

A Theological Introduction to the Pentateuch: Interpreting the Torah as Christian Scripture. Edited by Richard S. Briggs and Joel N. Lohr. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012. 210 pp. \$22.99, paperback. ISBN: 978-0801039126.

Most studies on the Pentateuch are centered around the ever-shifting J,E,D, and P, which tends to lose sight of the theological message of the final form of the text. In contrast to this (though not departing from it completely), *A Theological Introduction to the Pentateuch: Interpreting the Torah as Christian Scripture* provides a fresh reading of the Pentateuch as a theological work. Editors Richard S. Briggs (Director of Biblical Studies and Hermeneutics at St. John's College) and Joel N. Lohr (Assistant Professor of Religious Studies at Trinity Western University) note that their intent is to approach the text with both imagination and seriousness, with concerns "both theologically orthodox and robustly critical" (p. 4). Using critical, historical, and literary methodologies, the approach that the book seeks to utilize has as its ultimate goal the type of theological concerns that the reader would bring to the text, as well as those concerns which are held within the text itself.

In many ways, *A Theological Introduction* is an homage to Walter Moberly, and the book's methodology is built upon Moberly's in several ways (helpfully pointed out in the Appendix, which also briefly discusses several of the scholar's works on the Pentateuch). Following Moberly's example, each chapter focuses on the biblical text, especially the literary dimensions of it—most particularly in the selection of a key text to "work out larger hermeneutical issues and theological conclusions" (p. 178). Additionally, each chapter provides an outline of the book, its place in the larger canon (both Old Testament and New), and a discussion of theological themes.

Richard S. Briggs writes the chapter on Genesis. He chooses the story of the Tower of Babel as his exemplary text, and begins with a "surface level," literary reading. Briggs suggests that in the Babel story the themes of punishment and blessing come together to form a theological whole. He argues that the scattering of the nations and the confusing of the tongues should be read as a form of blessing in which "a blocking of one kind of human activity [is done] in order to channel it (via the scattering) into another. In this sense, grace operates in the creating of a life and context within which human endeavor can flourish toward God" (p. 49). This is an interesting notion, but a difficult one to fully embrace in light of the negative way in which Genesis portrays the events, and the poor showing that the "nations" have, especially in the rest of the Pentateuch.

Jo Bailey Wells, who writes the chapter on Exodus, focuses on two theological aspects of the book: holiness and priesthood. The text Wells chooses is Exodus 19:1-8 (focusing especially on verses 5-6). Wells concludes that the phrases "kingdom of priests," and "a holy nation" serve as climaxes to the speech and demonstrate the nature of the relationship that the nation of Israel was to have. According to Wells, each term "expands and intensifies" the one before it. As a result, the text insists that the nation (as a whole, not as individuals) is endowed with a special call to holiness, belonging to Yahweh and relating to the rest of the world in a unique way.

Joel N. Lohr tackles the chapter on Leviticus, which is particularly enjoyable because he addresses the bias Protestant readers have had against the book for a long time. He highlights several helpful themes, particularly those of corporate responsibility and death/life. Lohr argues (correctly) that the emphasis of Leviticus is on corporate life, not the individual, and that concerns of holiness in the book are those of holiness of the people as a whole. Lohr selects Leviticus 16 (the Day of Atonement) as his exemplar text. After examining several key issues (e.g. the scapegoat), he helpfully discusses how Christian theology of substitutionary atonement owes much to this chapter. He even goes so far as to suggest that Christians "recover the purgation ritual today" (p. 109), cautioning, though, that it should not be done "as if the Christ event has not taken place" (p. 109).

Nathan MacDonald's chapter on Numbers spends much space discussing source-critical issues related to the book. He suggests that Numbers, which he dates later than the material of Deuteronomy, was written with the intention of bridging the gap between the Pentateuch (Gen.-Lev.) and Deuteronomy in light of its place in the Second Temple Period. His text is Num. 20-21, a difficult one which MacDonald suggests contains some tensions (particularly in details of the itinerary) meant to provide a deeper reflection on the itinerary from the beginning of Deuteronomy.

Rob Barrett writes on Deuteronomy, which he believes lays the foundation of a new beginning for God's people. Theologically, Barrett finds three emphases in the book. First is loyalty to YHWH, of which he writes, "without this, Israel ceases to be Israel" (p. 150). Second is blessing and curse, which Barrett argues comes at a national level and provides the framework (blessing) for the community to live in obedience to YHWH and the mean (curse) by which they may be restored to loyalty. The third theological theme is the nature of the Law in Deuteronomy, which Barrett argues provides a model of behavior for the people rather than what could be called a law code in the Western sense. Barrett chooses two texts from Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy 8 is the first, which

he believes exhibits the theological pattern of Deuteronomy with its emphasis on loyal obedience, law, and the promise of blessing and curse. His second text is 15:1-11—which addresses the law of Release—illustrating the type of idealized life under God's blessing that the people could expect, and provides an exemplar law for them to loyally follow.

This is a book for students who are beginning to take a deeper look into the Pentateuch. The authors emphasize a close reading of the final form of the text, and their devotion to a theological interpretation helps the reader stay focused on the ultimate purpose of biblical study. Each chapter is not content with only the details of an individual book, but with linking those details to the larger theological concerns of the whole canon. While not ignoring a Jewish reading of the material, the authors are careful to place the Pentateuch in a Christian context. For books such as Leviticus and Numbers, which are often (and unfortunately) ignored by Christian readers, such a reading is instructive.

I would caution the novice to read the book critically, however, as space is devoted to discussions of source-criticism, which bogs down the chapters at times. The authors in this book accept many of the basic assumptions of source-critics, even in their critical interaction with them. Thus, while not always agreeing with historical-critical scholarship, the authors do assume such details as multiple and late (exilic to post-exilic) authorship of the Pentateuch, while still conceding that much of the material could have been early. However, these issues do not take away from this book's benefits. *A Theological Introduction to the Pentateuch* does service to the study Pentateuch and I recommend it (with the aforementioned caveats) to any reader who seeks to take the first five books of the Bible seriously as theological works with a theological message to the Christian Church.

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A Historical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mind, Readings with Commentary. 2nd ed. By Peter A. Morton. Peterborough, ON: Broadview, 2010. 704 pp. \$66.95, paperback. ISBN: 978-1-5511-1852-9.

One of the rarest finds is a book on the philosophy of mind that is suitable for beginners. So many authors seem to approach the material as if they were introducing the topic to philosophy grads. Discipline specific jargon is often ubiquitous, making the language almost impenetrable for cross-disciplinary scholars looking to investigate this subject. What we need is an author who remembers what it is like to be new to a sub-

ject, an author who can explain ideas and concepts without having to resort to philosophy-specific terminology, and an author with a sufficient enough background to be able to steer his readers through the hot-button issues of the day. I have been looking for someone like this for years who would write a book that I can use to help guide my students who are interested in supplementing their theology in this area. So you can imagine my delight when I came across Peter Morton's *A Historical Introduction to the Philosophy of Mind*. The book is considered a reader, but it is so much more than that.

Morton truly introduces his readers to the philosophy of mind beginning with Plato and Aristotle and moving through Descartes to Hobbes and Berkeley. Upon this foundation Morton looks to the most prominent theories of mind, compiling articles by behaviorists such as B. F. Skinner and Noam Chomsky, by mind-brain identity theorists such as U. T. Place and J. J. C. Smart, and by functionalists such as Jerry Fodor and Ned Block. This covers much of the needed introduction that non-philosophy majors will need to begin their investigations. At this point, Morton takes the lead directing his readers to the contemporary issues. He spends the bulk of the book submitting articles on a variety of subjects within philosophy of mind. Morton groups these articles under subject headings: Artificial Intelligence, Consciousness, Propositional Attitudes, Mental Content, and Mental Causation. Morton seems to have carefully chosen each article to serve as a counter-balance to the others within the subject heading.

The wise selection of materials is not the only reason this book makes for an excellent reader. Morton takes the time to include a well-crafted introduction to each chapter. The introduction is so well written that students might find it tempting to skip the historical passages all together. The other reason that this book is so good is that Morton has included contextual writings that aid the reader in grasping how the thoughts and ideas were developed over time. For example, in the chapter following the presentation of Descartes' *Meditations*, Morton includes Antoine Arnauld's objections. In the introduction to these excerpts, Morton introduces the work: "The fourth of these Objections was written by Antoine Arnauld (1612-1694), a theologian and philosopher at the Sorbonne in Paris. Arnauld's criticism of the argument for dualism in the Sixth Meditation is very useful in understanding Descartes' reasoning" (100-101). This brief introduction is followed by almost a full page analysis of Arnauld's critic of Descartes. And to follow this up, Morton wisely includes Arnauld's objections with Descartes' response. Such additions are a tremendous help for neophytes seeking to understand a cross-discipline.

As I read through the part of the book that covered contemporary issues, I was impressed at the breadth of the discussion. My personal work does not usually include Chomsky and Skinner, other than tangentially. But I found their inclusion fitting, especially after Morton's introduction. Following his presentation of the opposing views of Skinner and Chomsky, Morton places the debate in the philosophical context with the inclusion of articles by Gilbert Ryle and Ludwig Wittgenstein: "Criticism of theories that postulate inner mental states revealed through introspection was carried out most effectively by Gilbert Ryle and Ludwig Wittgenstein, two philosophers whose aims were different from those of the logical positivists although they originated from similar concerns. . . . In their [Ryle's and Wittgenstein's] view, a study of everyday use of language is sufficient by itself to eradicate metaphysical problems" (165). Through these two sets of scholars, Morton is able to present a balanced presentation from the behaviorist point of view.

While the contemporary issues part of the book contained some unexpected discussions, it also seemed to miss at least one issue that is almost deafening in its absence. I would have liked to see the inclusion of the work being done in the field of neuroscience. a number of works, including Murphy, *Bodies and Souls, or Spirited Bodies?*, (2006); Murphy and Brown, *Did My Neurons Make Me Do It?* (Oxford, 2009), Jeeves and Brown, *Neuroscience, Psychology, and Religion: Illusions, Delusions, and Realities about Human Nature* (Templeton Foundation, 2009); Jeeves, ed. *From Cells to Souls and Beyond* (Eerdmans, 2004), Brown and Banich, *Development of the Corpus Callosum and Interhemispheric Interactions* (Psychology Press, 2000); *Understanding Wisdom*, Templeton Foundation, 2000), and Moreland and Willard, *Love Your God with All Your Mind* (NavPress, 2012); *Kingdom Triangle: Recover the Christian Mind, Renovate the Soul, Restore the Spirit's Power* (Zondervan, 2007), have been advancing the discussion of philosophy of mind through their work for or against neuroscience.

The topic of neuroscience and philosophy of the mind also has made waves in theology. The New Testament scholar Joel B. Green, writing in support of neuroscience, has published a theology book entitled *Body, Soul and Human Life*, published by Baker Academic in 2008, in which he challenges John Cooper's work, *Body, Soul, and Life Everlasting*, published by Eerdmans in 2000. If Morton was looking for an area in which he could find opposing literature, the place where philosophy of mind and neuroscience collide is a veritable gold mine. I earnestly hope that the third edition of this book includes a section on the work being done at the intersection of philosophy of mind and neuroscience.

Since the omission of a debate over neuroscience likely can be attributed to the lengthy publication process, the only negative point of

criticism that I have about the book is the way the printers bound the work. Now, I can understand the desire to save money, especially on a book that is not going to make the New York Times bestsellers list, but the flimsiness of the covers makes reading the work a physical chore. The cover is so light that it could make it through your standard photocopier without causing a jam. To hold the book in your lap or in your hand makes for a wavy reading surface. Evenness of lighting and tracking along the short lines was a real problem. I am so glad that the pages were split into two columns, otherwise finding the next line would have been much worse. The only good position for reading this publication is at a desk or table. But even then the pages still had a beautiful curve to them.

Morton's work is an excellent primer on the subject of philosophy of mind. While others purport to introduce students to this area within philosophy, this author actually starts his readers off at the beginning and brings them up to speed. This is not a book for freshmen or even sophomores, but I relish the opportunity to walk through this text with my upper-classmen, those interested in exploring ideas that can enhance their theological education.

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***A Quest for the Assumed LXX Vorlage of the Explicit Quotations in Hebrews.* By Gert J. Steyn. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011. xiv + 458 pp. \$218.00, hardcover. ISBN 978-3-647-53099-4.**

Gert Steyn's book, *A Quest For the Assumed LXX Vorlage of the Explicit Quotations in Hebrews*, identifies and addresses an area of great need in the scholarly community: identifying the text that lay behind the quotations found in the New Testament. He understands that proper interpretation of the text hinges on having some understanding of the origin and content of the *Vorlage*. His claim is that unless one has some understanding of the origin and version of these quotations, attempts to answer the question of variant readings and eventually to interpret the text, are in vain.

Steyn is very adept in his field and knows the gaps in the research, which became the resultant rationale for this study. According to Steyn, we need a comprehensive study, or comparative analysis on all of the new data that has become available, that is, new witnesses available among the DSS, LXX, and NT texts, and a comparative study on the similarities between the thought world and writings of Philo and He-

brews. These are just a few of the areas he sees as lacking in scholarship, areas which he seeks to supply in this book.

In this study, Steyn has identified 14 pairs of explicit quotations following distinct theological motifs. Some of the motifs addressed include the motif of the exalted King, the Hymn of the ‘Pioneer of Salvation,’ the motif of rest, the motif of a Royal Priest – like Melchizedek, and the motif of cultic worship/sacrifices, to name a few. It appears that the organization of the argument in Hebrews could follow these theological motifs, but a discussion about it is not conclusive. The process focuses on a thorough examination of each of these explicit quotation pairs, researching all available resources to date and exploring every variant reading. Steyn not only does the text critical work, but he also probes for answers to questions such as: What was the source of these explicit quotations? Why did he select the passages he selected? Is there any evidence of pre-existing combinations of quotations? Do these quotes indicate the possible existence of an early *testimonium*-collection? Were certain groupings of verses known in the early church? Were they parts of an early liturgy? Or was this the establishing of an early tradition? Steyn takes a scientific approach: a) collecting available evidence, b) analyzing and comparing the available evidence, c) describing the results of the comparative analysis, and d) evaluating those results with great caution in the light of the question which drives his experiment. He does the painstakingly technical work to trace possible text traditions for each passage and explores 5 hypotheses to explain the explicit quotations of Scripture in Hebrews: 1) The *testimonia* hypothesis, 2) the liturgy hypothesis, 3) the homily hypothesis, 4) the Midrash hypothesis, and 5) a different LXX *Vorlage* hypothesis. But, although the study is mainly focused on the textual form, the function of the quotations as used by the author has to be taken into consideration in order to determine a possible source. The author also addresses hermeneutical adaptation for each passage and remarks on interpretation issues, which he does in a way that is both scholarly and refreshingly evangelical.

In his conclusion, Steyn charts the relationships between motifs and quoted verses from the DSS, common quotations, or overlap and similarities in Hebrews with Philo, as well as common passages quoted in other NT books. The fact that 75% of all explicit quotations in Hebrews were also quoted in other early Jewish and Christian literature is significant. This opens the door for a whole new area of research ... yet another “gap” in the scholarship he has identified. His findings are displayed in charts, making the relationship between different sources clear. His treatment of the new evidence, along with suggestions for a revision of the eclectic text both of the LXX and the NT, is extremely thought provoking. Although the NT text is updated regularly (there is already new

manuscript evidence that has not been included in the NTG27 text critical apparatus), the LXX (Rahlfs) eclectic text has not been updated since 1935. This book underscores the need to have all textual evidence logged and made available, if not in an eclectic text, then online where other scholars can access it. Steyn's charts on the variant readings in both the LXX and the NT are extremely informative, and invaluable for text critical work in Hebrews.

In this book, Steyn proposed to "*attempt to address (at least some of) these gaps in the research by investigating the unresolved matter of the origin(s) and version(s) of the Vorlage(n) that were utilized for the explicit quotations in Ad Hebraeos*" (p. 18). I believe he accomplishes this goal, and more. Gert Steyn has given us, not only a very useful tool for scholarly NT/LXX studies, but he's given us a map to follow in the process.

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***The Moral world of James: Setting the Epistle in its Greco-Roman and Judaic Environments.* By James Riley Strange. New York: Peter Lang, 2010. 237 pp. \$88.95, hardcover. ISBN-13: 978-1433108815.**

The coherent message and theme, or possible lack thereof, in the epistle of James has become a topic for much research in the last several decades. The results have been varied. But more than once it has been suggested that the epistle of James finds coherency in its emphasis on community behavior. Dr. James Riley Strange has built this assessment of James's epistle around this theme of community behavior. Dr. Strange's work is a revision of his 2007 Ph.D. dissertation, completed at Emory University,

The primary thesis of this book is that the moral system of James's community is comparable, in many ways to those systems held by other communities of the ancient Greco-Roman and Judaic worlds. Strange builds his discussion on an exposition of James 5:13-20 in which he finds four particular moral/religious acts (prayer, healing, confession and correction). These acts all have implications for community health and solidarity, and provide categories for comparison with the texts of other ancient communities. By comparing James with other similar texts, Strange attempts to show his reader not only the similarities in James but also James's distinct emphasis on community formation and survival, and the distinct religious and moral system that James proposes for such communities.

In the first part of his book Strange demonstrates James's concern for community solidarity and maintenance, particularly in James 5:13-20, but also in the entire letter. Sin, repentance, healing and salvation, are all related to James's concern for community solidarity. The sins that James addresses are those that occur within the community and threaten its solidarity. Sickness is related to those sins. Confession, correction and healing are all restorative not only for the individual but also for the community. Morality in James is also community oriented. This thesis is worked out throughout the book.

In the remaining chapters of this book, Strange compares the epistle to particular texts or groups of texts on the basis of the four diagnostic categories of prayer, healing, confession and correction. Part of his aim is to answer which of these moral/religious acts are done by whom in the communities that produced the ancient texts and how they relate to the community.

Part two of the book examines morals and religion in the Greco-Roman world in the centuries that make up the historical context for understanding James, and compares certain religious and moral texts of that world to the text of James. Strange examines works by three Greek writers, Plato, Plutarch, and Epictetus, and compares these works to the epistle of James on the basis of the aforementioned and other categories that accord with James. These works find particular affinities with the epistle of James in their concerns for prayer, purity, confession and correction but they do not appropriate these concerns to community solidarity as James does.

Strange examines ancient Greek magic papyri and particular inscriptions from the healing cult of Asklepios. These inscriptions and papyri demonstrate a belief in the ability of supernatural forces to act on behalf of individuals who properly petition them. James demonstrates a similar belief in his call for petitionary prayer on behalf of the sick. But the Greek inscriptions and papyri lack the positive moral character of James's petitionary prayer, as they allow for the invocation of the gods for the harm as well as the help of others. He also examines inscriptions from Asia minor that connect with James' category of confession of sins. However, these inscriptions reflect the religious practices of the individual without respect to the community concerns demonstrated in James.

Two chapters in part three establish the Judaic background for the epistle of James by comparing the epistle with moral/religious writings from Judaism. In chapter 5, the author looks at four Jewish text traditions for connections with James in the categories of prayer and healing. Again, James emerges in this context in some ways as similar, and in others as quite distinct. Chapter 6 compares James's epistle to the Qumran community instruction scroll 1QS. Both documents concern prayer,

characterization), Walsh discusses the way biblical narrative shows its characters through his actions and mediation through another character's behavior. At the end of this chapter, Walsh presents such exercises as, "Find examples where the narrator *tells* us about Jeroboam" (p. 39), and "Identify (in the Elijah story) three places where, in your opinion, a character reveals something significant about him- or herself through *speech*" (p. 40).

By continually pointing the reader back to the same three passages, and by using those passages as ways for readers to interact with the material they are learning in an actual text, *Old Testament Narrative* places itself in an excellent position as an introductory textbook. While Walsh's book may not be groundbreaking (along the lines of Alter or Berlin) its simple delivery does set it apart. The chapters are short, and do not get bogged down in numbing technicalities. Such brevity keeps the reader focused on the essentials and makes the end exercises manageable and effective. Further, Walsh helpfully provides three appendices where he discusses the answers to each of the chapter questions. This allows the student to "check his work," though Walsh is careful to point out that his answers are not necessarily the only correct ones.

This leads to one of the significant problems I had with the book. As with many modern hermeneutics, Walsh's approach is steeped in a reader-oriented hermeneutic that detracts from the authoritative nature that most Evangelicals recognize in the biblical text. For Walsh, the reader should be open to the way the author is trying to evoke a reaction from him (which is good), but at the same time take responsibility to construct the meaning of the text himself (which is not). Thus this line in his chapter on the responsibility of the reader: "the text holds the potential for many meanings and that every individual reading of a given text is likely to actualize a slightly different reading" (p. 128). While Walsh does not deny that a text can be misread (or poorly read), he does wish to stay away from labels such as "right" or "wrong," preferring instead "more or less well-founded" (p. 128). Additionally, Walsh's reading does not necessarily care whether the text is portraying actual, historical events. For him, the elements of the narrative are important—true or not. Most Evangelicals would have a problem with that, especially since much of the narrative of the Bible portrays itself as actual events, from which much of its authority is derived.

Such concerns go part and parcel with most studies on poetics, so we should ultimately judge the strength of the book on the way in which it fulfills its purpose. Walsh's goal is to provide an introduction to narrative study of the Old Testament, and the book does this. While he produces nothing new to the discipline, he does provide a helpful and well-mapped-out journey that students will find beneficial. As an instructive

tool, Walsh's approach is much needed. I recommend this book to all students of the biblical text who wish to come to grips with the narrative art of the Old Testament.

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