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BOOK REVIEWS

Robertson, Palmer O. *The Flow of the Psalms: Discovering Their Structure and Theology*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2015, pp. 302, \$ 21.99, paperback.

O. Palmer Robertson is director and principle of African Bible University in Uganda and is the author of many books, including *The Christ of the Covenants* (P&R, 1987), commentaries on the books of Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah in the *New International Commentary Series* (Eerdmans, 1990), and *The Christ of the Prophets* (P&R, 2008). His latest work, *The Flow of the Psalms: Discovering Their Structure and Theology*, represents one of the most recent contributions to the ongoing investigation of the “shape” and “shaping” of the Hebrew Psalter. Robertson’s burden in this book is to show that the Psalter is not a random collection of psalms; rather, it exhibits an intentional arrangement or “flow” from beginning to end (p. 50).

Two preliminary chapters precede Robertson’s attempt to demonstrate the presence of this “flow” within the Psalter. Chapter two draws attention to twelve different elements of basis structure in the Psalter, while chapter three is devoted to a discussion of the Psalter’s redemptive-historical framework. The heart of the book then follows in chapters five through nine, where Robertson traces the predominant structural, theological, and thematic contours of each of the Psalter’s five books. The major thematic focus of Book I (Pss 1–41) is said to be *confrontation*. This book predominantly reflects the constant confrontation between Israel’s messianic king (i.e., David) and his enemies as he attempts to establish his messianic kingdom (p. 53). A prominent structural feature of this book is the strategic placement of four acrostic psalms (Pss 9/10, 25, 34, and 37) to divide this large book into smaller units and, thereby, to aid in its memorization (p. 81).

Book II (Pss 42–72) witnesses a progression from David’s personal struggle to establish his kingship to the struggle between the people of Elohim and their corporate enemies (p. 90). But while struggle continues, the psalmist’s effort to *communicate* a message of hope to his enemies arises as the distinctive message of Book II (p. 107). The thematic focus of Book III (Pss 73–89) is *devastation*. In these seventeen psalms, Robertson detects a shift in perspective to the corporate community of God’s people and their devastation by international forces (p. 122).

The perspective of the Psalter shifts once again in Book IV (Pss 90–106). The distinctive focus of this book is that exile brought *maturity* to the people of God (pp. 147–148). The refrain “*Yahweh Malak*” (“Yahweh is King”) emerges as a distinctive statement in this book, triumphantly declared in the midst of the distress of exile

(p. 153). At the same time, Book IV also encourages “a resurgence of hope in the kingdom of the Davidic Messiah” (p. 147). Finally, the *consummation* of the kingdom of God is the major theme of Book V (Pss 107–150) (p. 184). As with Book IV, Book V also fosters hope in a Davidic Messiah, as evidenced by the presence of fifteen Davidic psalms (Pss 108–110, 122, 124, 131, 133, and 138–145) (pp. 190–195, 224–229).

Robertson’s work contributes to the ongoing discussion of the Psalter’s canonical shape in at least the following three areas. First, it makes important methodological contributions. While, like other similar studies, he takes into consideration psalm titles, genre, and key-word associations, for Robertson the *substance* of the psalms “overrides all other considerations of structure” (p. 239; see also p. 52 n. 6 and p. 92 n. 8). Throughout the book he demonstrates how this focus has the potential to shed new light on the Psalter’s structure. To give only one example, even though Pss 49–50 and 51–52 are attributed to different authors, Robertson contends that an analysis of their content uncovers a chiasmic structure that binds these four psalms together (pp. 90–95). Focusing primarily on the psalm titles in this section of the Psalter, previous studies (e.g., Wilson’s *Editing of the Hebrew Psalter*) have overlooked this possibility. A second methodological contribution is the way in which Robertson attempts to take *all* of the evidence into consideration in reaching conclusions about the Psalter’s structure and message. For example, rather than concentrating only on psalms that most clearly support his thesis, Robertson attempts to show how *each* of the seventeen psalms in Book III supports his contention that the book’s major theme is “devastation” (pp. 122–146). Such is a welcome corrective in an area of study where, all too often, claims about the Psalter’s structure or message are based primarily upon a select group of psalms, such as those appearing at the opening or closing “seams” of the five books (e.g., Wilson’s *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter* [SBL, 1985]; deClaisse-Walford’s *Reading from the Beginning* [Mercer, 1997]).

A further contribution is Robertson’s concern to trace the pastoral implications of the Psalter’s canonical shape. An illustration of this concern comes from his discussion of the structural role played by acrostic psalms in Book I. He observes that Pss 34 and 37 bracket four psalms of the innocent sufferer (Pss 34–37) and are followed by four psalms of the guilty sufferer (Pss 38–41). Robertson then points to the pastoral value of his structural observations: “a pastor who is aware of the bracketing function of acrostics 34 and 37 could be significantly helped in counseling persons struggling with either innocence or guilt in their response to suffering” (p. 80). Another example is found in the conclusion of this same section. Robertson discusses how attention to the structural role of the acrostics in Book I “could serve as a great blessing for the church of Jesus Christ today” by aiding in memorization of the majority of the book (p. 82).

A final contribution to be mentioned is the author’s suggestion that the structure of the Psalter may have impacted the New Testament authors’ usage of psalms. Robertson asks, for example, how John, Luke, and Paul could use the same psalm (i.e.,

Ps 69) to support four different aspects of redemptive history (p. 117). In response to this question, he suggests that “the position of this psalm immediately after the “dialogue” between the cry for help of the messianic king and the affirmation of God’s undisturbed reign (Pss 61–68) could provide a partial answer” (p. 117). Similarly, he suggests that the quote from Ps 82:6 in John 10:34 may have been based upon the author’s knowledge of the psalm’s broader context. According to Robertson, this context is a deliberately arranged group of psalms (Pss 77–83) that centers on Ps 80, a psalm presenting Messiah as God’s “Son” who suffers and is gloried (pp. 136–137).

This book will appeal to any serious student of the Psalter. Accessible enough for the novice, especially those looking for an entry point into the exciting study of the Psalter’s canonical shape, Robertson’s thought-provoking analysis and interaction with the scholarly literature makes this book both appealing and valuable to the specialist as well. *The Flow of the Psalms* is a welcome contribution to Psalms studies.

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Sanders, E. P. *Paul: The Apostle’s Life, Letters, and Thought*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015, pp. 777, \$39, paperback.

E. P. Sanders is one of the most well-known New Testament scholars in the world today due to the tremendous influence of his 1977 book *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*. His commanding explanation of the “pattern of religion” found in rabbinic and Second Temple Jewish sources turned Pauline scholarship away from previous caricatures of Judaism to a fresh interaction with the primary sources. It also laid the foundation for the “new perspective” on Paul.

But although we are familiar with Sanders the scholar, in this book we meet Sanders the teacher. *Paul* is a book written by the retired Duke professor for undergraduate students. It is a complete exposition of the apostle’s undisputed letters, and, while Sanders has written several books on Paul, this is the first one in which he addresses all of Paul’s thought in one place. This book gives us another side of Sanders—here we get a peek inside of his lecture hall where Sanders quotes Shakespeare, Milton, Kipling, and Poe; explains how he teaches his Greek students to bring out the force of Paul’s phrase *me genoito* (“Hell, no!”); tells us how striking he finds Paul’s boasting in weakness and that Galatians 3:6–29 is his “favorite argument in the whole world” (p.536); notes his great admiration for the commentaries of J. B. Lightfoot; and even recounts the conclusions of previous student term papers.

The book begins with four chapters on Paul’s life, examining the evidence of both Acts and Paul’s letters. He tends to see contradictions between these two bodies of evidence rather than attempting to harmonize apparent discrepancies. He emphasizes Paul’s background in the Greek-speaking Diaspora, questioning the claim of Acts that

Paul's education was in Jerusalem and arguing against Martin Hengel that "Hebrew of Hebrews" (Phil 3:5) does not refer to Paul's ability to speak Hebrew but rather to Paul's lineage (pp.24-28). Sanders argues that we do not see many traces of unique Pharisaic ideas like precise application of the law in Paul's letters (p.54) and that Paul's role in persecution was not linked particularly to his being a Pharisee (pp.80-81). In this section we see a glimpse into Sanders' great learning of ancient Jewish literature, but in my view he probably overemphasizes Paul's background in the Greek-speaking Diaspora. For example, Sanders suggests that Paul's Bible was the LXX (the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible) which he had probably memorized as a boy (pp.60-62, 72-76). But while Paul certainly made use of these Greek translations and he may have memorized them, his quotations sometimes differ from our copies of the LXX and follow our copies of the Hebrew Bible (MT) instead. Further, Paul never claims the inspiration of the Greek translation as Philo does of the Greek translation of the law (*Life of Moses* II.37).

Was Paul converted to Christianity? Sanders rightly notes that this common question is really is a debate over the meaning of "conversion"—if it means that Paul "turned from" the Jewish God then he did not convert, but if it means that he "turned to" a new revelation of the Lord then we can say he was converted (2 Cor 3:16) (pp.101-102). Sanders argues that Paul then became apostle to the Gentiles and only indirectly to the Jews (appealing to Rom 11 and seeing a contradiction with Acts). In typical Sanders fashion, he summarizes the apostle's message under several bullet points: "(1) God had sent his Son; (2) he suffered and died by crucifixion for the benefit of humanity; (3) he was raised and was now in heaven; (4) he would soon return; and (5) those who belonged to him would live with him forever" (p.119). He then offers some interesting reflection on how Paul traveled (probably by foot) and how he financed his journeys (not by inherited wealth but through patrons). Some reflection on 1 Corinthians 9 might have rounded out the picture here.

The heart of this book comprises nineteen chapters on Paul's letters, in which Sanders the teacher engages their major "topics" (an important exercise in which he makes his students engage). Two chapters introduce the letters, followed by two on 1 Thessalonians, seven on the Corinthian correspondence, four on Galatians, one on Philippians, and three on Romans. Sanders only covers the seven letters whose authorship is undisputed (really six, as he does not discuss Philemon in depth). So he does not discuss Ephesians, Colossians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, or Titus. I can't imagine how long this book would be if he discussed all thirteen! He argues that Paul dictated the letters himself, that he did not revise them, and that "they reveal his mind at work" (p.155). He very tentatively holds to John Knox's position that Onesimus the runaway slave later became the bishop of Ephesus and compiled Paul's letter collection (pp.155-57). Finally, he takes a chronological approach in his presentation because he has come to the conclusion that it is important to study *development* in Paul's thought (a change from his earlier view [p. xxxi]). By "development"

Sanders does not mean that Paul changed or retracted his earlier positions but that he grew in his understanding of the significance of Christ Jesus (p.172). At the end of the day Sanders most discusses development in Paul's eschatology as Paul wrestled with the imminence of the Lord's return.

Regarding matters of introduction, Sanders argues that 2 Corinthians has been edited. Originally 2 Corinthians 10-13 was the painful letter written before 2 Corinthians 1-9 (p.231). It is also possible that 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 is part of the letter that Paul wrote the church before 1 Corinthians (ibid.). While he sees merit in the idea that the difficult 1 Corinthians 14:33b-36 was a secondary edition, he ultimately argues that Paul is probably answering different questions, "one about head-coverings (chap. 11) and one about one particular female member on the congregation who tried to do all the talking (chap. 14)" (p.286) The two pieces of advice are truly contradictory—"the one *true contradiction* in Paul's letters of which I am aware" (p.287). But it is only a contradiction in that Paul applies one maxim in one case and another in another (ibid.). Sanders views 2 Corinthians 8-9 as the last part of the Corinthian correspondence (p.434). He holds to the North Galatian Theory of the audience of Galatians, and he suggests that the letter must have been written after Corinthians but before Romans because of theological developments (p.448). Philippians was written between Galatians and Romans during an imprisonment in Ephesus (pp.582-83). And Romans was Paul's final letter whose main theme is the equality of Jews and Gentiles before God (p.615).

One of major theses of this book is that students and scholars should distinguish Paul's conclusions and the reasons for those conclusions from Paul's actual arguments as they are presented in his letters. Paul's conclusions are usually clear, but his *arguments* are what make him so difficult to understand (p. xvi). Moreover, Paul's conclusions typically came to him before he had formulated his arguments (p. xxviii). Readers familiar with Sanders will recognize this statement as a variation of his well-known idea that for Paul the "solution" of Jesus Christ came to him before he developed the "plight" of human sinfulness. Finally, Sanders argues that we should assume that Paul's conclusions were more important to him than his arguments (ibid.). This line of thought comes up so frequently in the book that I do not think it is an overstatement to call it the most important idea of the book (e.g., pp.283, 315, 466, 473, 536-37, 628, 654). In my view, it is also one the weakest ideas of the book. While Sanders is probably correct to observe that Paul worked out his arguments after coming to his conclusions, does he expect us to believe that Paul did not actually think his arguments were important, valid, and true (i.e., good reasons to come to this conclusion)? Granted, we can sometimes overstate our arguments in the midst of a heated verbal debate. But was Paul constantly doing that in his written letters—making arguments he knew to be incorrect because he was so convinced of his conclusions? If we asked Paul, "Are your arguments good arguments?" would he say "no, I just said that because I was so convinced of my conclusion for other reasons." This view seems unlikely to

me. With that said, I do think Sanders makes a helpful point that Paul's arguments are those of a first-century Jew, and this is why he is sometimes so confusing to modern readers (e.g., the typological argument of 1 Cor 10:6-13 [p.315]).

Some of the major theses of this book peak to the issues at the heart of the new perspective on Paul. Sanders argues throughout for a sharp separation between "works of the law" and good deeds in Paul's letters (p.498). "Works of the law" in Galatians and Romans refer mainly to circumcision (p.513; 630), not charitable deeds (p.562). This is a well-known position of the new perspective, and Sanders is sometimes very strong on this point: "These verses against reliance on 'works of the law' are often converted into reliance on 'good works or 'good deeds,' the sorts of things for which Boy Scouts and others are applauded. And then it is thought that Paul was against 'good deeds.' Nothing could be a worse perversion of what Paul wrote. As we have seen several times, he was 100 percent in favor of good deeds and urged people to do more and more (1 Thess. 4:10)" (p.630). Sanders is right that Paul says Christians should pursue good works and "fulfill" the law through love of neighbor. He is also right that circumcision is the major issue in Paul's statements about "works of the law" in Galatians. But he fails to interact with the many critics of the new perspective who point out that Paul's statements against relying on "works of the law" actually do refer to moral obedience and not merely the boundary markers that distinguished Jews from Gentiles—e.g., Paul's statement that no one will be justified by works of the law in Romans 3:20 concludes an argument which accuses all people of being under the power of sin or not having done what is good (cf. Rom 4:6-8 and Rom 9:11).

I was very interested to see that Sanders continues to emphasize a point often quoted from *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*—namely, the idea that Paul's most important criticism of Judaism is that it was not Christianity. Paul's most important critique was certainly not legalism (a point Sanders makes very clear), and it was not even a critique of ethnocentrism (as many other new perspective scholars have argued). Rather, "According to Rom. 10:1-4, *what is wrong with the Jews is that they are not Christian; what is wrong with Judaism is that it does not accept Christianity*" (681; cf. 536-37, pp.610-611, and 611n35). There is certainly truth in this claim. At the heart of Paul's critique of Judaism is that the Jewish people as a whole did not confess Jesus as Lord. However, Paul's logic in Romans 9:30-33 and 10:1-4, two parallel passages that basically make the same point, is that it was their attempt to establish their own righteousness with the law that actually led the Jewish people away from believing in Christ (on this important criticism of the new perspective see Dane Ortlund's *Zeal Without Knowledge*, Bloomsbury, 2014). In other words, Paul does seem to have a category for a kind of "self-righteousness" that leads one away from accepting the righteousness of God through faith in Christ. How does Sanders respond to this logic? Romans 9:30-33 represents Paul's argument, not his actual conclusion (pp.677-80).

As a critic of the new perspective, I clearly disagree with some of Sanders's conclusions. But even on these contested issues of Paul and the Law, I think his

observations are helpful—e.g., the way he frames Paul’s wrestling with “two dispensations” (the coming of the law and the coming of Christ). He really listens to Paul and attempts to explain him accurately. His writing is clear and passionate. And he is intellectually honest, willing to admit when he does not know something and telling readers when he personally disagrees with Paul on some issue.

How should students think about this book? If they are looking for a basic introduction to the new perspective on Paul, this may not be the first book to read. N. T. Wright’s *What St. Paul Really Said* is shorter and more accessible. If they are looking to dig deeper into the most important contributions of E. P. Sanders, this may not be the right book either. His most influential books on Paul will likely continue to be *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* and *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People*. However, if they are looking for a basic introduction to Paul’s letters and thought, this would be a very helpful book. Sanders makes it clear from the beginning of the book that he writes as a historian, not as a theologian (pp. xxxiv-v). Sometimes his theology does peak through, which is basically a liberal Protestant perspective. But for the most part he follows his claim to stick with history, making this book a treasure trove of historical information about Paul’s life and letters.

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Hartenstein, Friedhelm, and Konrad Schmid, eds. *Abschied von der Priesterschrift? Zum Stand der Pentateuchdebatte. Veröffentlichungen der Wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaft für Theologie 40. Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2015. pp. 218. €38, paperback.*

The collapse of the Documentary Hypothesis beginning in the 1970s left many of the traditional results of critical Pentateuchal research in its wake. Despite the renunciation of the existence of the Yahwist and Elohist sources by Rolf Rendtorff and others, the Priestly Writing (P) has survived largely unscathed, although its characterization as a source is no longer taken for granted. A litany of questions now revolves around the nature of P as a source or redactional layer as well as P’s extent and internal stratification. A group of continental scholars gathered to address these and related issues in the Old Testament section of the Wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaft für Theologie in May 2012 at Stuttgart-Hohenheim.

Christoph Levin surveys the history of research on the nature of P and its composition, particularly within the framework of documentary, fragmentary, and supplementary models. Levin finds persuasive the arguments in favor of P’s literary independence and attributes the emergence of a separate Priestly history parallel to the Yahwistic/non-P history to the uniqueness of the Priestly worldview, particularly regarding the revelation of God’s name and offering sacrifices. For Erhard Blum, the

patriarchal traditions of Genesis reveal a varied profile of the Priestly texts. Narrative gaps and the presupposing of pre-P traditions and literary contexts suggest that P is a redaction, but coherent narrative threads provide evidence for an originally independent source. To account for both types of evidence, Blum proposes a multi-staged process for P's composition: Priestly tradents composed drafts of P that aimed toward combination with the non-P traditions from the outset. At a secondary stage, the Priestly tradents combined their P drafts with the non-P materials. In this way, the Priestly tradents function as both the authors and redactors of P. Jan Christian Gertz's examination of Gen 5 argues that the Priestly texts in Gen 1–11 originally constituted an independent source. Gertz counters several common arguments that suggest P is a redactional layer with traditional literary-critical observations. Most uniquely, Gertz proposes that SamP Gen 5, which he considers older than the MT and LXX versions, forms a non-narrative introduction to P's Flood story and prepares the way for the statement of worldwide corruption in 6:11–13. The first five individuals listed in the genealogy establish a life expectancy of around 900 years. The second five individuals, excluding Enoch and Noah due to their close relationships with God, suggest an inverse relationship: increased worldwide sin results in a decrease in length of life. Christoph Berner considers the Priestly texts in Exod 1–14 a redactional supplement to the pre-P texts, but the overall redactional history of the Exodus narratives is significantly more complicated. Berner detects four major editorial layers: (1) a pre-P layer that is much smaller than traditionally assumed; (2) a Priestly expansion of the pre-P texts (=P¹, which is basically the same as the traditional Priestly *Grundschrift* [P^g] or "basic layer"); (3) substantial post-P additions that are part of a broader late-Deuteronomistic Hexateuchal redaction; and (4) a secondary Priestly layer (=P²) that corresponds to Reinhard Achenbach's "theocratic revision" in the book of Numbers. Thomas Römer considers the same texts as Berner, but arrives at different results. The P texts in Exod 6; 7–9; and 14 originally constituted a continuous and independent narrative thread. Doublets (e.g., Exod 3//Exod 6) provide the most persuasive evidence for originally independent sources, since supplementary models expect a Priestly redaction of pre-P traditions to produce a less fractured narrative. Römer recognizes the absence of an introduction for Moses in P, which is problematic for source models but finds it more compelling to believe that the Priestly tradents assumed familiarity with the Moses traditions or that parts of the Priestly thread were omitted when they were worked into the Pentateuchal narrative than it is to believe that supplementary models would produce doublets. Eckart Otto investigates the relationship between post-exilic *Fortschreibungen* in Leviticus and Deuteronomy. Although Lev 17–26 receives and adapts the Deuteronomistic Code, Deut 11:13–17 evinces reception of Lev 26. Deut 11:13–17 contains lexemes otherwise unique to Lev 26 and raises questions about circumcision of the heart that only find their answer in Deut 11. Also, whereas Yhwh speaks in first person in Lev 26, Moses takes on Yhwh's words in first person in Deut 11:13–15 rather than in a third person report of Yhwh's

speech. Despite the grammatical awkwardness, Moses's adoption of the first person speech is purposeful: it betrays dependence upon Lev 26 and functions as a bridge to Deut 28 by highlighting Moses's role as prophetic interpreter of Torah. Christophe Nihan explores Pentateuchal models of composition and stratification through the lens of Lev 26. He concludes that Lev 26's concept of covenant presupposes the integration of P and non-P materials in Genesis and Exodus. The author who inserted Lev 17–26 into its present location has a much more limited role than previously thought. He is not the redactor of the entire Pentateuch or associated with a Holiness School. Instead, this author's work coincides with the emergence and redaction of Leviticus as an individual book (scroll). By the time of the insertion of Lev 27, a major break between the scrolls of Leviticus and Numbers had been firmly established.

The present volume's title bears obvious formal similarities to the 2002 collection of essays entitled *Abschied vom Jahwist* (and the English edition *Farewell to the Yahwist?*, SBL, 2006), but the contributors do not bid adieu to the Priestly Writing in the same way that scholars have increasingly rejected the traditional conception of a Yahwist. They maintain that the Priestly Writing (along with Deuteronomy) still comprises the cornerstone of critical research, but the proliferation of models to explain the literary character of the Priestly texts highlights many exegetical disagreements. The contributors' work represents the triumph of tradition-historical criticism at least in the sense that the literary character of P must be evaluated in a sort of piecemeal fashion. So for instance, the source character of Gen 1–11 cannot be extrapolated and applied to the ancestral traditions. Each block of tradition must first be evaluated on its own, and only after all the relevant texts have been examined can a broader synthesis be pursued. All contributors incorporate a range of critical methodologies in their studies, but redaction criticism is generally given pride of place. The essays by Gertz and Otto highlight the increasing importance of text-critical studies for literary criticism. Nihan's association of Lev 26 with the redaction of the book of Leviticus is provocative and potentially raises similar questions about the redaction of Genesis and Exodus as books, although Leviticus may be uniquely situated for such questions due to its thoroughly Priestly character.

My most significant reservation is the tendency to assign an increasing number of texts to post-Priestly strata. David Carr in particular has pointed out that the criterion of the coordination/harmonization of Priestly and non-Priestly language on its own is insufficient to assign texts to post-Priestly strata. According to Carr, scribes employed processes of coordination and harmonization both before and after the combination of the Priestly and non-Priestly materials. Such observations suggest that the distribution of Priestly and non-Priestly materials is not nearly as neat and even as might be expected. Simply because a given text contains both Priestly and non-Priestly terms or concepts does not necessarily mean that such coordination/harmonization only emerges in post-Priestly layers of the Pentateuch/Hexateuch. That said, Otto's article,

which posits arguments for direction of dependence in post-Priestly layers of Leviticus and Deuteronomy, exemplifies plausible ways forward.

For (especially non-German-speaking) students of biblical studies, *Abschied von der Priesterschrift?* contributes much more than simply a look at present continental studies of the Priestly strata of the Pentateuch. Levin's concise but thorough review of research is a useful entry point into current scholarship on P. Because the articles by Berner and Römer analyze the same texts, they serve as a particularly helpful way to compare how different scholars prioritize different types of evidence and methodological approaches in order to arrive at workable results. Without prior introduction to critical studies of the Pentateuch, the various labels for different Priestly strata (the more traditional P^g, P^s, H; Blum's KP; Berner's P¹, P²; etc.) might be confusing. Introductions to Pentateuchal studies like those by Jean-Louis Ska (*Introduction to Reading the Pentateuch*, Eisenbrauns, 2006) and Joseph Blenkinsopp (*The Pentateuch*, Yale University Press, 2000) will be particularly helpful for filling such introductory gaps.

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Kuruville, Abraham. *A Vision for Preaching: Understanding the Heart of Pastoral Ministry*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2015, pp 224, \$21.99, softcover.

Abraham Kuruville (MD, University of Kerala; PhD, Baylor College of Medicine; PhD, University of Aberdeen) is research professor of pastoral ministries at Dallas Theological Seminary. He is also a dermatologist in private practice. As the consummate skin doctor, Kuruville treats abnormalities of the epidermis in a clinical setting and academically reflects upon divine words transcribed on vellum scrolls. His academic emphasis centers on the intersection of hermeneutics and homiletics for faithful expository preaching. This intersection is explored in his latest book, *A Vision for Preaching*.

Kuruville's hermeneutical and homiletical proposal is encapsulated in his vision statement. He says, "Biblical preaching, by a leader of the church, in a gathering of Christians for worship, is the communication of the thrust of a pericope of Scripture discerned by theological exegesis, and of its application to that specific body of believers, that they may be conformed to the image of Christ, for the glory of God—all in the power of the Holy Spirit" (p.1). This vision forms the chapter divisions of Kuruville's book and casts a theological vision chapter by chapter for each respective component of his preaching manifesto. He also concludes each chapter with an exegetical "reflection" which are "intended not only to stimulate thought, but also to serve as illustrations of the hermeneutic proposed" (p.26 n.41).

While Kuruvilla attempts to cast a foundational vision for preaching, his most significant contribution to homiletics entails an examination “of how a particular text chosen for preaching dictates specific life change in the lives of Christians” (p.6). In Kuruvilla’s assessment, the preacher must go beyond merely applying biblical propositions. He argues that faithful expository preaching must apply the specific theological point of the preaching passage, which he labels a “pericope” (p.19 n.14). Each pericope entails a precise pericopal theology, which should drive every aspect of application (pp.96-99). In this scheme, Kuruvilla opposes principlizing the propositions of the pericope to draw out generalized and varied applications (pp.7-9). Alternatively, he asserts that preachers must apply the specific thrust of the propositions. This exact thrust is dictated by authorial intent and casts a “*world in front of the text*,” a world that the hearers are called to “inhabit” (pp.96-97). Thus, “the goal of preaching is . . . to align God’s people with God’s will in Scripture, pericope by pericope, week by week, sermon by sermon, effecting covenant renewal” (p.133).

In many ways, Kuruvilla’s paradigm of pericopal theology is groundbreaking for the discipline of homiletics. Far too often, homileticians have avoided significant discussion of hermeneutical issues. Kuruvilla believes that this neglect often leads to a default “hermeneutic of excavation—the exegetical turning over of tons of earth . . . most of it unfortunately not of any particular use for one seeking to preach a relevant message from a specific text” (p.7). To make sense of this raw data for the preaching event, many preachers resort to “distillation” (p.7). Here, the preacher “performs a distillation of the text into propositions of the sermon that are preached in formulaic fashion, with outlines, points, proofs, and arguments, and with application drawn seemingly at random somewhere along the way. . . . Thus, the dross of texts is distilled off to leave behind the precious residue of theological propositions that is then preached” (p.8).

The obvious hermeneutical problem with this scenario is that a text means something specific, and this specificity must be explicated and applied for faithful proclamation. While principlization and synthesis are valid hermeneutical moves for the discipline of systematic theology, the purpose and function of expository preaching and systematic theology are quite different. The latter is primarily meant to intellectually develop one’s theological foundation, whereas the former is meant to transform one’s intellect, emotions, and will with pericopal theology. Because each pericope calls for specific covenantal obedience, the expository preacher is not free to principlize a pericope because he would simultaneously be generalizing the pericope’s application. Since generalized applications are seen as lacking practicality, the preacher, in the name of relevance, is tempted to emphasize his own specific application which he extrapolates from the general principle. In this move from generalization to specificity, it is unlikely that the preacher’s application matches the pericope’s specific applicatory demands. Kuruvilla’s hermeneutical solution to this problem is for “the preacher [to] . . . pay close attention to the text, not just to what is being said, but also to how it is

being said and why, in order that the agenda of the author—that is, the thrust of the text, the theology of the pericope—may be discerned” (p.106). Kuruvilla is right to see that the key to faithful preaching is to re-present the pericope in its fullness.

Whereas Kuruvilla’s hermeneutic excels at the level of the pericope, he fails to see the role of redemptive-history for preaching (pp.98-99). Here, Kuruvilla neglects the sanctifying gospel in applying pericopal theology to Christians during the sermon. In its place, he proposes a concept he calls “Christiconic interpretation” (p.138). By this, he means that embracing the specific demands of pericopal theology conforms one to the corresponding attributes of the image of Christ (p.138). It appears that Kuruvilla has coined an empty phrase so that he can argue his model “[preaches] Christ” (p.140). This is seen in the fact that if one eliminates the Christiconic component from Kuruvilla’s vision, it is functionally the same concept, and reveals that Kuruvilla’s model does not actually lead one to preach Christ. This is a troublesome omission.

A Vision for Preaching is Kuruvilla’s third book on the homiletical and hermeneutical intersection of pericopal theology. It stands as a refined and much more accessible homiletic in comparison to his other two offerings (*Text to Praxis: Hermeneutics and Homiletics in Dialogue*, Boomsbury T&T Clark, 2009; *Privilege the Text! A Theological Hermeneutic for Preaching*, Moody, 2013). While the advanced student may want to engage *Privilege the Text!*, followed by *Text to Praxis*, all students should begin with *A Vision for Preaching*. This book uniquely gives students and pastors a strong theoretical and practical understanding of expository preaching that faithfully re-presents a biblical text and applies the text’s precise application. The importance of this book for the student and pastor is found in the reality that it is fairly easy to preach biblical truth from the pulpit when one is grounded in sound doctrine, but it is far more difficult to faithfully exposit a biblical text so that its peculiarities are seen and sensed by the congregation. *A Vision for Preaching* will also dissolve the mistaken notion that a preacher is faithful to his task simply because he preaches biblical truth and makes it clear and practical for the congregation. Preachers need a deeper sense of what faithful exposition entails, and Kuruvilla’s vision provides the necessary clarity to achieve expository faithfulness. At the same time, because Kuruvilla’s hermeneutic is incomplete, the student should also be acquainted with the role of biblical theology for preaching. For a good introduction on this topic, see Graeme Goldsworthy, *Preaching the Whole Bible as Christian Scripture: The Application of Biblical Theology to Expository Preaching* (Eerdmans, 2000).

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Porter, Stanley E. and Andrew W. Pitts. *Fundamentals of New Testament Textual Criticism*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015, pp. xvi + 202, \$22, paperback.

Stanley Porter and Andrew Pitts have written a new introduction to the subject of New Testament textual criticism that aims to be a “distinctly midlevel textbook” for people who have at least a basic working knowledge of New Testament Greek. The authors note the current lack of such an intermediate work on the subject. Metzger’s classic work *The Text of New Testament* (Oxford, 2005) provides a scholarly treatment of textual criticism some of which is too detailed to be useful to seminary students. On the other hand, introductory works, such as Greenlee’s *Introduction to New Testament Textual Criticism* (Baker, 1993), while they are suitable for college and first-year seminary students, do not cover some subjects or do not provide the kind of detail that students with more than one year of Koine Greek will find useful for applying text critical principles to the New Testament.

In large part, the authors have succeeded in meeting their goal of an intermediate textbook. The book’s aim of being useful to seminary students is enhanced by its covering subjects not directly under the purview of textual criticism. One example is a chapter on the formation of the canon. This is not strictly a concern of text critics, but it is a subject of interest to students as they engage in serious study of the Greek New Testament. Another chapter covers the history of the English Bible and translation theory as it relates to modern English translations. As a third example, in a chapter on types of writing materials, the authors provide a section on literacy and the function of books in the ancient world. These side discussions could prove useful for seminary students, although they are not subjects of text criticism proper.

The book begins with a chapter on basic terminology and concepts. Then, after the abovementioned chapter on the formation of the canon, it proceeds to cover topics that are standard for any book on textual criticism, including chapters on (1) writing materials, paleography, and scribal practices, (2) major New Testament witnesses, (3) text types (or families), and (4) basic concepts of textual variants. Although these topics are also found in more elementary books on textual criticism, Porter and Pitts often provide more detail. An example is in the chapter on major witnesses to the text of the New Testament, where tables are provided with details of papyrus manuscripts, majuscules, and minuscules, respectively. They are helpfully sorted by date, which provides a good running overview to the reader who is not yet familiar with the manuscripts.

The book then provides four chapters on the method of textual criticism. Chapter 7 addresses the major text-critical methodologies, including the stemmatic, the Byzantine / Majority Text, eclectic, and single-text approaches. While criticizing a “thoroughgoing eclecticism,” which relies heavily on subjective assessments of internal criteria, the authors advocate a “reasoned eclecticism” that attempts to balance

external and internal considerations, with external considerations often being given more weight. The authors conclude that a general consensus exists that this approach alone “can provide adequate objectivity for textual determinations” (p. 96). The authors do admit that reasoned eclecticism has the drawback that clear criteria do not exist for weighing evidence, for example deciding between manuscripts. A little more detail here would be helpful, for example by providing examples of the approach or approaches utilized by either of the modern critical editions – Nestle-Aland (NA27 and NA28) or the United Bible Society (UBS 4 and UBS5) – and how their committees dealt with conflicting manuscript evidence. This would be particularly helpful since the authors indicate that the Nestle-Aland and United Bible Societies editions tend to emphasize the Alexandrian text (p.95).

Chapter 8 covers the analysis of external evidence and argues for the priority of external evidence in making text-critical decisions. The chapter covers external criteria, including date and text type, geographical distribution, and genealogical relationship. The authors highlight a combined set of external criteria that consider (1) the earliest manuscripts, (2) the widest geographical spread, and (3) a lack of genealogical relationship among manuscripts (p.108).

Chapters 9 and 10 are devoted to evaluating and weighing internal evidence. The authors note that internal criteria are important when external evidence is not conclusive. Chapter 9 covers transcriptional probabilities. It begins by stating the fundamental axiom of text criticism known as *the genetic principle*, that the reading that best explains the other variants is probably original. It then covers the traditional canons of text criticism used to determine transcriptional probabilities: (1) scribal errors, (2) difficult readings, (3) shorter and longer readings, (4) less harmonized readings, (5) less grammatically refined readings, and (5) doctrinal alterations. In the final section of the chapter, they address the issue of doctrinal alterations in some detail. They interact with and challenge Bart Ehrman’s contention, in his book *Misquoting Jesus*, that scribes routinely changed their received text for doctrinal purposes. The authors conclude, *contra* Ehrman, that doctrinal alteration was rarely a factor in scribal changes, and that it is relatively less important than other criteria for reconstructing the New Testament text.

Chapter 10 looks at another fact of internal evidence: intrinsic possibilities. The factors that are considered are style, cohesion, theological and literary coherence, and linguistic conformity. Regarding style, the principle presented deals with stylistic continuity: “All other things being equal, the variant that shows the most stylistic continuity with the author’s style is most likely original” (p. 130). The authors admit up front that the word “style” is not generally defined with any precision. The authors attempt to provide more a objective basis for evaluating style by considering (1) cohesion with the immediate context, (2) coherence with the author’s theological emphases, (3) linguistic consistency and (4) the author’s use of sources.

The textual factor of cohesion is treated in some detail. The author's define cohesion in terms of what enables texts to "hang together" as a unity, and involves the evaluation of syntax and vocabulary. They go on to note that "any device or form can be used to create a cohesive pattern, and often this will aid in textual criticism." As an example, the authors examine the long ending of Mark and show how the lack of cohesion in vocabulary provides text-critical evidence that it is not original.

Another example from Colossian 3:9 is less convincing, and highlights the somewhat subjective nature of assessing "style" for making text-critical assessments. The authors note that the structure of the section from Colossians 3:5 to 3:12 involves 3 imperatives (in 3:5, 3:8, and 3:12) where in 2 cases (verses 5 and 12) the imperative is followed by a set of indicatives in secondary clauses. The imperative in verse 8, however, does not follow this pattern because according to the critical editions (both NA 27/28 and UBS 4/5), verse 9 also has an imperative and this breaks the pattern proposed for the other 2 imperatives.

The authors note the evidence of one manuscript, P⁴⁶, which has a one letter difference (a Greek *eta* instead of *epsilon*) that creates a subjunctive instead of an imperative. They propose that this would be closer to the pattern seen after the other imperatives in verses 5 and 12. They argue that based on the Paul's style, as indicated by the structure they identify, the subjunctive is the more likely reading in verse 9.

To evaluate this claim, one needs to turn to the author's explanation earlier in the chapter of when stylistic considerations might be useful for text criticism, which rightly begins with, "All other things being equal..." That is, when other text-critical factors with a higher priority are not at least moderately conclusive, then issues of style may be considered. In this case, however, external evidence supports the critical editions.

Assuming the external evidence is less than moderately compelling, one could appeal to the internal category of transcriptional probabilities. The change from Greek *epsilon* to *eta* or vice versa cannot be attributed to a straightforward example of itacism (the confusion of letters that were pronounced alike). But the P⁴⁶ variant could still be a scribal copying error. If we first assume that the subjunctive of P⁴⁶ was original, one might propose how a scribe would change this unusual form to a more expected imperative through changing one letter. But one could also argue the other way. If the style is clearly discernible, why could not the P⁴⁶ scribe have changed an imperative to a subjunctive to conform to Paul's stylistic pattern? Here the evidence is not conclusive.

Continuing with a consideration of the internal category of style in this case, the authors propose that one prohibition was substituted for another in verse 9 – that is, a scribe substituted a negated imperative for an original negated subjunctive. But the structure they identify for the passage as a whole is imperative followed by indicatives (that presumably provide explanation). They do not explain why an imperative command in verse 8 followed by a subjunctive command in verse 9 is closer to this pattern.

In addition, in order to make a case based on structural cohesion, one would have to demonstrate from Paul's writings that he tends to set up and then follow such structures consistently, and that content – for example, emphasis or repetition – could not contribute to deviating from a pattern.

In summary, the author's conclusion in this case is not warranted by the evidence. Thus, although considerations of stylistic continuity can be helpful in making text critical judgments, as shown by examining the vocabulary of the long ending of Mark, a different example than the one presented from Colossians would be more helpful.

Chapter 11 deals with modern critical editions of the New Testament and provides a useful primer for Greek students who are interested not only in the history of Greek editions but in the philosophy behind the latest Nestle-Aland (NA) and United Bible Society (UBS) critical editions.

The final chapters treat topics that are useful for seminary students although outside of the discipline of textual criticism. Chapter 12 provides a helpful guide to the critical apparatuses of both the NA and UBS editions of the New Testament. And chapter 13 discusses the history of the English Bible and gives an introduction to translation theory, both topics of interest to Greek students as they learn how not only how to use their Greek New Testaments but how to teach those who do not know Greek.

In summary, Porter and Pitts have provided a good intermediate treatment of textual criticism and some related subjects. The text normally provides good examples that illustrate the principles being presented. This book should prove useful for second-year Greek students. For those looking for more detail, Metzger's book is the standard reference work.

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Rolnick, Philip. *Origins: God, Evolution, and the Question of the Cosmos*. Waco: Baylor University Press, 2015, pp.vii + 252, \$39.95, hardback.

Philip Rolnick serves as Professor of Theology at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota as well as Chair of the Science and Theology Network in the Twin Cities. In addition to *Origins*, Rolnick has authored and edited several books, such as *Person, Grace, and God* (Eerdmans, 2007), *Analogical Possibilities: How Words Refer to God* (Oxford, 1993), *Reflections on Grace* (Cascade Books, 2007), and *Explorations in Ethics: Readings from Across the Curriculum* (Greensboro College Press, 1998). Rolnick has also written numerous chapters in books, articles, and book reviews whose topics range from evolution and theology to anthropology. *Origins* is a helpful book for any student of the Bible who seeks to understand the current debate between evolution and theology.

Rolnick approaches *Origins* with the view that “science and religious faith are not only compatible, but even mutually illuminating” (p.4); they are “partners in the search for truth” (p.5). When it comes to the origin of the universe, “divine creativity and reason are unquestionably present and scientifically discoverable” (p.6). Thus, for the believer today, learning from scientific discover can strengthen one’s faith (p.6). Rolnick sets forth the thesis that evolution—contrary to common belief—is not anti-theological to Scripture; rather, evolution is in harmony with Scripture. Part II of *Origins* deals with the so-called challenges of evolution to Christianity and shows how they are actually theological advantages. In Part III, Rolnick provides evidence from scientific discoveries of the universe’s beginning and its fine-tuning. Using the Gospel of John as a case study, Rolnick also shows how Christians have the tools to unite faith and science. Finally, Part IV seeks to set the previous chapters into the perspective of the believer’s daily life – how the Christian understands oneself and his interaction with nature and God, as well as how “the parallels between science and faith . . . can energize the faith of our time” (p.9).

There are two features about *Origins* that I would like to highlight. First, Rolnick’s work is easy to follow considering the amount of scientific jargon and data discussed. While most readers are familiar with the basics of Darwinian evolution, Rolnick is able to express more technical issues in a way that non-specialists can easily comprehend. Further, the sheer amount of scientific discoveries discussed—and the varied sub-disciplines of science they cover—illustrate the fact that Rolnick is well-versed in modern science. For instance, Rolnick’s chapters on the origin of an inhabitable universe and the finely-tuned nature of the universe present complex ideas from astronomy and astrophysics. The depth at which Rolnick interacts with current scientific discoveries serves to demonstrate that science can support key Christian beliefs regarding the origin of the universe.

The second feature worth commending is Rolnick’s attempt to demonstrate that evolution is not a challenge to theism, particularly the theistic belief in the existence of God. Reminiscent of Alvin Plantinga’s approach in *Where the Conflict Really Lies* (Oxford, 2011), Rolnick provides a more narrowly focused line of attack by addressing four traditional challenges of evolution against theism: “evolution and divine design” (p.15); “natural selection and a God of love” (p.25); “struggle, pain, and death and the goodness of creation” (p. 28); and “common ancestry and human uniqueness” (p.31). Rolnick admirably exhibits how each of the four “challenges” actually fit within a theistic view of the world. After exposing evolutionary challenges as theistic advantages, Rolnick can then render scientific discoveries not as anti-theistic fodder, but as key components of a larger theistic picture of the world.

The strength of Rolnick’s book—demonstrating the compatibility of evolution and theism—is perhaps its greatest weakness as well. Driving the entire work is Rolnick’s belief in Darwinian evolution in its entirety. For Rolnick, “the evidence discovered so well fits the theory of evolution, the theory has become predominant

among biologists—and many religious leaders” (pp.14-15). Further, because of the sheer amount of evidence supporting evolution, “denying the evidence is a poor and counterproductive way of defending the faith” (p.15). Darwinian evolution, for Rolnick, is a brute fact—a basic belief that undergirds his argumentation and even his interpretation of Scripture. As such, Rolnick allows science to speak for itself regarding evolution *in toto* instead of demonstrating *how* the current picture of evolution is correct.

Such a critique may be lost on some, but it is the opinion of this reviewer that the question of whether evolution *in toto* is accurate or not is a fundamental question. That is, one must first argue how Darwinian evolution as a system is accurate before demonstrating the compatibility between evolution and theism. As is, Rolnick’s book begs the question that scientific evidence 1) does support the complete package of evolution, and 2) is itself accurate. Accepting evolution *in toto* involves, in part, the epistemological task of interpreting scientific data and determining *how* one knows whether the data accurately portrays reality. Failing to address the epistemological underpinnings of his argument reduces the force of Rolnick’s *Origins* to a catalogue of compatible tenets of evolution and theism.

Finally, presenting Darwinian evolution as brute fact leads Rolnick to interpret Scripture through evolutionary lenses, leading to seemingly forced interpretations of particular passages. For instance, for Rolnick, the parable of the talents found in Matthew 25:14-30 “parallels and evolutionary setting” where “progress is applauded and rewarded, and standing still is forbidden” (pp.63-64). The servants who were praised “took intelligent risks and responsibly developed their initial endowments...Just as evolution is dynamic, so too is Jesus’ kingdom” (p.64). The servant who buried his talent illustrates, “in biological terms...that [he] is selected against; thrown into the outer darkness, his one talent is taken from him and given to the one who has ten” (p.64). There is a sense in which even non-scientific passages in Scripture are reinterpreted in light of evolution—a method that is problematic and dangerous.

Philip Rolnick’s *Origins* is a book that deserves attention from any Christian confronted with the relationship between evolution and Christian belief. Despite the weaknesses mentioned above, Rolnick’s work has apologetical value for the believer as it transforms key challenges against Christianity into theological advantages. For the believer who does not hold to evolution or only accepts it in part, *Origins* serves to demonstrate the probability of evolution in light of theism. Evolution need not be a defeater for theism. For the believer who does hold to evolution, *Origins* serves as a resource that tears down the wall between evolution and theism. Regardless of where one stands regarding evolution, Rolnick’s book is a good starting point into the discussion on evolution and theism. A comparable book is Karl Giberson’s *Saving Darwin: How to Be a Christian and Believe in Evolution* (HarperCollins, 2008). Similarly, William Dembski’s *Intelligent Design: The Bridge Between Science and Theology* (InterVarsity, 1999), like Rolnick, seeks to demonstrate the compatibility between science and

theology, but it does so from the perspective of Intelligent Design. Finally, Michael Behe's *Darwin's Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution* (Touchstone, 1996) challenges evolution from the argument of fine-tuning. These helpful books provide the scope of the debate within Christian circles regarding the relationship (if any) between evolution and theism.

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Vanhoozer, Kevin, and Owen Strachan, *The Pastor as Public Theologian: Reclaiming a Lost Vision*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2015, pp. 240, \$19.99, hardback.

Kevin Vanhoozer (PhD, University of Cambridge) is research professor of systematic theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. An ordained elder, he has written or edited sixteen books. Owen Strachan (PhD, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School) is associate professor of Christian theology and director of The Center for Theological and Cultural Engagement at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Also, Strachan is the author of six books, and he is the president of the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood. In addition to Vanhoozer and Strachan, pastoral contributions are woven throughout the work from twelve ministers across American and European evangelical contexts.

Vanhoozer, Strachan, and a team of seasoned practitioners provide a sweeping rebuttal to the contemporary approach of pastoral ministry. Throughout this work, readers are confronted with a passionate plea to recover a historical and biblical view that pastoral ministry is first and foremost a theological calling. The authors dispel the mentality that pastoral ministry is one of *only* praxis and robust theological reflection is reserved *only* for the academy. The authors argue that “theological minds belong in ecclesial bodies. We don’t wish to exaggerate: there is a place for academic theology, but it is *second* place. First place – pride of theological place – belongs to the pastor theologian” (p.xi, emphasis in original). The pastor theologian is not the only type of theologian, but his office is one of public *visibility* and ecclesial *necessity*.

Vanhoozer introduces the book with a riveting analysis of public, ecclesial theology. He traces historical and practical causes to establish his premise that pastors have lost their theological vision for ministry. Similarly and perhaps consequently, churches have lost their vision of a theologically robust pastoral office in favor of modern leadership and management skills gleaned from secular business practices. In order to reclaim a biblical vision, Vanhoozer wisely describes how the pastoral office is public and theological, and he provides the groundwork for prescribing a biblical and theological solution.

For Vanhoozer, a pastor is a public theologian because he says (through preaching and other ecclesial responsibilities) what God is doing in Christ. Declaring God's work in Christ is the heralding of a theological message designed by God for needy sinners. The pastor equips his congregation with the gospel, and he does so to build up an active body of believers committed to spreading the gospel to all aspects of life. Thus, a pastor is a public theologian because he is involved with people in and for community (pp.16-17).

After the introduction, the book divides neatly into two parts: In part 1, Strachan provides two chapters which focus on biblical and historical theology. Strachan writes with acute awareness of how the pastor theologian model is indeed reflected within biblical and historical theology. Thus, this book is not advocating a new paradigm for ministry but a recovery of one rooted in sound biblical practice and unquestionably evidenced through historical reflection. Strachan's chapter on biblical theology is superb. He carefully details the connections between the tri-fold office of Jesus (the *munus triplex*) as prophet, priest, and king and connecting them to pastoral theology. Strachan argues that ministers of the new covenant serve as priests by ministering grace, serve as kings by ministering wisdom, and serve as prophets by ministering truth. These ministries are emphatically theological, and they are the work of an ecclesial, public theologian. Seminary students will learn much from Strachan in this section, and seasoned pastors, at the very least, will find comforting reassurance or a helpful corrective.

In part 2, Vanhoozer provides two chapters focusing on systematic and practical theology. Readers accustomed to Vanhoozer's previous books will recognize these chapters as reflective of his other writings. Vanhoozer's writing is creative and probing, and throughout his work, he answers questions the reader does not even realize were asked. His chapter on systematic theology is historical in reflection and instructive in application. Readers are forced to consider the moods of theology (indicative and imperative). Pastoral ministry focuses on teaching the indicatives of theology, and the goal of this teaching is to "indicate *what is in Christ*" (p.110, emphasis in original). Ministers address the indicative mood through biblical literacy and a biblically informed understanding of cultural literacy. Ministers also employ the imperative mood by declaring how one is to live and pursue human flourishing in light of what is offered to believers in Christ. Throughout this chapter on practical theology, Vanhoozer refers to ministers as artisans in the house of God. As an artisan, the minister work as an Evangelist, Catechist, Liturgist, and Apologist. The twelve pastoral contributions are inserted within both parts and provide helpful reflections on the lengthier chapters. As academic theologians, one may be critical that these scholars are writing a corrective of pastor theologians. This criticism, however, loses any traction when readers grasp the helpful and wide ranging subjects the twelve pastors include in this work.

BOOK REVIEWS

Finally, the book concludes with Vanhoozer's fifty-five theses on the pastor as public theologian. Most of these thoughts are covered in one way or another in the book, but a few notable entries are worth further reflection. For example, thesis forty-eight focuses on the role of the sermon in assisting the congregation in interpreting culture. This thesis, and others, deserves further reflection, but each of them are descriptive enough that individual readers can apply them to their own contexts. While the book does not deal with the qualifications listed in 1 Timothy 3, the overall emphasis of the book does provide some substance to the qualification Paul establishes that elders should be apt to teach.

Students preparing for ministry should incorporate this book into their theological training. The authors present a compelling case rooted in various theological disciplines. Regardless of which contributor one reads, a consistent love for the church exists throughout this work, and students need to learn from this approach. The correctives listed advance needed conversations without being pushy or insensitive. Students in preparation for ministry can save themselves a lot of heartache by following the direction the book offers for ministry vision. Ultimately, pastoral ministry built upon shallow platitudes and cutting edge marketing skills are nothing more than a house of cards. And when those houses crash, many ministers do not recover. Capturing a vision of pastoral ministry embracing the role of public theologian sets a course of growth and strength for ministers and the churches they serve. In addition to this fine work, students interested in reading more widely on this subject are encouraged to read *The Pastor Theologian: Resurrecting an Ancient Vision* by Gerald Hiestand and Todd Wilson. Both Hiestand and Wilson are contributors to the work under review, and their own volume on this subject addresses additional subject matter worthy of investigation.

Throughout this work, Vanhoozer, Strachan, and their team of twelve contributors have helped shape a necessary conversation within the academy and church. The authors did not ask every question within this crucial conversation, nor did they cultivate consistently explicit examples of how to be a pastor theologian. But these observations do not hinder the helpful instruction and application within this book. My prayer is that current and future pastors will use this work and others as way to bolster the pastoral office to its theological position. May the Lord use this work to help in the reformation of pastoral calling, and may future pastors resolve to embrace their theological role as public, ecclesial theologians for the glory of Christ and His church.

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Duguid, Iain M. *The Song of Songs*. Westmont, IL: IVP Academic, 2015, pp. 160, \$15, paperback.

Iain Duguid (PhD, University of Cambridge) is professor of religion and Old Testament at Grove City College in Pennsylvania. Duguid has written several works including *Hero of Heroes: Seeing Christ in the Beatitudes* (P&R Publishing, 2001) and *Ezekiel and the Leaders of Israel* (Brill, 1994). He has also contributed volumes to several commentary series including the *Reformed Expository Commentary* (Daniel, Esther & Ruth), the *NIV Application Commentary* (Ezekiel), and *Preaching the Word* (Numbers). *Song of Songs* is a work that will benefit both student and pastor in their study of Solomon's love poem.

Duguid wrote *Song of Songs* based on "a conviction that it [Song of Songs] was not generally being preached adequately (or at all) in the evangelical or Reformed circles in which I move" (p.9). The book sets out to provide a comprehensive commentary on the text to alleviate this perceived shortcoming. This is accomplished methodically by examining questions of authorship and date, themes and structures, and concluding with an analysis of the text itself.

Duguid's work shines in two areas. First, his sensitivity to the hermeneutical issues and tendencies at play is excellent. Duguid surveys various attempts to categorize and classify the Song. These interpretations include: love song, allegory, natural, typological, and more. In this he rightly worries that "the desire for relevant application of the biblical text can make allegorists of us all" (p.31). He contends, however, that it is just as problematic for a text to exist without connection to the present. Therefore, he rightly argues for a balanced approach in understanding the text. Duguid sees the Song as it is most naturally presented, that is, as a work of wisdom from the ancient Near East speaking about marriage. This foundation is augmented by a realization that a study of human relations can have theological implications. "To put it in more explicit biblical terms, our broken human relationships tell us something about our broken relationship with God" (p.38). Duguid's interpretative lens is impressive as it allows him to remain grounded in the history and culture of the text while remaining sensitive to the metanarrative themes of Scripture itself. It is clear that Duguid seeks to be as faithful as he can to the original intent of the book.

The second excellent feature of the book is in its relevance to the modern reader. With Western, especially American, culture's preoccupation with sex and eroticism, Duguid makes a point of showing a biblical counterbalance in viewing sex. He helpfully points out that the Song does highly praise sex and views it as a beautiful gift of God, but also notes that the author of the Song doesn't go out of his way to be crass (p.95). Sex is more than a biological action biblically, it is an event in which the whole person becomes 'one', in the Genesis sense, with their partner. Students and pastors alike will find great practical application in Duguid's words on this matter.

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The only critique I would venture for Duguid's work is that he too lightly engages the history of ancient Near East and its relevance in interpretation. As noted earlier, Duguid believes the work to primarily be interpreted as a piece of wisdom literature of the ancient world. As such, the Song exists in a genre that contains other examples from neighboring cultures. This is mentioned in passing for example when Duguid speaks of Egyptian love literature (p.95). Rarely though does he engage the metaphors, images, and symbols that would be part of the genre of love literature. This omission may be due to the pastoral focus of the work, or perhaps a concern that such inclusions would push the required knowledge on the reader's part beyond a basic level. In either case the shortcoming remains. There does seem to be a missed opportunity to both advance scholarship and enrich readers in this area.

Throughout *Song of Songs* the reader is pushed to know, meditate upon, and apply biblical wisdom in regards to marriage. Duguid has written an excellent commentary that calls one to draw closer to God. This work is a welcome addition for students seeking to get an introductory view of the Song of Songs, and it will be an excellent addition to any pastor's library. In light of rising rates of divorce and a generally cavalier attitude towards sex permeating our churches, Duguid brings godly truth and offers practical applications from the Bible that can mend the broken hearted.

The Tyndale Old Testament Commentary series seeks to help readers understand the Bible as Scripture and to be able to approach it without being lost in the technical debates of academia. On that count Duguid's work is a resounding success. Students should not rely though on this as their only source for more academically focused work. Those that would wish a more serious lexical approach should consider turning to Longman's *Song of Songs* (Eerdmans, 2001) or Garrett's *Song of Songs, Lamentations* (Nelson, 2004). For more historic and cultural insight into the Song, students should consider Othmar Keel's *The Song of Songs: A Continental Commentary* (Fortress, 1997).

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Fasol, Al. *A Complete Guide to Sermon Delivery*. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996, pp. 164, \$25.89 (paperback).

Al Fasol, in his book, *A Complete Guide to Sermon Delivery*, offers those that preach a practical guide to effectively preach better and at a higher level of excellence. Fasol bases his work around six core sermon principles, that if understood and practically applied can help any preacher evolve from good to great in his sermon delivery. These six areas of focused study include vocal production, facial expression, eye contact, posture, articulation, and gestures.

In this work, Fasol makes it clear that while sermon delivery has much to do with a preacher's personality, sermon delivery must grow and change as the preacher matures and grows in his walk with God, as well as the preparation and delivery of a sermon. As we understand life and ministry, we see that healthy things grow and growing things change. Fasol in this work clearly lines out why this principle is indeed correct and how the preacher can actually achieve growth in sermon preparation and delivery. By focusing on the aspects of proper vocal production and articulation, the proper and most effective facial expressions, continued eye contact with the audience, presence, posture, and gestures the preacher becomes a very effective preaching instrument to any and all audiences.

There are several positive features to Fasol's work that are worth mentioning. Utilizing the entire body for sermon delivery is probably the most important and practical piece to Fasol's work, as he proposes that actually doing the listed exercises can the preacher train his body to actually communicate more effectively than every thought or imagined. This area is offered with many practical applications for the preacher to work through and on, with the goal of becoming an accomplished and effective communicator.

Another big strength to this work is the way that Fasol encourages the preacher to continually be looking at evaluating how well he is putting these exercises into practice and how much growth the preacher is seeing in his own sermon deliveries. Fasol encourages his readers to approach preaching in a very honest manner, to be open about evaluating where the preacher is weak, for the sake of growing in those areas and focusing on growth as the goal. Fasol assumes that if the preacher can examine his weakness honestly, then he will be better equipped to focus on those areas and actually use those weak areas to highlight the strength areas of preaching. This was a great direction to take the work in, and was very encouraging to read how weakness can be a great motivator in preaching, as this was a concept that this reader never looked at previously.

However his greatest strength is the continual push of wanting to grow better in sermon delivery. Fasol shows how personality driven preaching can actually hinder the message that is being communicated, as a preacher who is "good at preaching" can become complacent and uninterested in actually becoming a master at his preaching craft. This concept really made this reader sit back and look at his past preaching ministries to evaluate how important growth in sermon delivery is and was, while moving forward looking to utilize these areas of focus to become a better communicator, not just in the pulpit but in every aspect of life.

One of the weaknesses of this book is that the author spends a considerable amount of time addressing media relations, specifically how to prepare for radio and television, when he could have spent more focus on the sermon delivery from the pulpit. While there is some value in what Fasol has written in Chapter six, this area could be seen as adding more of an issue in contemporary preaching today.

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Radio and television preachers nowadays are everywhere and whole ministries are being committed to radio and television production. Preaching should never be a production of anything, and in today's society there are so many false prophets and teachers, even on "Christian radio and television" that the focus really should be in those areas. Fasol almost gives his thumbs up to radio and television speaking, as if that's the goal of all preachers, to reach that platform as a goal.

Again, there is value in what Fasol has proposed, but from this reader's perspective he is walking a very thin line when he expresses how to approach radio and television, because if this work is truly a complete guide to preaching, then the practical application of chapter six would be to focus on getting on radio and television, which one could argue isn't preaching or sermon delivery at all.

Fasol helps the reader to remember the importance of practice in sermon delivery and how utilizing the concepts put forth in this work are necessary to grow in sermon delivery. Fasol even goes so far as to explain that by utilizing the physical aspects of all the six areas of focus, that preachers will be able to grow in many areas, not just the vocal oration of preaching.

Many feel that preaching is just about what you say, but Fasol explains very clearly that preaching is not just or only about the message and text, but how you communicate that message physically as a whole. Fasol focuses not just on what a preacher says, but how they say it verbally, in every physical way possible, utilizing the whole body to be as effective in sermon delivery as possible.

This work is an extremely valuable resource for all preachers, as it is designed to help those who preach become better and more skilled at the art and craft of preaching. For this reader, the work is something that I am thankful for being exposed to as I look to reengage the next stage of my preaching ministry, as there is so much depth and content in it. Fasol has presented very practical steps for those who want to improve on their preaching and sermon delivery.

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Bodner, Keith. *After the Invasion: A Reading of Jeremiah 40-44*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, pp. viii + 179, \$90, hardback.

Keith Bodner is Professor of Religious Studies at Crandall University in New Brunswick, Canada. Bodner has written several books and commentaries including *Elisha's Profile in the Book of Kings: the Double Agent* (Oxford, 2013), *Jeroboam's Royal Drama* (Oxford, 2012), and *1 Samuel: A Narrative Commentary* (Sheffield Phoenix, 2008), among other titles. Bodner's writings have largely been within the area of narrative criticism. *After the Invasion* is an excellent work that will help any thoughtful student of the Bible understand the text of Jeremiah, and particularly Jeremiah 40-44, better.

After the Invasion was written “to make a contribution to the interpretation of Jer 40-44 by undertaking a reading of the text with a primary interest in the narrative poetics of the text” (p. 3). In doing this Bodner examines that text of Jeremiah 40-44 in a sequential manner and focuses on features within the narrative like characterization, geography, point of view, temporal compression, plot, intertextuality, and irony.

There are two features of this book that I would like to highlight. First, it is well-written and well researched. This work combines two things that are rare in academic books. It is well-written and easy to read. The author is exceptionally clear in the points that he is communicating while at the same time being scholarly and advancing scholarship. There are several places where this can be found within the book. One example is near the beginning of the book when Bodner is discussing plot within a story. When doing this he is interacting with academic scholarship (particularly the works of Ricoeur and Doak), but explaining the concepts in a way that the uninitiated will appreciate and understand (see pp.3-5). This work is approachable by anyone who has a basic understanding of the outworking of narrative poetics, but will be most appreciated by those who have a stronger foundation in this area.

The second admirable feature of this work that I would like to highlight is helpfulness of Bodner’s methodology and how this leads to a strong reading of the text. One of the places where this is visible is in his discussion of Jeremiah’s “double release” in Jeremiah 39:11-14 and 40:1. Many commentators spend excessive time on extremely hypothetical theories. While Bodner understands that there is a place for such theories within biblical scholarship (there are ample footnotes referencing other scholarship in the field showing that Bodner is more than familiar with history of scholarship both in the field of narrative criticism and the book of Jeremiah) he focuses on understanding the text as we have it and how Jeremiah’s “double release” functions within the narrative. Bodner supports his interpretation by discussing how plots can rearrange, expand, contract, or even repeat. This provides a much richer reading of the text as it stands. Bodner’s interpretation, that the narrator is providing different perspectives for the same event, is an extremely clear and compelling reading of the text. This understanding of the double release then allows each of the scenes to “have their own distinctive thematic emphases” (p.25). Even on the rare occasion where I do disagree with Bodner’s reading of the text it is evident that he has wrestled with the text and supported his view.

The only critiques that I would offer are that the organization of the work could be slightly clearer and it would have been helpful for Bodner to frame Jeremiah 40-44 more fully in the narrative space of 34-39. Bodner does draw the reader’s attention back to these previous chapters frequently, but the reader should be very familiar with Jeremiah 34-39 before starting this book. It would have also been helpful to the reader if the texts from Jeremiah being covered within the individual chapters would have been clearly marked within the chapter title or subtitle. Bodner does lay these out within the introduction and the texts being covered within each chapter are evident

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when reading through the book cover to cover (which is how this book is intended to be read, not like a traditional commentary), but for quicker reference and research this feature would have been helpful.

After the Invasion is a great example of how a reading of a biblical narrative should be done using narrative poetics. *After the Invasion* would be a great addition to the libraries of students and pastors. It is a great supplementary volume to any major commentary on Jeremiah and should be one of the first resources that is consulted when reading, preaching, or studying Jeremiah 40-44. This book should probably not be a student's first book in the area of narrative poetics, though this book can certainly be read and appreciated without a background in this area of study. This book does provide a prime example to students of what narrative poetics looks like when practiced. Before reading this book a student who is in the beginning stages of learning about narrative would be helped by reading introductory works in the field. I would recommend starting with the chapter on narrative within most standard hermeneutics books. The chapters on narrative in Duvall and Hays's *Grasping God's Word* (Zondervan, 2012), Patterson and Köstenberger's *Invitation to Biblical Interpretation* (Kregel, 2011), and Fee and Stuart's *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth* (Zondervan, 2014) are good very basic introductions to this field. After grasping the basic content of this study the student will be helped by consulting introductory works focused on narrative poetics like Alter's *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (Basic, 2011), Ryken's *How Bible Stories Work* (Weaver, 2015), or Longman's *Literary Approaches to Biblical Interpretation* (Zondervan, 1987). There are also several advanced works in the field by Amit (*Reading Biblical Narratives*, Fortress, 2001), Berlin (*Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative*, Eisenbrauns, 1994), Bar-Efrat (*Narrative Art in the Bible*, T&T Clark, 2004), Sternberg (*The Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, Indiana University Press, 1987), and others that the advanced student would greatly benefit from.

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