 74). From there Paul identifies the true God as the source of eternal life for the gospel he proclaims, whereas he rejects the compromised values of Cretan culture. In response to this polemical letter that denounces the deception of Cretan life and religion, the church should embody God's grace in such a way that its authentic Christian existence, from household to community, is markedly different from the depraved Cretan culture.

Towner rightly notes that the theological perspective of 2 Timothy concerns suffering and succession (p. 79). Referring to his experiences and those of Jesus, Paul provides a model of suffering and vindication to set before Timothy. As Paul followed Jesus into suffering as a result of faithfulness to the gospel, so Timothy must now join with Paul in suffering for the gospel, persevering in ministry, keeping the pattern of sound words, and guarding the gospel.

In a commentary of this size, I obviously cannot review Towner's take on every issue or verse. Thus, in what follows I will address within the space of this review some of those things that seem to concern people the most.

Towner takes an egalitarian approach regarding women in ministry, disagreeing with both the hierarchical (complementarian) and feminist interpretations. After considering the many different issues of the interpretative landscape, he argues that women played an increasingly public role in Paul's churches (p. 200) and maintains that a "fundamental equality principle," represented by verses like Gal 3:28, cannot be ignored in this debate.

Towner's treatment of passages that deal with women, especially 1 Tim 2:9–15, is heavily influenced by Bruce Winter's study on "new Roman women" (*Roman Wives, Roman Widows: The Appearance of New Women and the Pauline Communities* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003]), who "flouted traditional values governing adornment and dress and sexual impropriety" (p. 196). Christian women were also drawn into this movement that transgressed traditional dress codes and respectability and therefore endangered the church's reputation (p. 196). Thus, one should note that background when interpreting this passage; 1 Tim 2:8–9 especially comes into play.

The heresy in Ephesus also influenced Paul's restriction in 1 Timothy 2. However, following S. M. Baugh's research, Towner does not connect it to women who were

uniquely part of a feminist movement that was grounded in the Ephesian Artemis cult and gave rise to a local group addressed by Paul in 1 Timothy 2 (p. 195). He thinks the false teaching in Ephesus may possibly have had an “overly enthusiastic eschatology” (similar to 1 Corinthians) underlying it (p. 197), but finds no certain evidence that the women were actually teaching the heresy. Towner notes, however, that the heresy’s presence, its effect on marriage (1 Tim 4:3) and the value of bearing children (1 Tim 2:15), its misunderstanding of OT stories (1 Tim 1:4; 2:13–15a; 4:1–5), together with the attraction of some wealthy women and young widows to the “new women” paradigm, affected the manner in which Paul addressed women in this text (p. 198).

On the two infinitives in 1 Tim 2:12, Towner agrees with Andreas Köstenberger’s analysis of the grammar and syntax, but he takes issue with his assessment that Paul denied to women two positive activities: “to teach” and “to exercise authority over a man.” He specifically disagrees that “to teach” has a positive meaning. For Towner the context suggests that if “Paul is addressing women who have been involved in teaching the heresy,” then “teaching” has to carry a negative meaning (p. 223–24); likewise, “if the problem is that they have assumed the role inappropriately (whatever they teach) out of a desire to dominate in the public meeting (or out of a desire to enact gospel freedom), their assumption of the teaching role is under a negative evaluation” (p. 224).

On 1 Tim 2:15, the difficult “saved through childbirth” verse, Towner thinks that “Paul urges these Christian wives to re-engage fully in the respectable role of the mother, in rejection of heretical and secular trends, through which she may ‘work out her salvation’” (p. 235).

In light of all of the above, for Towner these verses do not restrict women in ministry, but rather they address a specific group of wealthy women (probably wives) who were problematic for the church.

On leadership positions within the church, Towner holds that the overseers and elders are separate figures in 1 Timothy, whereas both terms interchangeably describe one person in Titus 1:5–7 (p. 680). To distinguish the terms as interchangeable in Titus but not in 1 Timothy seems a little inconsistent to me, but then I am probably still thinking of 1, 2 Timothy and Titus as the Pastoral Epistles. Here I would have liked to have seen some interaction with Ben Merkle’s recent research on this subject (*The Elder and Overseer: One Office in the Early Church* [New York: Peter Lang, 2003]), but a commentator simply cannot do everything nor be expected to do so.

Towner argues that the women in 1 Tim 3:11 are not deacons’ wives but female deacons (p. 265; cf. also p. 265, n. 28, in which he laments the retreat of the TNIV edition of 2001 to the ambiguous “women” from the bolder reading found in the TNIV edition of 2001: “women who are deacons”). However, unlike the males he believes that the duties and authority of women deacons, some of whom had participated in the false teaching, were somewhat curtailed, at least temporarily (p. 266).

I am grateful to Towner for writing this useful scholarly volume on the letters to Timothy and Titus. They deserve extensive treatment, and he gives them their due. Given the massive amount of technical discussion in this commentary, it is still a fairly easy commentary to read. Towner also thoughtfully handles several controversial issues well. He endeavors to treat fairly those viewpoints that differ from his own. His work should find a place next to the other recent standard evangelical commentaries on Paul’s letters to his coworkers—particularly those of Marshall and Mounce. Those who hold to an egalitarian interpretation of 1 Tim 2:9–15 will probably buy this commentary, whereas those who hold to a complementarian viewpoint will likely be reluctant to do so. Though I certainly do not agree with Towner on every issue, I nonetheless recommend his commentary. There is much to commend it (in my mind, especially his attention to the *oikonomia theou/oikos theou* concepts in 1 Timothy), but, if for nothing else, purchase it for the vast wealth of material it contains. If you are a specialist or are going

to do serious study on these letters, then you will need to interact with his work. The book will undoubtedly serve research students and scholars well for many years to come.

Terry L. Wilder  
B & H Publishing Group, Nashville, TN

*2 Peter and Jude*. By Ruth Anne Reese. Two Horizons New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007, x + 234 pp., \$20.00 paper.

That this is a fresh approach to writing a commentary can be seen in the structure of the book. The 16-page general introduction focuses on interpretive method more than on anything else. Then comes Jude (98 pages) with a short introduction, followed by commentary, and then a triple section on theology: theological themes in Jude, Jude's theology in the context of the canon, and Jude's theology in contemporary context. This is repeated for 2 Peter (106 pages), although in this case there is curiously enough no section on 2 Peter in contemporary context. The eight-page bibliography is sufficient and appears relatively current on 2 Peter and Jude up through 2001, although theological works continue to 2003, showing the emphasis of this commentary.

The general introduction is mainly a defense of the author's method, that is, a discussion of theological method and the importance of reading a text in multiple contexts. This will make some readers uncomfortable, because all they want to know is "what the Bible says." Others will be thankful for Reese's succinct discussion of method, which explains why there is no "objective" view of the text and why multiple inputs are needed in the interpretive process. Helpful as this section is, it will be difficult for a teacher to photocopy and hand to people struggling with the issue, since it is studded with the jargon of contemporary theological and philosophical discussion that enables her to condense her presentation but also makes it more opaque for the uninitiated.

The commentary text itself is highly readable. Furthermore, all Greek is both transliterated and translated in parentheses after the term. The text moves along smoothly without the common interruptions found in commentaries such as references to background material. Some references are there, although not in the same copious amounts as in many commentaries, but they are placed in the footnotes so as not to interrupt the flow of the text. Reese does use one interesting convention in that she refers to the teachers whom Jude opposes (but not those 2 Peter opposes) as "the Others" and to the addressees as "the Beloved," using the nomenclature of Jude (Jude's terminology for the Others is usually "they" and "them," but this would be too confusing) rather than foreign terminology such as "false teachers." This convention plays into her theological discussion, both the canonical one and the contemporary one, in which she notices: (1) that in Jude nothing is supposed to be done to "the Others" and a door is held open for repentance; and (2) that Jude unlike contemporary people does not define "the Beloved" and "the Others" over against each other but both in relationship to God. In other words, although commentary and the discussion of theological themes are separate, Reese is apparently aware of theology while providing commentary and thus the two sections fit together.

Reese finds six theological themes in Jude, which she then discusses in the context of the whole canon. While one might argue that it would have been possible to do this theme by theme rather than separating the canonical discussion from the discovery of the theme in Jude, it is clear that each of the themes does in fact exist and that she has covered the major issues in Jude. What I did not notice was a discussion of what Jude indicates about canon, in particular his use of 1 Enoch 1:9 as his sole citation of

a written document. Nor does she note that Jude exclusively reads canonical narratives through the lens of Second Temple literature and traditions. Should we, then, impose our canon on Jude and read him within that context? Or should his canonical context be the context of the literature and traditions with which he shows himself to be familiar? This would in itself be an interesting methodological or even theological question.

Jude was the focus of Reese's previous monograph, and this becomes apparent when one looks at the 2 Peter section. Unlike the Jude section, this *does* have an introduction, the bulk of which is used to defend the possibility that 2 Peter could have been written by Simon Peter, one of Jesus' closest followers. This is surely the weakest part of the book, since (1) she examines the case for and against pseudepigraphy in terms of generalities rather than engaging with the data; and (2) she does not seem to understand the force of the argument about the degree of difference with 1 Peter—it is not about topic or even literary style but about a very different usage of the Hebrew Scriptures and engagement with Hellenistic culture. In the end, while stating her preference for an early date for Jude and 2 Peter, she allows that a decision for pseudepigraphy is possible. She then opts for what she calls a canonical approach, which is more an approach to reading than a historical statement.

Here are a few thoughts on some of the key passages in the 2 Peter section. Reese exegetes the critical passage of 1:3–11 from a Christological perspective, without noting the strong Hellenistic language that evil is connected to desire (although desire is discussed apart from its Hellenistic background in the section on the "Theology of 2 Peter in the Context of the Canon"), that freedom from this is what knowledge of Jesus provides, and that the goal is participation in the divine nature. While she does note that six of the nine virtues in the virtue list are Hellenistic and common in Stoicism, her basic concern is that Jesus gives the believer the power to live an ethical life and that this does not have anything to do with earning salvation, despite the fact that the "false teachers" who do not have these virtues and are entrapped in desire are going to "destruction." When it comes to the passage in 3:10–16, it looks like Reese tries to have two different meanings of *stoicheia*, since, while noting that the text does not say that the earth will be destroyed, she also argues that *stoicheia* means *both* the heavens/heavenly bodies *and* the "foundational elements" of the earth. That traditional understanding leads to her theological explanation of eschatology in the theological themes section.

This commentary is indeed a theological reading of the text. Sometimes this reading is informed by exegetical argument, sometimes not. While intertextuality with Second Temple literature is cited, one does not get the sense that these books, and especially 2 Peter, are interacting with that culture—for instance, the possibility that 2 Peter is interacting with Epicureanism (as in Jerome Neyrey's commentary) is not discussed. If one wants a very readable, American evangelical interpretation of Jude and 2 Peter that has significant interaction with theological literature, this is the book to use, although one must read both the theological and the exegetical sections to get the full interaction with the text. If one wants a sociologically informed, historically sensitive commentary on 2 Peter and Jude, one would do better to look elsewhere.

Peter H. Davids  
St. Stephen's University, St. Stephen, NB

*New Testament Theology: Exploring Diversity and Unity.* By Frank J. Matera. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007, xxxi + 485 pp., \$49.95 paper.

In some respects and quarters, NT scholarship continues in the disintegrative directions encouraged by postmodern pluralisms. Yet offsetting this centrifugal impulse is

a centripetal drive affirming NT unity. Frank Matera's study adds to a series of works on NT theology that find more unity than not in the canonical NT corpus. Like-minded scholars include Peter Balla (*Challenges to New Testament Theology* [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997]), Peter Stuhlmacher (*Biblische Theologie des Neuen Testaments* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992, 1999]), François Vouga (*Une théologie du Nouveau Testament* [Genève: Labor et Fides, 2001]), Ferdinand Hahn (*Theologie des Neuen Testaments* [2 vols.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002]), Howard Marshall (*New Testament Theology* [Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2004]), and Frank Thielman (*Theology of the New Testament* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005]). Matera makes a solid and insightful contribution to this growing body of scholarly conviction.

He has already published related monographs: *New Testament Christology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1999) and *New Testament Ethics* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1999). (These books do not even appear in the bibliography of the volume under review, a striking contrast to some works whose authors most frequently quote themselves.) One senses that these subjects are slightly less prominent in the work at hand than they deserve to be, perhaps because the author senses he has already addressed these subtopics adequately elsewhere.

Matera's *New Testament Theology* unfolds in six parts. A substantial introduction (pp. xix–xxxi) surveys the history of the discipline starting with Gabler and justifies Matera's own approach, which would fall in the general category of "historical-positive," using L. Goppelt's taxonomy. While far from devotional in tone or aim, the author begins with "the hope to present readers with a way to see the whole picture so that they may stand in awe and wonder before the multifaceted mystery that is God in Christ" (p. xxxi). One could wish that the last "that" were "who," but this still marks progress in a discipline whose ideals have historically tempted authors to theological aridity if not sterility.

The meat of the work consists of four parts: The Synoptic Tradition (97 pp.), The Pauline Tradition (161 pp.), The Johannine Tradition (74 pp.), and Other Voices (90 pp.). The chapter on the Book of Revelation (23 pp.) is placed within Other Voices; if Matera had viewed it as Johannine, his section on The Johannine Tradition would equal The Synoptic Tradition in length. Within each of the four parts, Matera treats longer books in separate chapters, viewing each book from the angle of a prominent theme. So in part 1, he analyzes Mark as "A Theology of the Kingdom of God," Matthew as "A Theology of the Righteousness of the Kingdom," and Luke-Acts as "A Theology of the Salvation the Kingdom Brings."

The inclusion of Luke-Acts within "The Synoptic Tradition" is an interesting innovation, since no one thinks of Acts as a Gospel. However, within Matera's organization this has the advantage of forming a bridge from the Synoptic Jesus to Paul, whose writings are treated in the next section. The disadvantage is twofold: (1) this organization mutes the canonical wisdom that the so-called Synoptics (an Enlightenment construct; historically Christians read them as eyewitness testimony, not literary creations) pave the way for testimony to the beloved disciple's Christ; (2) this placement of Acts construes it so aggressively as a theological projection that its historical claims (which Matera frequently finds inaccurate) may be undervalued.

Part 2, treating The Pauline Tradition, covers all thirteen canonical letters. Matera's reflections on the thorny problems surrounding how to conceptualize and present Paul's theology are wise and welcome (pp. 99–103). He opts for a carefully conceived hybrid approach: undoubted Pauline letters (2 Thessalonians excepted; although deuteropauline, it is treated with 1 Thessalonians) are analyzed in their presumed historical order of appearance: 1–2 Thessalonians, 1–2 Corinthians, Galatians and Romans, Philippians, and Philemon. However, in the chapter dealing with Philippians and Philemon, "A Theology from Prison," Colossians and Ephesians are treated, too, a segue mid-chapter from Paul's authentic writings to works that Matera emphasizes are of

uncertain origin, composed in his name. This is followed by “A Theology of the Pauline Tradition: The Pastoral Epistles,” which are also not written by Paul. (Critiques of the flimsy basis for rejecting Paul’s authorship of the Pastorals are not mentioned.) Matera’s section on “The Pauline Tradition” actually incorporates a good deal of non-Pauline material.

Matera concedes that “the pseudonymous nature” of so many letters of Paul “is often disturbing to modern readers” (p. 242), but his perfunctory assurances to dispel unease are a colossal *non-sequitur* if by “modern readers” he means, for example, the burgeoning masses of Bible-believers in developing nations whose faith tends to be, as Philip Jenkins points out (*The New Faces of Christianity: Believing the Bible in the Global South* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006]), robustly bibliocentric. (Disclosure: I write this review from a Middle Eastern educational center in a country where Christians have been and still are bitterly persecuted and derided for clinging to historic convictions regarding the truth and authenticity of biblical writings.)

When Matera writes that the NT’s six pseudo-Pauline documents “introduce new themes that go beyond Paul’s theology, thereby establishing a Pauline tradition” (p. 238), it is not reactionary conservatism (or “an unbending theory of verbal inerrancy”; p. 379 n. 13) but simple common sense (still extant among believers in many lands) to resist such legerdemain. If people not named Paul hijack his name and go “beyond his theology,” it is pure equivocation to call it “Pauline theology.” Precisely if Matera is correct, the “Pauline theology” in a deuterocanonical work warns us against his method: “We ask you, brothers, not to be quickly shaken . . . by . . . a letter seeming to be from us [when it is actually not]” (2 Thess 2:1–2). In the end, the more we view 2 Thessalonians as either Pauline or “Pauline,” the more we are prohibited on those very grounds from viewing what is pseudo-Pauline as secure evidence of the historical figure’s convictions. Matera either should argue that Paul wrote the works in which he finds Pauline theology (which are, in this book, all thirteen of them), or he needs to concede that almost half of these works, by “going beyond” Paul and not coming from his hand, count against the unity of the NT’s Pauline witness. This would have implications for other sections, too, however, and undermine the book’s thesis.

Following the treatment of John’s writings in part 3 under “A Theology of Revelation” (John’s Gospel) and “A Theology of Communion with God” (1 John), part 4 polishes off the NT corpus. Matera’s “Other Views” in part 4 are Hebrews (“A Theology of Priesthood and Sacrifice”), James (“A Theology of Wisdom and Perfection”), the Petrites and Jude (“A Theology for a Time of Affliction and Disorder”), and Revelation (“A Theology of God’s Final Victory over Evil”).

In working carefully through this book, one wishes for three editorial refinements: a Scripture index, an index of modern authors, and a list of publications (see pp. 481–85) that contains all the works cited. As it stands, the only way to discover that, say, William Dalton’s study of 1 Pet 3:18–4:6 (p. 382 n. 17) or Brevard Childs’s *New Testament as Canon* (p. 384 n. 20) is cited is to stumble on mention of them by poring over every page and footnote in the book. In other words, many works are cited that do not appear in the bibliography. On a related problem, I wanted to know quickly where Matera may have cited Adolf Schlatter’s two-volume NT theology (see p. 484 in the bibliography), but without a modern author index this task was impossible. Why publish an academic book without the features that are essential to make it useful for academic readers?

In the quite lengthy Conclusion (pp. 423–80) Matera lays out “the diverse unity of New Testament theology.” This unity has grown considerably from what James Dunn in a classic work of the former generation found (cf. *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament* [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977]). Matera discovers that all four parts of the NT (Synoptics and Acts, Pauline tradition, Johannine tradition, other voices) are in substantial accord regarding (1) humanity in need of salvation; (2) the bringer of

salvation; (3) the community of the sanctified; (4) the moral life of the sanctified; and (5) the hope of the sanctified. Compared to Dunn's "the proclaimer becomes the proclaimed," this is a quantum leap forward.

Overall this is a lean, focused, penetrating, and gracious study. Its final words mark a commendable openness, at least rhetorically, to the subject matter at hand: "The diverse unity of the New Testament is the only unity of the New Testament. It is the only unity that stands in awe before the mystery" (p. 480). One can debate the exegetical and theological angles Matera has adopted at any number of points. Inherent in his historical-positive approach I find three down sides: under-utilization of the OT as an explanatory factor in the thought of NT writers (so that "true Israel" is more apt than "new Israel" to describe their self-understanding; cf. p. 36); theological thinness generally; a tendency to give so-called "critical" theories less rigorous scrutiny than known facts call for.

Yet in much of the NT's message as summarized in "A Final Word" (pp. 478–80), Matera has made a convincing case, often staking out fresh territory for subsequent studies to enter and enlarge.

Robert W. Yarbrough  
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, IL

*Imitating Jesus: An Inclusive Approach to New Testament Ethics.* By Richard A. Burridge. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007, xxi + 490 pp., \$35.00.

Richard A. Burridge is Dean of King's College London, where he serves as Director of New Testament Studies. *Imitating Jesus: An Inclusive Approach to New Testament Ethics* is Burridge's third major publication that relates to NT studies, and specifically the Gospel narratives. He is best known in evangelical circles for his publication *What Are the Gospels? A Comparison with Graeco-Roman Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), in which he argued that the Gospels are not a genre of literature themselves but rather ancient *bioi*, or biographical accounts of the lives of individuals composed largely of their own words and deeds.

*Imitating Jesus* is essentially an exploration of the implications of Burridge's view of the Gospels for NT ethics. In his own words, "This project is therefore an attempt to bring these various fields—of Jesus and the gospels, genre and literary theory, ethics and a concern for the world today—all together" (p. 17). In this text Burridge explains that, in light of understanding the Gospels as ancient biographies, the proper way to do ethics is not to extract ethical teachings from the account of Christ's life, as is commonly done, but rather to imitate the character of Jesus as it is revealed in Scripture. While he does not use the exact phrase in his book, what emerges is essentially a "Christological virtue ethic." In other words, rather than understanding Christian ethics in terms of obedience to the commands of Christ, Burridge views the *sine qua non* of Christian ethics to be the cultivation of a Christ-like spirit. As is implied in the subtitle to this volume, in *Imitating Jesus* Burridge argues that by employing the ethical methodology prescribed in this text one will be led to a more inclusive type of Christianity than is embodied in the lives of many contemporary believers. Indeed, Burridge seems to view this as the greatest contribution of his biographical genre-driven approach to Christian ethics.

Structurally speaking, *Imitating Jesus* is divided up into eight lengthy chapters, each containing a host of subsections. In the first two chapters Burridge basically explains his approach to NT studies and details the picture of the historical Jesus that his approach yields. Readers of Burridge's other works will find little new material here,

other than a helpful summary of Burridge's thought. Chapter 3 contains Burridge's analysis of Paul's theology and ethics. While this chapter is by no means the strongest part of this text, it will prove interesting for those who have read Burridge's other texts on the Gospels and have wondered about his approach to Paul. In short, Burridge concludes that, like the methodology prescribed in this volume, Paul's was an inclusive Christological virtue ethic that rested more upon Jesus' character than upon his commands. Chapters 4 through 7, which constitute the core of *Imitating Jesus*, focus upon the four Gospels and detail Burridge's approach to NT ethics as explained above. As a concluding test case, in chapter 8 Burridge applies his ethical methodology to the topic of apartheid in South Africa.

By way of analysis, *Imitating Jesus* is a fine text in the tradition in which its author stands—that being the theological middle ground. As such, this volume has a few features with which some evangelicals may disagree, such as apparent acceptance of the Q-document hypothesis (pp. 51–53), seeming denial of Pauline authorship of the Pastoral Epistles (p. 91), and univocal espousal of gender egalitarianism (p. 124), among several other expected nuances of those in Burridge's theological tradition. Moreover, other prospective readers may be discouraged by the dense prose of this volume, by the author's overly interactive style (roughly 3–5 footnotes on every page), as well as by Burridge's failure to address explicitly many ethical issues. Yet, these potential shortcomings would probably not be stumbling blocks for readers who are aware of the theological trajectory and style of the author. Indeed, the above quibbles would likely not be seen as shortcomings for the intended audience of *Imitating Jesus*.

However, one potentially significant drawback of *Imitating Jesus* is the marked distinction that Burridge makes between Jesus' character and commands. While Burridge is ostensibly trying to correct the overemphasis that some Christians have placed upon a sterile, rote, deontological approach to ethics, in so doing he comes perilously close to setting up a false dichotomy between character and conduct. To elaborate, in view of passages that teach "as a man thinks in his heart, so is he" (Prov 23:7; cf. Matt 12:34; 15:18), assuming volition and ability, it is clear that one's conduct will necessarily be reflective of one's character. In regard to Jesus, the Gospels record that what the Lord commanded his followers to do was to imitate him. In other words, Jesus' commands were reflective of his being. Therefore, imitating Jesus (to cite the title of this volume) cannot be reduced to keeping Christ's commands *or* to following Christ's example, since they are essentially intertwined. Moreover, to emphasize Jesus' character at the expense of his commands allows for the possibility that the accepted or desired conduct in one's own context can become determinative for defining proper (i.e. "Christ-like") character. Burridge seems to have left himself open to this charge with his call for an inclusive approach to ethics that fits well with twenty-first-century theologically moderate presuppositions.

As mentioned, the above critiques notwithstanding, *Imitating Jesus* is a fine volume in the tradition in which it stands and will prove useful to those interested in the field of NT ethics, regardless of theological persuasion. Additional benefits of this text include a 47-page bibliography with roughly 1,000 entries and three separate lengthy indices (subject, modern author, and Scripture). Moreover, Burridge's analysis of apartheid in South Africa in his concluding chapter is well worth reading, especially for those unfamiliar with the moral discussion that surrounds the topic. While it is doubtful that *Imitating Jesus* will have much of an impact upon those outside of the academy, it is an intellectually stimulating volume that people interested in this field of study would do well to pursue.

David W. Jones  
Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, NC