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Book Reviews

Brian Wintle, ed. *South Asia Bible Commentary: A One-Volume Commentary on the Whole Bible*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2015. 1807 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-0310286868. $44.99.

Home to greater ethno-linguistic and religious diversity than any other region of the world, South Asia has no *single* worldview. In contrast, the Bible had numerous divinely inspired human authors spanning nearly two thousand years, yet it has proven to be both timeless and truly transculturally relevant. These two great realities met in 2015 with the release of the *South Asia Bible Commentary (SABC)*. The brainchild of the Langham Partnership, founded by John Stott and now stewarded by Christopher J. H. Wright, this single-volume commentary has the distinction of being the first written *by* and *for* a diverse South Asian population that makes up nearly one-fifth of the world's population. In his foreword Ajith Fernando notes, "The needs here are so great that we cannot afford the luxury of pure (scholarly) specialization. But this source of frustration has given us an opportunity to sharpen a skill that could well be our distinctive contribution to the world of biblical scholarship: the skill of integration" (p. v). So, while intended for South Asian "pastors, lay preachers and teachers who are being trained," this volume has the potential to shed light on many a western theological blind spot.

Its ninety-two contributors (none expatriate) are all currently living and ministering in one of the eight SAARC countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, or Sri Lanka. However, whenever contributors are gathered from various denominations and worldviews, the theological drift often associated with ecumenism is suspect. Yet one of the ways this volume avoids that potential is by recruiting contributors that affirm and adhere to the Lausanne Covenant. In its own words, "This commentary upholds the divine inspiration and authority of Holy Scripture. Its general aim is to interpret the word of God to speak relevantly to South Asian realities today. It seeks to equip Christian leaders at the grassroots level—pastors, students and lay leaders—who under the guidance of the Holy Spirit can be instrumental in the establishment and nurture of a vibrant church in this region" (p. vi). The commentary is based upon the NIV 2011 and seeks to "explain the meaning of the text, relate the meaning to the context and apply it to wider life and ministry" (p. vi).

One of this reviewer's primary concerns at this valiant attempt of an

applied ethno-hermeneutic is that, though South Asian, no small number of its contributors were trained in a western context. Though these men and women do view the world through distinctively South Asian eyes, their vision has surely been shaped by their wearing, even if only for a season, western educational "lenses." So, one must ask whether the outcome is truly a "South Asian" commentary, or some hybrid that is perhaps more reflective of a blend of eastern and western thinking. Add to this the fact that the volume is published only in English (to my knowledge there has been no attempt to provide translated versions), the scholarship herein has a limited audience. Missiologists note that much of the growth of the church in South Asia is occurring in places and among people that are not English-speaking. And most of the local indigenous leadership in those movements has no formal educational or theological training. It thus remains to be seen whether the insights of a volume like this will make their way into the non-traditional churches that are multiplying throughout the region.

As to structure, each of the Bible's 66 books are prefaced with an Introduction and Outline to aid the reader in understanding context, themes, relevance and preaching units. Those units are then identified within the text of Scripture by the addition of sub-headings. Bold and italic make key words and verses stand out where commentary is being provided. Application points that are often distinctively South Asian are dispersed throughout. Each book then has a list of recommended further reading—all of which is also English-medium. In addition, articles are provided throughout, dealing with distinctively South Asian topics from a biblical perspective. Examples include "Resurrection and Reincarnation," "Pilgrimages and Holy Places," "Gurus and Godmen," "Dalits," "Indigenous Music and Worship," "Caste," "South Asian Responses to Christ," "Christian Bhakti," "God among Other Gods," "Yoga and Meditation," and "Avatar and Incarnation" among others.

A brief survey of key texts shaping the biblical grand meta-narrative yielded interpretations that were both insightful and helpful for my own decades-long ministry in and among South Asians. These exegetical spot-checks also drew attention to some of my own culturally-based theological blind-spots. Perhaps all students of the Bible would benefit from the global community and such diversity of insight, characterized by theologically sound and contextually informed interpretation.

In conclusion, though the *SABC* certainly has several weaknesses, overall it is a helpful volume that is a step in the right direction. For far too long western missionaries have exported their own culturally-biased hermeneutics into the South Asian context, rendering churches there subject to theological paternalism. Though this volume does not eliminate

those biases, it does begin the long arduous process of helping South Asian members of the majority world church to fill a respected seat at the table of biblical scholarship.

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Miles V. Van Pelt, ed. *A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the Old Testament: The Gospel Promised.* Wheaton: Crossway, 2016. 600 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-1433533464. $50.00.

A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the Old Testament, edited by Miles V. Van Pelt, is the collaborative work of 13 contributors who are past and present professors of Reformed Theological Seminary. Van Pelt specifies in the preface that this volume is intended to relate the message of each Old Testament book within the context of the biblical canon in a manner that produces a distinctively "biblical-theological" introduction intended for pastors, teachers, and students.

This volume attempts to provide a self-consciously nuanced introduction to the Old Testament that does not "dismantle" the Bible into disparate parts but rather demonstrates its interconnectedness as the divine "covenantal testimony to the person and work of Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit according to the eternal word of God the Father" (p. 14). As such, the book does not conform to the traditional genre of "special introduction" or "survey." Rather it provides a hybrid, devoting limited attention to critical discussions of authorship, date, and background and more robust discussions of a book's message, theology, and relationship to the New Testament. In addition, this work takes as its point of departure the final form as represented in the Masoretic tradition, following its book divisions (e.g., Ezra-Nehemiah as a single composition) and ordering (i.e., Law, Prophets, and Writings). In doing so, this volume follows a recent trend in introductory texts structured after Jewish canonical orderings, such as *What the Old Testament Authors Really Cared About: A Survey of Jesus' Bible* edited by Jason DeRouchie (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2012), which follows a different ordering found in *Baba Batra* 14b (e.g., Jeremiah and Ezekiel before Isaiah, Ruth before Psalms, and Daniel preceding Esther).

In the introduction, Van Pelt presents a biblical-theological framework for the 24 chapters that follow. He identifies Jesus as the theological center of the Old Testament, contends that the OT ultimately presents the promise of the gospel, and draws upon passages such as Rom 1:1–3 and Luke 24:25–27 in support of this claim. In addition to Christ as the theological center, Van Pelt argues that the kingdom of God provides the

"thematic framework" for the Old Testament (and the New). So, the kingdom of God offers the theological context where one finds Jesus as the theological center of the biblical canon. He contends that the presentation of the kingdom unfolds progressively along the lines of redemptive history, which he suggests is structured covenantally as Covenant, Covenant History, and Covenant Life (i.e., Law, Prophets, and Writings). He sees this structure mirrored in the New Testament by the Gospels, Acts, and the Writings (i.e., the Pauline and catholic epistles).

Each chapter is structured around five foci: Introduction, Background Issues, Structure and Outline, Message and Theology, and Approaching the New Testament. While space does not allow a review of each chapter, a limited survey of a couple of chapters should provide sufficient orientation to the volume.

In chapter 2, John C. Curid introduces the book of Exodus. In line with the ethos of this volume, Curid does not spend much time discussing authorship beyond noting that the "biblical author" employs Egyptian vocabulary and idioms (pp. 70–71). He tackles the message and theology of the book in a topical fashion; discusses the exodus as a *Leitmotif*; presents common plot patterns between Exodus and other ancient Near Eastern literature; and examines various important aspects, such as the plagues, the hardening of Pharaoh's heart, the Decalogue, and the Book of the Covenant.

In chapter 13, Daniel C. Timmer provides an excellent overview of recent research on the shape of the Book of the Twelve and its hermeneutical significance. He concludes that it is best to approach the Twelve not as a redactionally unified whole but rather as a collection of books. He claims "our hermeneutical point of departure must take account of the fundamental fact that each book of the Twelve *is a book*" (p. 327). Like Curid, Timmer provides a thematic presentation of the message and theology of the Twelve as a whole by presenting how a book within the Twelve contributes or develops a theme, such as sin, punishment, repentance, and deliverance.

A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the Old Testament presents at least two weaknesses worth noting. First, the chapters do not integrate explicitly with the biblical-theological vision cast in the introduction. The introduction creates the expectation that the chapters will present the message and theology of each book in relation to its place within the canon of Christian Scripture as conceived by Van Pelt. While some chapters come close to such integration (e.g., Jeremiah), others fall short (e.g., Chronicles). Second, the restricted treatment of standard introductory matters may limit the utility of this text within seminary and graduate courses intended to prepare students not only for the church, but also for engagement with

scholarship beyond the evangelical orb.

Despite these criticisms, Van Pelt and his fellow contributors provide an excellent resource for churches and seminaries. The contributors' commitment to the integrity of the Old Testament as a witness to the person and work of Jesus Christ gives this introduction a distinctively and unashamedly Christian ethos. While perhaps more biblical-theological integration is needed, this volume fills a necessary gap in introductory texts with its biblical-theological nuance.

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T. Desmond Alexander. *Exodus*. Teach the Text Commentary Series, ed. Mark L. Strauss and John H. Walton. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2016, xii + 204 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-0801092145. $17.52.

This commentary by Desmond Alexander is part of a new series, the Teach the Text Commentary Series that is designed to aid pastors who teach consecutively through entire books of the Bible, verse by verse. Each preaching unit in the commentary series is structured around a number of standard sections.

Considering Alexander's treatment of the Book of Exodus, the first major section is referred to as the "Big Idea." This identifies the primary theme that drives both the passage and the exposition. It is followed by a detailed interpretation of the text, including the literary context of the passage, historical background material, and interpretive insights. He explains how each unit fits the flow of the text around it and the individual unit's contribution to the purpose of the book. This is followed by theological insights where Alexander selects a few carefully selected theological insights about the passage. In the section "Teaching the Text," he reviews the main themes and applications of the passage. The final main section is entitled "Illustrating the Text." The illustrations bring alive the passage's key themes and message.

To illustrate the method, I will examine Exod 12:31–13:16 which Alexander entitles, "Some Things Should Never Be Forgotten." Here the big idea is stated as: "*Constantly recalling how God has saved us is vital to nurturing our relationship with him*."

In the "Understanding the Text" section Alexander points out specific details about the departure of the Israelites from Egypt (Exod 12:31–42). These details are immediately followed by several speeches that contain instructions outlining how the Israelites are to commemorate their rescue from Pharaoh's control in the future. These instructions apply to the reenactment of the Passover (12:43–49), the celebration of the Festival of Unleavened Bread (13:3–10), and the setting apart of all firstborn males, both people and animals (13:11–16). Alexander astutely points out that no other event in Israel's history receives this type of comprehensive and unique recognition.

In the next section, "Interpretive Insights," Alexander observes that the reference to the Israelites asking for articles of silver and gold for clothing fulfills God's earlier instructions (Exod 3:22; 11:2) and is the reward the Israelites receive for their years of service as slaves. The section closes with the summation that now after 430 years God's people are leaving Egypt "to the very day." The latter phrase should be understood to mean that the Israelites departed on the day immediately following the Passover night (cf. 12:51). On that very day, Alexander states, they began their journey out of Egypt. In the final section on setting apart all firstborn males (13:11–16), we learn that because of the Passover, all firstborn males belong to God in a unique way. Passover sacrifices should be viewed as ransoming the firstborn males from the power of death.

Alexander then addresses "Theological Insights." Here he points out that since God's instruction regarding the Passover in 12:43–49 highlights the necessity of circumcision, we are reminded that at the heart of the covenant of circumcision was the promise that all nations would be blessed through the royal descendant of Abraham. Thus circumcision is not given as a mark of ethnicity but rather as a sign pointing forward to how God's covenant with the patriarchs would be fully established through Jesus Christ (Gal 3:8–18).

In the section "Teaching the Text" Alexander points out that there is no other event in the Old Testament like the Passover that enjoys such prestige. By emphasizing the importance of circumcision, the Passover regulations connect what happens in Egypt with God's earlier covenant with Abraham. This is noteworthy because God's covenant with the patriarchs concerns the blessing of the nations. As Gen 17:3–4 states, Abraham is to be the father of many nations. Furthermore, Alexander notes the concept of ransom in Exod 13:11–16. By being a substitute, and dying in the place of the Israelite males, the Passover lambs and goats rescue them from death. Thus at the heart of the Passover is the concept of substitution.

This commentary not only utilizes the best of current biblical scholarship but also presents the material in a clear, concise, and easy to follow format. Technical material is kept to a minimum, and the endnotes point the reader to more detailed discussion and additional resources. Alexander's work is a vital source for those who would preach or teach the book of Exodus and is highly recommended. The reader of the commentary

will certainly find information that becomes sermon and teaching material for each text unit of Exodus.

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Francis Landy, Leigh M. Trevaskis, and Bryan D. Bibb (eds.). *Text, Time, and Temple: Literary, Historical and Ritual Studies in Leviticus*. Hebrew Bible Monographs 64. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2015. xi + 239 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-1909697515. $95.00.

The book of Leviticus continues to enjoy an upsurge in scholarly interest, attention that is well served by this latest edition to the Hebrew Bible Monographs Series. Each of the volume's editors—Francis Landy, Leigh M. Trevaskis and Bryan D. Bibb—has contributed a major study on this part of the Hebrew Bible. Thus they are well positioned to collect and present this compendium of essays from leading scholars in the field. Contributors include many well-known names. In addition to the editors, chapters are offered by Michael Hundley, Jonathan Burnside, Israel Knohl, Reinhard Müller, James Watts, Christophe Nihan, Deborah Rooke, Rüdiger Schmitt, Ida Fröhlich and Jeremy Milgrom (son of the late Jacob Milgrom). The thirteen essays collected here, therefore, promise a valuable snapshot of the multifaceted state of contemporary Leviticus scholarship.

On that score, the reader is not disappointed. As the subtitle of the volume indicates, included studies variously pursue literary, historical, and ritual concerns. Needless to say, space prohibits detailed engagement with all thirteen essays. Instead, I draw attention to two representative examples.

The essay by Rooke—"The Blasphemer (Leviticus 24): Gender, Identity and Boundary Construction"—is fascinating and presents a veritable tour de force in methodological adaptability. In approaching this problematic text, Rooke employs insights derived from ideological, feminist, ethnic, and post-colonial concerns. Moreover, the pericope is read in its final form and in light of its wider Pentateuchal context. The exegetical payoff from such a nuanced reading is readily apparent, and Rooke's essay thus provides a helpful model for reading other texts—whether in Leviticus or beyond.

Schmitt's contribution ("Leviticus 14.33–57 as Intellectual Ritual") builds on the anthropological insights of Mary Douglas and others to explore the function of the צרעת ritual. He argues (rightly in my estimation) that the text functions as much more than simply a "handbook for priests." Rather, the stylization of the legislation points to its pedagogical

function. Indeed, he suggests the whole ritual sequence serves a didactic purpose. While not all will agree with the postexilic provenance assumed by Schmitt, the case for a community-shaping intent of the text is well made.

One more general point of interest in relation to the collection is a widespread willingness to make the final-form text of Leviticus the basis of inquiry. In that vein, Burnside highlights a prior tendency in scholarship to "simply avoid . . . the challenge of the final form of Leviticus 20" (p. 42), a tendency his essay seeks to overcome. Nihan pursues a line of inquiry he describes as "largely synchronic" (p. 96). Rooke, similarly, argues that "it is worth considering Leviticus 24 as a whole," even if the pericope "seems to consist of a number of disconnected elements" (p. 158). Müller's rhetorical study of the אני יהוה formula is based on the canonical text. Herein lies perhaps the clearest evidence of how much Leviticus scholarship has shifted from the behind-the-text focus that dominated twentieth-century approaches. While such methods may still be valuably employed, they now sit alongside a plethora of other interpretive options.

There are of course points where readers will disagree with positions being argued, or desire further clarification. For instance, while Knohl presents a case for reading biblical priestly rituals in light of Hittite-Horite traditions based on "deep connections" (p. 66), he doesn't allow for or discuss any "deep differences"—a vital consideration in comparative methodology, as Bryan Babcock has recently argued (*Sacred Ritual: A Study of the West Semitic Ritual Calendars in Leviticus 23 and the Akkadian Text Emar 446* [BBRSup 9; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2014]). There is also a degree of editorial inconsistency across the volume. Chapters are of varying lengths (Knohl's is only seven pages; Nihan's is thirty-seven); some use transliteration (e.g., Nihan), others original languages (e.g., Watts); bibliographies are sometimes provided (e.g., Burnside), at other times not (e.g., Müller).

Such quibbles aside, this remains an important work. Some of that value is signaled in the introductory essay by Bryan Bibb which categorizes contemporary approaches to Leviticus. Bibb comments, "The most interesting work in the current context involves the creative cross-pollination of . . . methods—studies that combine source-critical, anthropological and narrative methods in their approach to Leviticus as a literary work of art" (p. 2). The point is well made. Certainly one of the more tangible benefits of the demise of the Graf-Wellhausen hegemony in biblical studies has been the proliferation of interpretative methods applied to the canonical texts. Thus, while each of the individual authors in this volume operates within his or her own paradigm, the *collective* weight of

the volume is an implicit validation of the multiple approaches required to render a competently "thick" interpretation of Leviticus. For this reason alone, *Text, Time, and Temple* makes a valuable contribution to a field so often divided along methodological lines. One can only hope for further instances of "creative cross-pollination."

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Matthew Newkirk. *Just Deceivers: An Exploration of the Motif of Deception in the Books of Samuel*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2015. xviii + 244 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-1498201179. $31.00.

Mentir pour son avantage à soi-même est imposture, mentir pour l'avantage d'autrui est fraude, mentir pour nuire est calomnie; c'est la pire espèce de mensonge. Mentir sans profit ni préjudice de soi ni d'autrui n'est pas mentir: ce n'est pas mensonge, c'est fiction. (Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Les Rêveries du promeneur solitaire, Quatrieme Promenade)

To put it simply: lying is debased or, worse, delusional. The same conclusion is found of speaking falsely in Exodus (20:16; 23:1–3) and Leviticus (19:11). And yet, some biblical narratives appear to extol and not reprove deception. For example, the fallacious assertion of the midwives that protected the lives of male Hebrew children from Pharaoh is celebrated (Exod 1:19–20). These women are said to fear God and even received the blessing of households (Hebrew: *battim*; Exod 1:21) on account of their reverence (cf. 2 Sam 7:11!). Providing coherence between these ethical norms and the narrative descriptions is the central focus of Matthew Newkirk's book.

The prolegomena differentiates lying and deception. Lying is purposefully communicating a falsehood. Deception occurs "when one causes someone to believe a falsehood" (p. 3). These do not always coincide. Deception need not entail lying if it was inadvertent or unintentional. Lying does not necessarily occasion deception: one may lie with the intent to deceive but be unsuccessful in persuading another of the falsehood. Following several theorists, Newkirk holds that intention and response play a role in determining this distinction. In order to incorporate these added components, he adopts Kevin Vanhoozer's definition of deception for the study: *"x deceives y" means that x intentionally causes y to believe p, where p is false and x knows it to be so* ("Ezekiel 14: 'I, the Lord, Have Deceived That Prophet': Divine Deception, Inception, and Communicative Action," in *Theological Commentary: Evangelical Perspectives* [ed. R. Michael Allen; New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2011], 77).

Aiming to comprehend the motif of deception, Newkirk analyzes the terminology for deception in the Hebrew Bible, interacts briefly with prescriptive ethical passages primarily in the Torah, and provides a close reading of twenty-eight episodes in Samuel. He does not, however, discuss issues with divine deception (e.g., 1 Kgs 22; Ezek 14). In the Samuel accounts, the "narrator's disposition" is assessed as to whether each is positive or negative. Deception is determined to be negative when unjust harm is desired or the intent is to bring personal benefit to the detriment of another. It is considered positive when unjust harm is forestalled or the intent was to benefit another. Although one case is judged as unclear (Ahimaaz's news in 2 Sam 18:19–30), fifteen instances are evaluated as negative and twelve as positive. Most of the study is composed of this evaluation. A final synthesis chapter attempts to systematize these portrayals with the assumed biblical principle that deception requires unjust harm or disadvantage.

Newkirk's study is a lucid and helpful foray into applying Vanhoozer's definition of deception to a particular biblical book. The monograph, however, suffers from several overarching ailments.

First, the study betrays its origin as a doctoral dissertation. As such, the language in places is stilted and affected. For instance: "What is needed is a comprehensive investigation of the motif of deception that extends across both 1 and 2 Samuel" (p. 11). Is this really a *need*, or merely a somewhat arbitrary textual sampling? Elsewhere, a "history of research" section seems all too brief with almost no interaction with early interpreters. Do the rabbis have nothing to say about these questionable ethical situations? What of early Christian readers? These voices would have added greatly to the study.

Second, the author's literary-synchronic approach fails to deal with the significant and well-known variations amongst the different Samuel texts of the MT, LXX, and Qumran. He bases his study on "the Hebrew text as represented in *BHS*" (p. 12; rare exceptions include a lone mention of 4QSam^{a} on p. 57 n. 11 and a brief interaction with the Greek text of 2 Sam 4:6 on pp. 98–99). But a much more sophisticated analysis regarding the textual composition of the book is needed.

Third, the conclusions are too far-reaching. On pp. 104–5 Newkirk ventures into situational ethics without explanation, except for a dismissive quotation of the work of Joseph Fletcher. Deception in the NT—a monograph-worthy topic itself—is also given only six pages (pp. 198–204). Further, Christian dogmatic and doctrinal conclusions, such as "not all lying and deception is wrong" (p. 104), should require a detailed discussion, yet this assertion is made without any reference to NT didactic standards or the church's teaching. While the desire to make the study

applicable is admirable, the execution is too hasty to be a significant resource for the broader discussion of the ethical norms of falsehood.

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Nazek Khalid Matty. *Sennacherib's Campaign against Judah and Jerusalem in 701 B.C.: A Historical Reconstruction*. Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 487. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016. xii + 226 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-3110447880. €89.95/$126.00.

Sennacherib's invasion of the western Levant in 701 BC is well-documented, both in biblical (2 Kgs 18–19; Isa 36–37; 2 Chron 32) and non-biblical sources. Nevertheless, while the general contours of the campaign are agreed upon, the details continue to generate considerable discussion. In this revised version of a doctoral thesis completed under John Day (Oxford), Nazek Khalid Matty, a Dominican Sister who lives and works in Iraq, examines Sennacherib's incursion with the aim of providing a historical reconstruction that is sensitive to all the extant evidence.

Several key questions propel the investigation. Matty wonders "whether Sennacherib . . . really accomplished his mission. Was there any reason for receiving Hezekiah's tribute in Nineveh? Did Sennacherib return to Nineveh unexpectedly? If so, what was the reason for his return?" (p. 2). Her aim, therefore, is to evaluate prior reconstructions against the textual (biblical and Assyrian) and non-textual data. Importantly, she notes that many previous examinations have limited the scope of evidence considered. Work on the Assyrian inscriptions, for example, has tended to focus only on Sennacherib's third campaign. Thus, insights derived from a broader appreciation of Assyrian campaigning strategy have not been sufficiently considered (p. 2). Matty's approach, then, is to more widely consider the Assyrian and biblical accounts (p. 14).

Accordingly, the study is divided into two parts. Part 1 looks at the Assyrian evidence. The inscriptions are examined first to outline Sennacherib's campaigns (pp. 23–35). Consideration of a broad suite of operations allows Matty to make some general observations about Assyrian military policy. The results are revealing. First, it becomes clear that the annals take a particular rhetorical stance and evidence a certain form (p. 35). Second, the inscriptions avoid details that do not serve Assyrian ideology (p. 64). Third, against this backdrop, it becomes evident that Hezekiah is an exception to the norm—no other king is treated in the same way (p. 40).

Assyrian reliefs are examined next. The focus here is the well-known portrayal of the siege of Lachish, depicted in room XXXVI of the South-West Palace (the slabs are reproduced in an appendix, pp. 205–20). While

obviously important, the Lachish siege is not mentioned in the annals. This fact highlights the selective nature of the Assyrian accounts. Moreover, the portrayal serves certain ends. Although some have suggested that the absence of destruction imagery indicates that Sennacherib had a non-aggressive policy in his third campaign (and hence towards Jerusalem), Matty argues that the Lachish reliefs are instead designed to emphasize the effectiveness of Assyrian tactics (p. 85). Thus again, rhetorical aims dictate the presentation. Indeed, archaeological evidence demonstrates the complete destruction of Lachish c. 701 BC (pp. 85–87).

Part 2 considers the biblical texts. Although Assyrian material allows Sennacherib's third campaign to be outlined with a degree of detail, one important question is nowhere addressed: Why did Sennacherib withdraw from Jerusalem in 701? The biblical accounts provide the only data we have. Yet the texts are not straightforward. Four different (although not mutually exclusive) reasons for Sennacherib's return to Nineveh are given—Hezekiah's payment of tribute (2 Kgs 18:13–16); the hearing of a "rumor" (2 Kgs 19:6–7); the impending attack of Tirhakah (2 Kgs 19:9); and the action of the angel of YHWH (2 Kgs 19:35–36). Matty examines each pericope in order (pp. 119–90), concluding that the most likely explanation is a rumor of Babylonian unrest, provoking the return to Nineveh and a campaign against Babylon the following year (pp. 189–90).

This is a fascinating study and its broad assessment of biblical and non-biblical material is to be commended. Indeed, it is its willingness to look at tangential data, outside of the scope of the question per se, which uncovers patterns and trends that allow for more nuanced readings of the various media. The payoff is evident throughout. For example, Matty lists twenty-six occasions on which tribute was paid to Sennacherib (pp. 48–53). Seeing the wider pattern adds color to the Hezekiah episode, for the tribute he offered does not fit the observed pattern; it was larger than any other, was paid following Sennacherib's return to Nineveh, and was clearly not an act of submission. Matty suggests instead that it was an effort to avoid future conflict (pp. 60–61).

Nevertheless, there are several methodological tensions within Matty's study, particularly in part 2. While none are fatal for the thesis being advanced, they do raise questions about the integration of biblical evidence within the study. Two examples will suffice.

As with Assyrian material, Matty wants to assess the rhetorical purposes behind the biblical accounts (p. 122). Her modus operandi, however, is a detailed source-critical reading of the pericopes—an approach at odds with the starting point of rhetorical-critical appraisals (viz. the final-form text). Moreover, while her source analysis is sometimes helpful, much discussion feels superfluous to the task at hand.

Also evident is an overly strong dichotomy between theology and history. Matty regards annalistic sources as more historically credible (e.g., 2 Kgs 18:13–17). So-called "prophetic narrative," however, is deemed to be "drenched in theology" (p. 149). What this means in practice is that when there is conflict, annalistic material is preferred over what is deemed theological. Moreover, Assyrian material tends to trump the biblical account (e.g., p. 180), even though earlier in the study Matty acknowledges the rhetorical, ideological, and selective nature of the Assyrian annals.

In any event, this is an engaging and well-conceived study. While generating questions about method in places, the reconstruction of Sennacherib's 701 BC incursion into Judah is compelling.

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Michael Kruger, ed. *A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the New Testament: The Gospel Realized*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2016. 656 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-1433536762. $50.00.

In this companion volume to *A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the Old Testament: The Gospel Promised*, editor Michael Kruger and the team of former and current professors at Reformed Theological Seminary offer a fresh introduction to the New Testament (NT), characterized by sound biblical scholarship and theological reflection. An exceptional scholar, capable of instructing scholarly and popular audiences, Kruger holds evangelical commitments as well as a commanding grasp of NT scholarship. His fellow contributors likewise are excellent evangelical scholars, and some of them currently serve local churches as pastors.

The contributors' dual commitment to academic excellence and pastoral care drives this volume's goal of creating an introduction that presents foundational material "in a way that could be readily accessible to ministry leaders, preachers, Bible study teachers, and, of course, seminary students" (p. 21). In light of this goal, Kruger asserts this volume's distinctiveness as six-fold. First, it is "accessible," adopting a "streamlined" approach to more technical issues and offering additional extensive discussions of certain critical matters in the appendices (p. 22). Second and third, it is "theological" in that it prioritizes elucidating each book's theological message, which then, since the volume is "redemptive-historical," is related to unfolding salvation-history (pp. 23–24). Fourth, it is "reformed" in that the contributors are committed to Scripture's authority and the Reformation's five *solas* (p. 25). Fifth and sixth, it is multi-authored and "pastoral" (pp. 26–27). While contributors exercise editorial

discretion in presenting a book's theological message, each chapter follows the same broad format: "Introduction, Background Issues, Structure and Outline, Message and Theology, and Select Bibliography" (p. 26).

After the theological message of each book is presented, the appendices address important topics related to NT study. First, Kruger defends Scripture's self-authentication as the basis for its authority and asserts that the "attributes of canonicity" that Scripture itself outlines—"divine qualities," apostolic origins," and "corporate reception"— affirm the authority of the NT canon (pp. 555–66). Second, Charles Hill introduces the field and practice of textual criticism, assuring the reader that the original reading can be discerned (pp. 567–80). Third, Guy Prentis Watters briefly surveys the Synoptic problem and proposed solutions (pp. 581–91). Fourth, Robert Cara introduces the NT's use of the Old Testament (OT) with the chief goal of encouraging the reader to trust that the NT authors correctly understood and applied the OT (pp. 593–602).

A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the New Testament has five major strengths. First, as intended, it is readily accessible since the contributors avoid technical jargon and present critical matters in a clear manner. Second, the contributors do not sacrifice academic excellence for the sake of accessibility. They deftly navigate the most important background issues for each book while offering exceptional insight into its theological message. Third, the volume promotes theological integration. The contributors draw from the fields of biblical studies, biblical theology, historical theology, and systematic theology as they instruct their readers in understanding and embracing each book's theological message. Fourth, the volume equips its readers to be better interpreters of Scripture. This strength is observable throughout the book, but especially when the contributors offer hermeneutical and preaching suggestions ranging from how to interpret parables (pp. 111–12), to advice on navigating the challenges and value of mirror reading (pp. 251–53). Fifth, the appendices are valuable and accessible resources, capable of introducing the novice to issues important to understanding and interpreting the NT.

However, this volume also has four minor weaknesses. First, the quality of the chapters is uneven, a problem common to multi-authored works. While some chapters like William Barclay's on the Pastoral Epistles (pp. 349–400) or Charles Hill's on the Johannine Epistles (pp. 483–508) are exceptional in their attention both to background issues and theological matters, a few chapters are noticeably brief in treating either of these. Second, while the choice to discuss the Synoptic problem in an appendix is understandable given the goal of making the volume accessible, it introduces new problems for the reader. For instance, the novice is

unprepared to understand and evaluate discussions of composition history (pp. 33, 95) or to recognize when authors assume Markan priority and to understand the implications thereof (pp. 33, 65). Adding a brief introductory chapter on the Gospels would better prepare readers to understand this literature and would provide a framework for understanding terms like "redaction critic" that are used but not explained (p. 105). Third, while Robert Cara's discussion of the NT authors' hermeneutical methods is helpful, it is incomplete in that it focuses almost exclusively on typology and lacks sufficient explanation. Quite frankly, his insistence that "*the biblical writers' hermeneutics are an infallible guide for modern Christians*" is not properly explained (p. 596, emphasis original). Can a pastor create new types to explain the OT or should one restrict oneself to only those types identified in the NT? Are believers free to allegorize the OT because Paul did so in Galatians 4? Cara is a competent and brilliant scholar who certainly could provide well-reasoned answers to such questions. Perhaps he did not address them due to constraints in space. However, given that this book is intended for pastors and lay people and that this appendix addresses proper biblical hermeneutics, it seems like a significant oversight. Fourth, given the title and the biblical-theological focus of this volume, more space should have been devoted to defining what is meant by "biblical theology" and distinguishing it from other approaches to this discipline, than the single page in the introduction (p. 24).

Despite these weaknesses, *A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the New Testament* is a useful resource that accomplishes its purpose of serving as an accessible, theological introduction to the New Testament. It is certainly a valuable resource for pastors and students as they seek to understand, obey, and cherish the Scriptures.

Levi Baker
Wake Forest, North Carolina

J. K. Elliott. *A Bibliography of Greek New Testament Manuscripts*. 3rd ed. Supplements to Novum Testamentum 160. Leiden: Brill, 2015. xliii + 408 pp. E-book. ISBN 978-9004289680. $149.00.

J. K. Elliott is Honorary Professor of New Testament textual criticism at the University of Leeds. His *Bibliography* is a "comprehensive listing" of books and articles (including those treating the text, illustrations in the manuscripts, and paleography), facsimiles, photographic plates, and albums related to approximately 3,600 manuscripts of the Greek New Testament. The bibliography is divided into the categories commonly used in New Testament textual criticism and in the official registry of the Münster

Institute for New Testament Textual Criticism: papyri, majuscules, minuscules, and lectionaries in the order in which they are presented in the apparatuses of the UBS[5] and NA[28] editions of the Greek New Testament. This third edition of the bibliography includes entries from the two previous editions, three supplements that appeared as articles in *Novum Testamentum*, as well as additional material published even after the supplements. It intentionally excludes entries related to short notes in journals or brief discussions in commentaries that treat isolated textual variants found in particular manuscripts. The references in each entry are arranged in descending chronological order (i.e., from the most recent to the oldest).

The Third Edition treats manuscripts included in the *Liste* through April 2014. The most recently added manuscripts in each category were 𝔓[128], 0323, 2927, and *l*2463. This edition has also added references to a number of works focusing on paleography, codicology, and scribal habits due to the growing interest of New Testament scholars in these fields. The Third Edition has added a significant number of entries of sources containing illustrations that appear in manuscripts. It also adds all references to the paragraphs discussing particular manuscripts in Hermann von Soden's catalogue.

The Introduction to the *Bibliography* includes very helpful guidance for a number of different research projects including tracing the use of particular Greek New Testament manuscripts in various editions of the Greek New Testament, understanding the history of collecting, collating, and classifying New Testament manuscripts, and how to reconstruct reliably the running text of certain manuscripts even when one has no direct access to the manuscripts themselves.

Readers looking for a source that will identify the date, provenance, writing materials, text type, etc., of a particular manuscript will not find those details on the pages of the bibliography per se, but only by consulting the resources listed in the bibliography. Thus the bibliography is an immensely helpful supplement to the *Liste*, introductions to textual criticism, and so forth, but should not be assumed to serve as a substitute for these tools. However, a close examination of the entries for the manuscripts with which I am most familiar found the bibliography to be impressively thorough and up-to-date.

Eight separate appendices give data on (1) text types, (2) introductions to textual criticism, (3) catalogues of libraries that house important manuscripts, (4) other bibliographies helpful for textual criticism, (5) guides to various approaches to transcriptional probability, (6) collections of essays, (7) links to important websites, and (8) explain why Elliott discontinued his earlier practice of including a list of unregistered manuscripts.

The obvious limitation of a printed work is that new manuscript discoveries will undoubtedly be added to the registry by the time that the book is published. As of September 14, 2016, the highest numbered manuscripts in each category were 𝔓[131], 0323, 2933, and *l*2465. Thus since the publication of the bibliography, three papyri, six minuscules, and two lectionaries have already been added to the registry.

Some of the resources listed in the bibliography can be quickly located by other means such as a search of the ATLA database. However, researchers will have greater difficulty locating sometimes essential discussions buried in chapters of books or monographs. Although the book is quite expensive and the e-book surprisingly costs just as much as the hardback, the book can potentially save the researcher a significant amount of time and will be a worthy investment for specialists in the field. The bibliography is an unrivaled resource for advanced students and scholars seeking to locate quickly important works related to New Testament manuscripts, textual criticism, paleography, codicology, scribal habits, and art history.

Charles L. Quarles
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George H. van Kooten and Peter Barthel (eds). *The Star of Bethlehem and the Magi: Interdisciplinary Perspectives from Experts on the Ancient Near East, the Greco-Roman World, and Modern Astronomy*. Leiden: Brill, 2015. xxi + 695 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-9004307971. $241.00 (Hardback), $69.00 (Paperback).

The Star of Bethlehem and the Magi is not one contiguous text, but rather a compilation of papers from twenty different scholars discussing the Star of Bethlehem from a range of perspectives and disciplines. These papers were initially presented in 2014, at a conference in the Netherlands that was held in honor of the University of Groningen's 400th anniversary. The impressive assembly of specialized knowledge makes the book both a fascinating and a daunting read. One perspective that goes almost unrepresented is that of a Christian believer who accepts Matthew's Gospel as inspired Scripture.

I began *The Star of Bethlehem and the Magi* expecting to read analyses of Matt 2:1–12 both from professional astronomers like myself and from ancient historians and textual critics. In fact, seven out of the twenty contributors are professional astronomers, but only two (David Hughes and Bradley Schaefer) discuss in detail what modern astronomy indicates the Magi might have seen. The rest—even the astronomers—write as historians. This is reasonable because, as Hughes and Schaefer demonstrate,

no astronomical object could have exhibited the behavior Matthew describes for the Star of Bethlehem. The contribution of modern astronomy is therefore mainly to rule things out: it cannot explain the star. The question remains whether history can do so.

Michael Molnar makes a noteworthy attempt to find an answer through history. Although himself an astronomer, Molnar has researched ancient astrology, including evidence from stars depicted on coins minted by the biblical Quirinius. Molnar has concluded that the land of Judea was associated with the constellation of Aries, the ram. On April 17, 6 B.C., the Moon occulted Jupiter in Aries on the very day of Jupiter's heliacal rising. Such an occultation is not rare, but Molnar argues that the positions of the other planets and the coincidence with Jupiter's heliacal rising added up to a staggering astrological jackpot predicting that a child born in Judea would rule the world. A conjunction does not match Matthew's text, but Molnar suggests the story got muddled: "Matthew probably struggled with arcane astrological jargon he had heard, most likely handed down through several sources, which would explain why the star mysteriously 'went before' the biblical Magi and 'stood over' the child" (p. 30).

Stephan Heilen expresses profound skepticism with Molnar's view, and states that Aries was by no means uniquely identified with Judea. Aaron Adair points out that astrological horoscopes did not predict birth, only the fate of a child already born. Peter Barthel suggests that the Magi might have been making a diplomatic tour, and that Jerusalem was only one of several stops. Antonio Panaino writes that Matthew's account cannot be true because any attempt by the Magi to evade Herod would have failed: he would have sent an army of spies after them and killed the infant Jesus that very night. Roger Beck mentions the interesting fact that Tiridates of Armenia in A.D. 66. led a bona fide delegation of Magi from the east to Rome, where they did homage to Nero and possibly worshiped him as a god. Beck suggests that Matthew's account is a fiction based on the Tiridates story.

The Star of Bethlehem and the Magi is almost universally skeptical of the biblical account, the one exception being astronomer David Hughes, who writes, "To me, the Gospel of Matthew rings true. All of it" (p. 105). No writer seriously considers the possibility that the star was a miracle beyond both modern astronomy and ancient astrology. The book comes nowhere close to a consensus on the meaning of Matthew's text. Even though it is full of interesting historical factoids such as Tiridates' journey, *The Star of Bethlehem and the Magi* is likely to be of limited value to evangelical pastors and teachers.

The chief value I derived from the book was quite unexpected. As an evangelical Christian with academic training in science but not in history

or ancient texts, I have often been troubled by popular deconstructions of the Scriptures, proving, for example, that Paul didn't write Paul's epistles. *The Star of Bethlehem and the Magi* was my first experience with scholarly literature from the relevant fields. Even though I was impressed with the detailed information from ancient sources, I was astonished at the lack of rigor, the abundance of contradictory claims, and the profound absence of a consensus. I used to assume that skeptics of the Scriptures had what a scientist would call a valid argument behind their claims. Not anymore.

Ari Heinze
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John B. Cobb, Jr. *Jesus' Abba: The God Who Has Not Failed.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015. xxiv + 157 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-1506405704. $22.99.

In this book John Cobb urges Christians to follow Jesus in their thinking about and relationship to God. These have too often differed from those of Jesus, according to Cobb. It is not Jesus' Abba, but rather a deviation, that is objectionable to secular moderns. In fact, the modern world actually needs Abba. Thus, "it is time for thoughtful Christians to free themselves from acquiescence to the late modern worldview" and to embrace the "biblical worldview in general . . . the worldview of Jesus and Paul in particular," albeit in updated form (pp. xxi, 155).

Cobb begins with his reconstruction of the historical Jesus, which is similar to the Jesus Seminar's. Jesus was no apocalyptic preacher but rather a social reformer who proclaimed the already present kingdom of God (or "divine commonwealth") in an itinerant ministry involving healings, exorcisms, and charismatic gifts. Jesus' Abba was loving, compassionate, "intimate and tender" (p. 11), inclusive, and opposed to social injustices. Jesus' message was countercultural in its challenging of existing societal institutions and its call for total devotion to and trust in Abba.

Next, Cobb traces how he believes Jesus' Abba was historically lost in western consciousness. Paul faithfully transmitted Jesus' vision of Abba with *pistis Christou*—meaning "Christ's faithfulness," not "faith in Christ"—but concomitantly made the divine commonwealth more otherworldly than countercultural. In the Middle Ages, mediators like the church, the saints, and Mary took Abba's place while God became an "all-male Trinity that had evolved a long way from the experience and teaching of Jesus" (p. 38). A key moment was when modern Cartesian dualism objectified the natural world as a vacuous actuality devoid of subjectivity. When Darwin firmly placed man within nature there was opportunity to see subjectivity in all of reality but most opted to see man as just one more

object to be studied scientifically and understood in a reductively materialistic way.

Subjectivity is a main theme of the book, and Cobb's tour de force for subjectivity based on the primacy of experience comes next. All experience is selective and interpreted, which implies a subject. Our immediate experiences of subjective freedom and real possibilities contradict modern materialistic determinism, which Cobb shows to be internally inconsistent. He likewise argues for the correspondence theory of truth over the coherence theory of truth, which contradicts the way people actually live: "Modern thought profoundly conflicts with common sense" (p. 69). Abba, says Cobb, is necessary for the past to be real and efficacious in the present, as well as for real possibilities graded according to value, which morality requires.

In opposition to the modern exclusion of God from causal explanations, Cobb argues for the necessity of God as a causal subject in the world. Cobb undercuts the modern assumption that subjects cannot be causal factors and, then, in a way reminiscent of the classical theistic proofs for God's existence, argues that only God as subject explains otherwise inexplicable aspects of the world. This he does by evincing evidence from contemporary science and individual experience.

From the question of God's credibility Cobb moves to that of God's desirability. In Christian interactions with other religious traditions—or "wisdom traditions"—what historically became the dominant Christian view of God, not Jesus' Abba, has been intellectually objectionable and practically detrimental. Rejecting both Christian exclusivism and soteriological pluralism, Cobb espouses "deep pluralism." Abba is compatible with the key beliefs and intuitions of major wisdom traditions but Christian followers of Abba can also learn from other wisdom traditions.

Abba is also desirable for addressing the world's problems today. Biblical historical consciousness coupled with the almighty Lord of traditional Christian belief has issued in tribalism, exceptionalism, violence, and genocide. Abba's power lies in persuasion, liberation, and empowerment, not coercive omnipotence and exhaustive divine sovereignty. Abba can remedy communal, societal, economic, and ecological problems. Abba is the only real hope for the future.

Cobb's book raises many questions. One general question regards the degree to which Cobb's vision of Jesus' Abba is biblically and historically grounded versus the degree to which it is a presentation of Alfred North Whitehead's philosophy. From among the contested reconstructions of the historical Jesus, Cobb presents one that is very much at home in Protestant liberalism. Cobb sees little apocalyptic in the New Testament (p. 18) even though Ernst Käsemann once remarked that apocalyptic is

the mother of Christian theology.

Similarly, one may wonder at Cobb's repeated and strenuous criticism of the modern worldview when his own vision is so heavily informed by modern assumptions and sentiments. The prominence of "subjectivity" is telling: Jürgen Moltmann once argued that the transition from "substance" to "subjectivity" as the primary category of being is a hallmark of modernity.

These and other more particular questions notwithstanding, there is much that commends this book. Cobb evidences a sophisticated command of a number of disciplines from modern biblical scholarship to physical science to the social sciences. He adeptly translates abstruse points into terms laymen can easily understand and in an enjoyable style. Importantly, Cobb makes a plausible case for God to secular moderns on their own terms—a notable strength of process theology. The book would serve well as an introduction to contemporary liberal Protestant thought in an academic or ecclesial context and may even be helpful for those struggling with the viability of faith today.

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Keith T. Marriner. *Following the Lamb: The Theme of Discipleship in the Book of Revelation*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2016. xv + 274 pp. Paperback. ISBN 13: 978-1498237390. $35.00.

Keith T. Marriner serves as Executive Editor of One Accord Resources and is an adjunct professor at the School of Christian Ministries at Emmanuel College in Franklin Springs, Georgia. *Following the Lamb: The Theme of Discipleship in the Book of Revelation* is Marriner's Doctor of Education dissertation at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina, written under the direction of David R. Beck. Reacting to a scholarly neglect of the topic of discipleship in the Apocalypse, Marriner seeks to address this theme through biblical and theological analysis (p. 8).

Three questions in particular serve as the focus of his research: (1) What forms of discipleship existed in the ancient world? (2) How is the theme of discipleship developed in the Gospel of John according to current research? and (3) How is the theme of discipleship developed in the book of Revelation? Addressing these questions, Marriner employs a qualitative content analysis methodology from the area of social scientific research. He follows the example of others who apply content analysis to the field of biblical studies (e.g., Lioy, Bazar, Ray, Hudgins), seeing it as capable of producing fruitful results. This methodology, which consists

of a systematic analysis of texts, includes the use of a coding frame with accompanying categories or topics that assists in identifying the theme of discipleship in Revelation. Marriner establishes his coding frame by employing both inductive and deductive approaches. The qualitative content analysis approach allows him to move beyond manifest content to latent content. The result is a thoroughly biblical and insightful examination of discipleship in the Apocalypse.

Marriner divides his writing into five chapters. In chapter one, he recognizes the lack of studies in biblical scholarship, Christian education literature, and spiritual formation literature on discipleship in Revelation. While New Testament scholars such as Fiorenza, Aune, and Stuckenbruck do examine the topic (pp. 2–4), their works are limited in scope. In addition, most literature related to Christian education and spiritual formation ignores discipleship in the Apocalypse since authors do not believe the writing contributes to our understanding of educational ministry (p. 4).

In chapter two, Marriner examines the forms of discipleship in the ancient world, including the New Testament. Greco-Roman and Jewish writings present a disciple as a student of a (human) teacher. While the student-teacher model is not completely absent in the Old Testament, more prominent is the notion that the Lord serves as one's teacher (p. 27). Discipleship in the Gospels and Acts by and large refers to one committed to Jesus' teaching, mission, and authority, among other features (p. 45). Discipleship in the New Testament Epistles is often portrayed as imitating Jesus (p. 46). Insights gleaned from this chapter, which concentrates especially on terminology, provide helpful information about discipleship that one may compare with the Apocalypse's presentation.

Chapter three consists of a review of recent works (1970s-present) on discipleship in the Fourth Gospel. Marriner also formulates a coding frame, employed in chapter four in his examination of discipleship in Revelation. More specifically, from the Johannine literature examined in chapter three, themes emerge which Marriner applies to his study of the motif in the Apocalypse in chapter four (e.g., union with Christ, belief in Jesus for salvation, membership and election of the people of God, bearing witness to Jesus, keeping and obeying Jesus'/God's commands, consequences of following Jesus, marks of discipleship, distinction between Jesus' disciples and non-disciples, and Jesus as the model for his disciples). However, some may question the emphasis Marriner gives to the call narrative in John 1:35–51, its importance notwithstanding, which he labels as "paradigmatic" (p. 73).

The final portion of the book (chapter five) provides a summary and synthesis of his research with specific suggestions as to how Revelation's

presentation of discipleship might be applied to the life of a Christian disciple. Marriner's conclusions in this chapter are sound and insightful, the result of careful research, not an attempt to force the text to fit his themes. He also includes helpful recommendations for future research (p. 237).

Some may criticize Marriner for his use of a method (content analysis) from social scientific research in his examination of the biblical text. Also, biblical theologians who affirm common authorship may question the appropriateness of applying categories or themes from the Fourth Gospel onto the book of Revelation (i.e., one must let John express himself on his own terms in each writing), though I did not find evidence of Marriner forcing themes from one writing onto the other. Nevertheless, these concerns aside, the author has produced a work that has advanced biblical scholarship's understanding of discipleship in the Apocalypse. Marriner's effort should be taken seriously as it makes a valuable contribution to biblical studies in general and to discipleship studies in particular. Those interested in understanding Revelation's presentation of discipleship are strongly encouraged to read his work. It is an excellent resource.

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Andrew Christopher Smith. *Fundamentalism, Fundraising, and the Transformation of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1919–1925*. America's Baptists. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2016. xiii + 249 pp. Hardback. ISBN 978-1621902270. $46.00.

It is common for Southern Baptists to claim we are not a denomination, but a convention of autonomous congregations. While this distinction recognizes that the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) is not a hierarchical or (explicitly) connectional organization, it is nevertheless a distinction made by few besides SBC insiders. The SBC is a not only a denomination, but a remarkably centralized one, especially for a tradition committed to local church autonomy. The SBC became a denomination in the years immediately following World War I. And as Andrew Smith argues in his recent monograph, fundraising and fundamentalism were the engines that drove the denominational machine.

Fundamentalism, Fundraising, and the Transformation of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1919–1925 is a revision of Smith's dissertation at Vanderbilt University. It also serves as the inaugural volume in the University of Tennessee Press's new series, America's Baptists, edited by Southeastern Seminary's own Keith Harper. It is an impressive first entry, and one that bodes well for the series as a whole. Smith, assistant professor of religion

at Carson-Newman University, has written a groundbreaking book that offers some much-needed nuance to key years in Southern Baptist history.

Smith divides his book into six chapters, plus a brief conclusion. He discusses figures and topics that are familiar to historians of the SBC: Norris, E. Y. Mullins, L. R. Scarborough, J. B. Gambrell, anti-evolution controversies, the Seventy-Five Million Campaign, and the Baptist Faith and Message (1925). He also includes as an appendix a brief essay exploring how the historiography related to J. Frank Norris and the SBC has evolved since the publication of George Marsden's *Fundamentalism and American Culture* in 1980.

Often, the story of this era is told as follows: Like nearly all the major Protestant denominations, the SBC launched a massive fundraising drive after World War I. The goal was $75 million, which was over-pledged ($92 million) but under-met ($58 million). This unfortunate situation was further complicated because denominational institutions borrowed money on the assumption that the pledges would be honored. But the good news is that the doomed campaign united Southern Baptists nationwide, giving birth to the Cooperative Program in 1925. As an added bonus, Southern Baptists united against evolution and adopted the first edition of the Baptist Faith and Message, also in 1925. Thus, the SBC as we know it came into its own. Everything about this narrative is basically accurate. As Smith shows, it is also far too simplistic.

Smith interprets the era as a victory for southern progressives who wanted a more centralized denomination, rather than the more democratic convention championed by many grassroots pastors. Using fundamentalists such as Norris as their foil on the right, and the ecumenical movement as their leftwing nemesis, progressives such as Mullins and Scarborough used the $75 Million Campaign to create a new Southern Baptist bureaucracy. This new bureaucracy was theologically conservative, like fundamentalism, but was fiercely committed to denominational unity, much like the more ecumenical mainline denominations. The rallying point was cooperative giving for the sake of foreign and domestic missions and theological education, emphasized during the original 1919–1924 campaign and then perfected, though gradually, in the Cooperative Program. Smith calls this center-right approach advocated by SBC progressives the "Scarborough Synthesis," after $75 Million Campaign chairman L. R. Scarborough, who emphasized both the institutional defense of orthodoxy and denominational loyalty (pp. 136–37).

Progressive leadership worked hard to gain the support of rank-and-file Southern Baptist pastors for the Scarborough Synthesis. Most of the state newspaper editors became defenders of the new status quo, though

some raised concerns about centralization (e.g., L. L. Gwaltney of Alabama) and a few even registered populist protests against the new bureaucracy (e.g., Victor Masters of Kentucky). While local church protectionism remained prominent in the SBC, denominational loyalists ostracized and often pushed out completely anti-denominational Landmarkers. The same was true of most self-proclaimed fundamentalists. Pastors who supported the $75 Million Campaign were rewarded with praise in the denominational press and recommendations to more strategic pastorates. Denominationalists treated critics as disloyal malcontents. By 1925, despite the failure of the $75 Million Campaign, the SBC was fast becoming a centralized denomination. The Baptist Faith and Message appealed to the orthodoxy impulse of the Scarborough Synthesis, while the Cooperative Program appealed to the denominational loyalty impulse. The Scarborough Synthesis became the denominational consensus that prevailed until the Inerrancy Controversy finally upended it in the final two decades of the twentieth century.

Smith's book offers a needed corrective to earlier studies that overestimated the influence of J. Frank Norris and underestimated the influence of progressivism among leading SBC pastors and institutional leaders. Later denominational controversies, often interpreted as being either battles for the Bible or denominational power politics, were actually more complicated: they were debates over the integrity of the Scarborough Synthesis. Conservatives were concerned that moderates downplayed the orthodoxy impulse, while moderates were convinced conservatives had rejected, or inappropriately redefined, the loyalty impulse. To understand what happened in 1979, historians need to understand what happened between 1919 and 1925 and how those years shaped the postwar SBC. Smith's fine study plays a signal role in helping us to do just that. Highly recommended.

Nathan A. Finn
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Drew Hart. *Trouble I've Seen: Changing the Way the Church Views Racism*. Harrisonburg, VA: Herald Press, 2016. 198 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-1513800004. $16.99.

Pastor, blogger, and PhD candidate in Theology and Ethics, Drew Hart has contributed to the growing literature on the Church and race relations. Part memoir, part social theory, and part theology, this is a well-rounded, accessible work that refuses to shy away from arguably the most important issue facing Evangelical churches today—their complicity with systemic racism. Hart's major argument is that American Christians have

chosen to uphold a racist and patriarchal social system that has marginalized people of color and women at the expense of following Christ fully—the Christ who stood in solidarity with the socially and culturally marginalized. Hart demonstrates that white American Christian acceptance of the racial and patriarchal structures of society are subtler and more tacit than people believe. Hart's purpose in the work is to expose how white Christians have been complicit in the perpetuation of these social structures and offer practical steps for Christians to live as Christ (i.e., by living counter-culturally in a context of societal racism).

The major strength of the book is the way Hart works through issues like racism, white privilege, black respectability, and patriarchy. In all of these, Hart draws from sociology and recent theological works. In terms of racism, Hart engages the definition of prominent sociologists Michael Omi and Howard Winant, who define race in terms of socially constructed categories of people, rather than biological categories. This is important, since it points to the fact that race has been created at a certain historical moment to serve political and ideological ends, as Omi and Winant assert. This definition undergirds all the issues that Hart investigates.

In particular, Hart's treatment of whiteness is very thoughtful yet honest. He asserts, and rightly, that whiteness as a concept is rarely considered among Christians. Because America is racially hierarchical with whites occupying the top place, whiteness is thought of as normal, while blackness, for example, is "otherized." Using the definition of race as a social construct, Hart is able to unpack the construction of whiteness and show how it serves to empower whites and to marginalize blacks. Part of this white empowerment has meant the creation of a "white Jesus" who serves the needs of the powerful at the expense of the weak. Hart is critical of this construction as he asserts that this view of Jesus has no support in the gospel narratives. Hart argues that Jesus lived and ministered to colonized persons in first century Palestine as a colonized person. Jesus was intimately associated with those marginalized by Imperial Rome.

Hart admits that most of the book is from his perspective as an African American man. However, he argues that racism and patriarchy have been dually aligned in American society. He thus challenges racism that marginalizes people of color but also challenges patriarchy that marginalizes women. What is interesting is that Hart asserts that patriarchy does damage to white men since they have been viewed as "heroes and as ideal human beings." This is something that sets white men up to fail. In fact, it is blasphemous according to Hart. For Hart, Jesus is the norm; he is central. These are key issues discussed by Hart; all of them challenge the Church to live like Christ in response to racism and patriarchy.

Though Hart engages these issues with honesty, he elects to leave his readers with the task to apply the gospel to racism and even to white male superiority. In the final chapter, Hart offers seven practices to undo the ravages of racism and patriarchy. Among those is "to see the world from below." This practice calls for white Christians to renounce their white privilege and their perceived superiority and to occupy the place of fellow believers who are in the place of the lowly and weak. Hart asserts this is the place the Incarnate Christ assumed; therefore, to live as Jesus means all Christians should assume this position in the world. It also means that white Christians will listen to the stories of African Americans, Native Americans, Asian Americans, and Latinos in order to empathize with them.

Though there are other books on the issue of racism and racial reconciliation, Hart's work utilizes the body of scholarship on race and gender, thus giving it scholarly credibility. At the same time, its being part memoir allows readers to listen with empathy to Hart's stories about living as an African American man. Nevertheless, scholarly readers may desire Hart to engage more scholarship that would add complexity and nuance to his arguments. Those reading the book who lack familiarity with the tenets of the sociology of race or critical race theory may thus be dismissive of Hart's articulation of these findings, thinking them to be extra-biblical, and that Hart relies too heavily on social science, rather than on biblical exegesis. This is a problem a book of this sort faces.

In the end though, Hart's work offers a strong biblical argument against racism and patriarchy since it defines these categories as being socially constructed. This book should be read alongside Ta-Nehisi Coates's *Between the World and Me* so that readers can see how an African American Christian has experienced racism in America in much the same way as an African American atheist. Both writers unapologetically criticize the racist structures of the United States, but unlike Coates, Hart, a Christian, leaves his readers with the belief that change can occur.

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Jonathan Leeman. *Don't Fire Your Church Members: The Case for Congregationalism*. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2016. viii + 200 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-1433686238. $24.99.

Jonathan Leeman is an elder at Capitol Hill Baptist Church in Washington, D.C. He also serves as the editorial director for 9Marks. He has previously written on the importance of church polity ("Why Polity?" in *Baptist Foundations: Church Government for an Anti-Polity Age*, ed. Mark Dever

and Jonathan Leeman, Nashville: B&H Academic, 2015) and church membership (*The Church and the Surprising Offense of God's Love: Rediscovering the Doctrines of Church Membership and Discipline*, Wheaton: Crossway, 2010). Leeman demonstrates his conviction of the importance of church polity and the role of church membership in this book as well, writing in the preface: "If Jesus calls every Christian to be a part of a church, then those congregational responsibilities belong to basic Christian discipleship" (p. viii).

The goal of the book is to "present a biblical-theological and systematic case for pastor-led or elder-led congregationalism. Elder-led congregationalism makes every member a priest-king, and it trains them for the work" (p. 16). Rather than pursuing an approach to church polity that is "wholly pragmatic," Leeman seeks to demonstrate that the "fundamentals" of church government grow out of the gospel (p. 14, 15).

Chapter 1 presents the hermeneutical process of discerning the gospel roots for church polity. This process seeks to ascertain who the Bible says has the "power in the church," thus the title of the chapter, "Who's In Charge of What Around Here" (p. 31). Leeman contends that one must embrace an "institutional hermeneutic." Ultimately, he persuasively contends that "church polity is a subcategory of ethics and that whatever hermeneutical principles are used for Christian ethics should also be used for polity" (p. 17). He thus offers five rules to govern the hermeneutical process: (1) ask who is authorized to do what; (2) employ wisdom for determining how to fulfill an authorization; (3) heed canonical horizons and covenantal administrations; (4) be sensitive to different kinds of authority; and (5) treat polity as a subcategory of ethics (pp. 19–31).

Chapters 2 through 4 offer the theological argument for congregationalism. Leeman considers the Adamic office of "priest-king" an indispensable ingredient to the concept of congregationalism. His argument is that God gave this office first to the "federal head" (Adam) and repeated throughout history through Noah, Abraham, Israel, and David. Finally, the office was conferred on Jesus, the final "federal head of God's new covenant people," who perfectly fulfilled the office. Through Jesus, the office of priest-king is "re-conferred on every member of the church" (pp. 58–59). Thus, every member of the church has the responsibility to work for Christ's kingdom and to watch over the members of the church.

In chapters 3 and 4, Leeman unpacks the significance of Matthew 16 and the "keys of the kingdom." He evaluates primarily where church authority resides, and he seeks to dismantle the idea that either the authority descends from the apostles or is grounded and ascends from the whole church. For Leeman, the whole congregation, including elders, has received authority to fulfill the office of priest-king, giving the congregation

the "keys of the kingdom." Elders have the authority to lead the congregation in its use of the keys. Chapter 4 concludes the discussion of the "keys of the kingdom" by placing them in the hands of the gathered local church.

Chapter 5 examines the connection between congregational rule and elder leadership. While the congregation has the "authority of command," elders have the "authority of counsel." As Leeman emphasizes, "the congregation has final earthly rule over the church" (p. 146), and the elder is the spiritually gifted guide to counsel the congregation on its use of authority. He suggests that elder leadership and congregational rule, with its concomitant ingredients of submission to and trust in the elders, provide a powerful tool for discipleship.

Chapter 6 evaluates the interconnectivity between a local church and other churches. Through an analysis of Acts 15, Leeman argues that local churches are independent of one another but are also interdependent in the fulfillment of the Great Commission. Chapter 7 concludes with practical applications of elder-led congregationalism. He emphasizes that the right kind of preaching and the right administration of ordinances lead to healthy congregationalism.

Leeman offers a strong biblical-theological argument for elder-led congregationalism. His contention that the congregation is the final authority over the church should assuage the temper of those who struggle with the idea of elder leadership. Leeman also addresses the issue of "multi-site" (especially pp. 118–20), yet I was left wanting more detailed analysis. The growth of "multi-site," as well as the commonality of "multi-service," begs for richer biblical-theological examination. The biblical heft of Leeman's interplay with differing opinions on other topics in the book would have well served his analysis of "multi-site." Overall though, I agree with others who positively endorse this book. Leeman provides a significant, robust defense of elder-led congregationalism.

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Megan Hill. *Praying Together: The Priority and Privilege of Prayer in Our Homes, Communities, and Churches*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2016. 125 pp. Paperback. ISBN 978-1433550515. $12.99.

The thesis of the book, *Praying Together* is both in the title and in the first line following the Introduction: "A Christian never prays alone" (p. 17). This might be a bit misleading, in that Megan Hill intends a reader to understand that God is present in every prayer, even those prayed in sol-

itude. However, her central call is for community prayer. In the introduction, she clearly states what she hopes the reader would gain when she writes, "This book is a call to each one of us to consider the praying together we have done and are doing and hope to do; the childhood dinner prayers, the youth-group prayer vigil, the spontaneous prayer in dorm rooms and parking lots and at the back of the church, the planned prayer during Bible studies and prayer meetings and in the Lord's Day worship service" (p. 13).

I confess that because of the cover art and the description of the author as a "pastor's wife and pastor's daughter," my first impression was that it was mostly a practical book, written primarily for women. She does state in the introduction that, "This book is not an exhaustive theology of prayer. Many and better minds than my own have written that book several times over" (p. 13). Yet, in reading the book and investigating the further substantial credentials of the author, I am first to admit my error and to caution a reader not to regard the scholarship of the text too lightly. *Praying Together* is a substantial treatise on community prayer, biblically supported and theologically sound.

Following the introduction, the book is divided into three parts, *The Foundation of Praying Together, The Fruits of Praying Together,* and *The Practice of Praying Together*. The first part, *Foundation,* stresses the nature of relationship in prayer—the definition of the "together" in praying together. We pray in relationship to God and we unite our hearts with other believers, including the mingling of our prayers in heaven with those of the saints who have prayed before us (p. 27). In this section, Hill discusses the biblical imperatives for praying together (duty) and the biblical incentives for praying together (promise). She traces a hermeneutic history of collective prayer, saturating the reader with Scripture.

In the second part, *Fruits,* the author describes love as a byproduct of praying together, saying that if we pray with (not just for) each other, a deep love will follow. Discipleship is a result of community prayer, especially as younger believers learn the "why" and "how" of prayer from praying with others. She closes the section with a discussion on the role of prayer in revival. She includes revival as a fruit of community prayer, calling it "God's answer to our prayer" (p. 81). However, this was the only place in the book where I had a bit of tension—Hill clearly states that revival is not an automatic response to community prayer (p. 83), and she states that "we avoid praying for something different, a magic bullet, that bears no resemblance to God's normal work in our midst" (p. 85), but she tells multiple stories that insinuate that we prompt God's sovereignty with our prayers.

The last part, *Practice,* is what I expected from the book. After laying

down the biblical and theological foundations, and describing the byproducts of praying together, Hill switches to the pragmatic and lets the reader know how to engage in community prayer so that it becomes natural. The author admits in the opening lines of the chapter on praying with the church, "I wrote this entire book so I could write this chapter" (p. 95). Her stories early in the book regarding her practice of finding the church prayer meeting at various life moments tips her hand. She believes that a church needs to pray together. She does not depart from her attention to Scripture and her supportive anecdotes as she describes strategically how to make praying together a reality, a normative practice in the church, in prayer groups, and among families.

Following the three sections are study questions, endnotes, and a bibliography which testifies to her thorough research for the book. Megan Hill is a voracious reader, if the supportive evidence is any indication. Also included is a scripture index, which gave me further confidence that this book is appropriate for both corporate and personal advancement in the practice of community prayer. The chapter on discipleship might provide an additional suggestion—this book makes a great curriculum for personal discipleship.

It is unusual to conclude a book review with favorite quotes, but Megan Hill is a wordsmith. I feel it helpful to close with her own turns of phrase:

> We pray "in Jesus's name" because he is the one whose blood secures our right to pray, whose perfect will and blameless character direct our prayers, and whose ongoing intercession in heaven makes us bold on our knees. (p. 34)

> When we pray together, we declare in the hearing of others who our God is—we build an area in which to showcase God's sovereign work and his gracious character. Our corporate prayers demonstrate that we are a people who know our God and who delight in his ways. (p. 47)

> When believers unite in prayer for Christ's bride, no one is preferred and no one is forgotten. (p. 62)

> What if we prayed for "prayer appointments"? What if we looked daily for God-given moments to pray together? By prayer and expectation, we may discover that a friendship, a crisis, a Bible study meeting, a phone call, or a hospital room reveals yet another occasion to gather at the throne. (p. 113)

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