TMSJ 14/2 (Fall 2003) 329-359

BOOK REVIEWS

T. Desmond Alexander and David W. Baker, eds. *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2003. xxii + 954 pp. $52.00 (cloth). Reviewed by Dennis M. Swanson, Seminary Librarian

For the last several years. InterVarsity Press has been establishing itself as a leading publisher of scholarly reference works. After the completion of the four-volume *Dictionary of the New Testament* series, they have embarked on a matching four-volume set on the OT.

The editors have assembled an impressive list of nearly one hundred individual contributors who represent a full spectrum of evangelical scholars. The work includes a helpful list of the contributors with a listing of the articles they authored. The editors have a useful section on "How to Use this Dictionary" that details the structural features of the work (xi-xii). A list of abbreviations which duplicates the *Society of Biblical Literature* guidelines is a useful part of this volume. The work has a helpful two-column format with each article outlined at the beginning. All articles have rather extensive bibliographic support.

It is impossible to discuss even a small portion of the nearly 200 articles in this massive volume. Some are worthy of special note, however. The article by B. T. Arnold on "History of Pentateuchal Criticism" (622-31) is an excellent survey of the major issues and personalities in OT historical criticism. The articles on the "Date of the Exodus" (258-72) by John H. Walton and the "Exodus Route and Wilderness Itinerary" (272-80) by Peter Enns are exceptionally detailed with excellent charts. A thought-provoking article on "Preaching from the Pentateuch" is included (637-43).

The publisher is to be commended for commissioning and the editors for producing this new addition to biblical reference. The volume should serve as the standard reference work on the Pentateuch for many years.

Bill T. Arnold and Bryan E. Beyer. *Encountering the Old Testament: A Christian Survey*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999. 521 pp. $49.99 (cloth); and idem, eds. *Readings from the Ancient Near East: Primary Sources for Old Testament Study*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002. 240 pp. $19.95 (paper). Reviewed by

Keith Essex, Assistant Professor of Bible Exposition and Dennis M. Swanson, Seminary Librarian.

Bill T. Arnold, professor of Old Testament at Asbury Theological Seminary, and Bryan E. Beyer, dean and professor of Old Testament at Columbia International University, have combined to produce these two volumes in the "Encountering Biblical Studies" series of textbooks. The two books are companion works to *Encountering the New Testament: A Historical and Theological Survey* and *Readings from the First-Century World: Primary Sources for New Testament Study* by Walter A. Elwell and Robert W. Yarbrough in the same series [see *TMSJ* 10 (1999):291-93]. As their NT predecessors, these OT textbooks target an undergraduate audience, especially freshmen, and seek to provide a foundation for further college and graduate OT study.

The authors have designed the basic textbook, *Encountering the Old Testament*, to make a student's first encounter with the OT systematic and a little less daunting since "it can be overwhelming because there is so much to learn" (17). The student needs to master the content of the OT and a good deal about the ancient Near Eastern world. This textbook seeks to meet those needs in an understandably written, pedagogically sound, and visually oriented volume geared to collegians rather than lay people, pastors, or seminarians (13). To ensure that this goal was met, as this textbook was conceived, written, and produced, the publisher obtained extensive input from professors who teach OT survey courses in approximately fifty colleges (15).

The work follows the standard *Encountering* format. Each chapter begins with a brief outline of that chapter's content and a list of objectives that present the tasks the student should be able to perform after reading the chapter. The body of each chapter includes the main content, supplemented with sidebars, presenting primary source quotes in blue boxes and contemporary concerns in yellow boxes, charts, and maps. Throughout the text the authors identify key terms by the use of boldface type; the definitions of these key terms are found on the interactive CD-ROM rather than in a concluding glossary as in the NT volume. A chapter concludes with a summary, lists of key terms and key people/places, study questions, and suggestions for further reading.

The format of the text is well designed and the content presentation is suitable for a beginning student of the OT. Two introductory chapters begin the book. The first has an overview of OT canonicity and textual transmission, with an affirmation of plenary verbal inspiration and grammatical-historical interpretation (21-33). The second gives a concise introduction to OT geography and Israel's history within the context of the major periods of ancient Near Eastern [ANE] history (35-59). The following thirty-two chapters survey the OT following the order of the English Bible. Those chapters are are in four parts: "Encountering the Pentateuch" (61-154), "Encountering the Historical Books" (155-277), "Encountering the Poetic Books" (279-335), and "Encountering the Prophets" (337-473). Each

part begins with a chapter to introduct the student to key issues associated with that section of the OT. The content and themes of the OT books themselves constitute the major portion of the following chapters in each part of the text. An epilogue discussing the relationship of the OT to the NT concludes the narrative of the text (475-76). End notes (477-87) and three indexes—subject (488-99), Scripture (500-509), and name (510-12)—bring the volume to an end.

The authors' aim is to give a broad evangelical understanding of the OT. But they note, "At the same time, we recognize that people from many Christian denominations will use this book. Consequently, when we discuss issues on which evangelicals agree to disagree, we have often chosen to survey the basic interpretations and let the particular emphasis lie with the professor" (16). However, the authors do not always practice this principle. For example, Arnold surveys the evangelical positions on the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, but then states his conclusion, "In some cases Moses may have initiated a literary tradition that he later simply monitored. . . . The priests may have preserved and expanded the material, but Moses was its source" (73). Also, Beyer notes that Joel has been dated anywhere from 900 B.C. to 400 B.C., but then gives three reasons supporting 500-450 B.C. as being the correct date. On the debate concerning the date of the Exodus, Arnold concludes, "Singling out a definitive date for the exodus is currently impossible because of a lack of more complete information" (108). But Beyer's chart (23) and comment that 591 B.C. was almost a thousand years after Israel left Egypt (414) assume the early date, while Arnold's statements that the period of the Judges was approximately 200 years (50, 189) imply the later date. Nevertheless, for the most part, the authors do a solid work in guiding the beginning student through the OT.

Each book includes an interactive CD-ROM designed by Chris Miller and Phil Bassett of Cederville College. As with all of the CD-ROM products in the *Encountering* series, they are compatible on multiple platforms (Windows and Macintosh OS). The CD was tested on a range of hardware configurations from a Macintosh G4 (1.25ghz dual processor) to an older Power Mac 6100 and Pentium IV (2.65ghz) to an older Pentium II (250mhz), all utilizing CD-ROM drives from 4x to 24x. All in all, the performance was excellent on the higher-end machines, but less than adequate on the older models.

The CD supplements the text with movie clips and hypertext formatted pages that contain roughly the same material as the text in an easily navigable manner. None of the significant technical problems that plagued the NT version of the CD were present in these tests. Overall, the CD product will prove helpful to students as they attempt to work their way through the text and material; however, for optimal benefit they should have Pentium 4 or Macintosh G4 CPU's or better.

In the supplementary text, *Readings from the Ancient Near East*, the authors have endeavored to present a "basic collection of the ancient Near Eastern texts that most closely parallel or complement the biblical text" (9). In this sense the supplement is something of an undergraduate version of James Pritchard's *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton

University Press, 1950, 1955, 1969).

While the readings are helpful for illustrative and background information, the authors' tend to muddle the picture with their explanations. For example, in the section on "Creation and the Flood" (13-70), the authors state,

> The Bible's accounts of the creation of the world, the creation of humankind, and the flood were not borrowed from these [extra-biblical accounts], but neither are they unique in every respect. These parallel myths and epics from the ancient Near East illustrate that Israel was part of a larger world community and offered an alternative perspective on reality (13).

Those statements, of course, are self-contradictory and leaves the unmistakable impression that Moses and other biblical authors did "borrow" from the other texts in writing the Bible. Also to call the ANE accounts "*parallel* myths and epics" leaves the impression that the biblical text itself is "myth and epic." In other sections, such as "Wisdom Literature" (175-91), the explanations are so anemic that no real distinction is drawn between the ANE material and the biblical text. The entire work could be significantly strengthened with a more thorough discussion on the true nature of and proper relationship between Scripture and ANE literature.

Despite the above criticisms, the two volumes will undoubtedly serve undergraduate and Bible institute students well.

Walter Brueggmann. *The Land: Place as Gift, Promise and Challenge to Biblical Faith.* 2nd ed. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002. xxvii + 225pp. $17.95 (paper). Reviewed by Dennis M. Swanson, Seminary Librarian.

This volume is the second edition of Brueggmann's earlier work by the same title. As part of the *Overtures to Biblical Theology* series by the publisher, it is a thoroughly revised and updated work, with an additional chapter and updated references.

The author is the well-known professor of Old Testament at Columbia Theological Seminary and the author of numerous other works on OT themes. In this work he contends that the "land is a central, if not *the central theme* of biblical faith" (3, emphasis in the original). He builds a case that Israel's entire experience was centered on a "promised land," that while they were outside the land (as a nation), they were a homeless and helpless people (5). He attempts to demonstrate that the narrative of the OT is to be understood "in terms of that hope and in response to that promise" (ibid.), that is, the promise of God to provide Israel a land for themselves. He makes the remarkable claim that "Israel never had a desire for a relation with Yahweh in a vacuum, but only in land" (200).

The author, however, approaches the subject of the land in the OT from a theological, not an exegetical approach. He has no close examination of the relevant

passages related to the land and no attempt to deal with the prophetic passages related to the boundaries; in fact the major passages related to the boundaries of the Promised Land (e.g., Exod 23:31; Num 34:1-12; Joshua 15) receive no mention at all. He makes no attempt to examine the promises of restoration and expanded boundaries, such as in Jer 31:38-40. The remarkable passage of Ezek 47:13–48:35 is called a "powerful typology" (134), and nothing more than the refreshing of the old traditions of the land division under Joshua, which the Davidic house had "ignored and destroyed" (192).

In reading this wholly unsatisfying book, one is left with the impression that the land of the Bible, for the author, is not a real place. It is an idealistic locale, not dissimilar to C. S. Lewis' land of Narnia or J. R. R. Tolkien's Middle Earth, wherein some surrealistic drama was played out and recorded in the text of the OT. It presents yet another vacuous hermeneutical scheme, which robs the Scripture of its reality and the reader of its power.

Joseph A. Fitzmyer. *The Acts of the Apostles*. Anchor Bible, vol. 31. New York: Doubleday, 1998. xxxiv + 830 pp. $45.00 (cloth). Reviewed by Keith Essex, Assistant Professor of Bible Exposition.

Joseph A. Fitzmyer, a Jesuit priest, is a prolific writer in biblical studies who has served as president of both the Catholic Biblical Association (1970-71) and the Society of Biblical Literature (1979-80). He has earned degrees in Semitics and Greek. Although his teaching has been predominately in NT, he has also taught Aramaic and Hebrew. Among his many writings are works dealing with NT background, especially Palestinian Aramaic and the Dead Sea Scrolls [for biographical details, see *CBQ* 48 (1986):375-78]. During the past quarter century, Fitzmyer has contributed several volumes to the Anchor Bible [AB]: Luke (1981, 1985), Romans (1993), Philemon (2000), published in his eightieth year, and, the focus of this review, Acts (1998). Fitzmyer's commentary on Acts replaces the previous 1967 AB volume by Johannes Munck.

Within the AB format, Fitzmyer attempts to present a modern commentary on the book of Acts in the classic style. "It has been written from the standpoint of the historical-critical method, seeking to expound not only the literal meaning of the Lucan text with a view to setting forth the religious and theological message that the author sought to convey, but also that message in actualized form" (xiv). The volume begins with the commentator's translation of Acts (1-43). This translation reappears at the beginning of each section of commentary and is the basis of Fitzmyer's comments and notes concerning the biblical text. The translation incorporates the interpretive decisions made by Fitzmyer as spelled out in his notes. For example, the translation of Acts 4:12b reads, "for there is no other name in the whole world given to human beings through which we are to be saved" (7, 294). In

his notes on the text, the author states that the text literally translated would read, "there is no other name under heaven given among humans by which we must be saved" (302). He interprets "under heaven" as here meaning "in the whole world." Further, "we must be saved" is softened to "we are to be saved." The reader must always go to the author's notes to discover a more literal translation.

Following the initial translation, Fitzmyer provides the reader with a lengthy introduction to Acts (45-152). He takes "Acts" to mean "historical monograph" (49), regards the Luke of church tradition as the best candidate for author (50-51), and thinks that the date and place of composition has little impact on the interpretation of the book (55). Luke's purpose in Acts is "to pass on to a postapostolic age of Christians an account of the Jesus-tradition, which is intimately related to the biblical history of Israel of old, and to insist that it is only within the stream of apostolic tradition, represented by Peter and by Paul, that one finds this divinely destined salvation" (60). The Western text is not considered the original text-form of Acts, but Fitzmyer does give its translation, after his translation which is based on NA^{27}, in each section of commentary (72). Although the commentator admits that finding sources in Acts is largely a speculative question (80), this does not stop him from stating the sources Luke used for every section of the book (85-88). He concedes that Luke has imposed his own style and language on the sources so that Acts is a "thoroughly Lucan composition" (85). Based on his source material, Luke has composed the speeches that make up about a third of the narrative of Acts (103-8).

Fitzmyer provides valuable discussions of the use of the OT in Acts (90-95) and the language and style of Acts (114-18). Concerning the historical character of Acts, the author concludes that while every statement or episode is not necessarily historical, "what is recounted in Acts is substantially more trustworthy from a historical point of view than not" (127). The historical value of every episode has to be carefully checked. Fitzmyer states categorically that Luke had not read the letters of Paul (88); thus in minor details Acts does not correspond to the picture of Paul seen in his letters (129). When there is a discrepancy, the Pauline information is to be preferred (133). Five differences between the Pauline and Lucan data are discussed, but the correlation of much more of the data is significant to show the general trustworthiness of Luke's record (136-38).

An extensive general bibliography (153-87) precedes the commentary and notes (189-799). The general bibliography is in addition to the supplemental bibliographies that Fitzmyer appends to his discussions throughout the volume. In the commentary proper, the author progresses through the book of Acts narrative by narrative. Each section begins with the author's translation. Then comes the "Comment" in which a discussion of the passage's sources, structure, theological perspective, and essential message are presented. The "Notes" come next and discuss specific items of historical background and grammatical analysis. The Greek references in the notes are transliterated. A "Bibliography" for the passage concludes the section. The commentary is written from the critical perspective.

Indexes of subjects (801-9) and commentators (810-30) conclude the volume.

The release of the AB volume on Acts shortly after the completion of C. K. Barrett's two-volumes in the ICC invites comparison between the two [see *TMSJ* 13/1 (2002):101-3]. The AB has definite advantages for the beginning student and expositor of Acts. First, the material is more simply presented. Second, an outline of the book of Acts guides the commentary. Third, all of the foreign language material is translated for the English reader. Fourth, the bibliographies contain evangelical works and all the items are much more accessible in the American context than those listed in the ICC volume. However, the AB does not match the ICC in length and breadth of exegetical discussion. If one has the ICC, the AB does not add enough to make an investment in Fitzmyer prudent; if one does not have the ICC, its essential material is in the AB at a greatly reduced cost. However, the expositor does not need both; one historical-critical commentary is enough to discover how those who deny the inerrancy of Scripture interpret the book.

Victor P. Hamilton. *Handbook on the Historical Books*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001. 557 pp. $32.99 (cloth). Reviewed by Michael A. Grisanti, Associate Professor of Old Testament.

Hamilton has made another fine contribution to Old Testament studies with this volume. Alongside his earlier *Handbook on the Pentateuch* (Baker, 1982) and Robert Chisholm's *Handbook on the Prophets* (Baker, 2002), this volume introduces readers to a treatment of the OT historical books that will supplement a "history" textbook and will offer different emphases than a commentary on a given book or set of OT books.

Hamilton uses the principles of such disciplines as rhetorical criticism and inductive Bible study to get at and uncover the thrust and message of these OT books (14). He seeks to relate the structure of a given biblical book to its message. Like the rest of the series of which the work is a part, the volume's target audience is the undergraduate college student just beginning advanced biblical studies (14).

Hamilton divides the historical literature into 10 sections, treating Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, and Esther with a chapter apiece, combining 1-2 Chronicles and Ezra-Nehemiah in a chapter each, and dividing 1-2 Kings between 2 chapters (1 Kings 1–11, 1 Kings 12–2 Kings 25). He begins each chapter with brief introductory comments and an outline for the book. The rest of the chapter deals with key interpretive, rhetorical, and historical issues in accordance with that analytical outline. Although Hamilton avoids footnotes, he provides a helpful bibliography at the end of each chapter, divided into sections (commentaries-major studies and shorter studies). He has intentionally limited his bibliography to more recent books and those in English. He divides the longer bibliographies according to the section of the biblical book to which a set of references relates. He does refer

to certain key resources in the body of the chapter (within parentheses, by name, date, and page number [with full information at the end of the chapter or with full information to those sources not referenced elsewhere]). The volume ends with a brief subject index (7 pages).

This volume has several interesting features. Hamilton provides a helpful overview of *kh-r-m* (Hamilton's designation) or "to devote to destruction" (33-37), a good overview chart of judges (114), a nice chart for the structure of Ruth (189), and a helpful overview of oaths ("oaths of purgation" and "promissory oaths"; 246-47). He provides a clear and concise overview of the debate over the historicity of the Conquest (58-66). In the end, he accepts it as a historical event. According to Hamilton, Joshua's conquest represents an initial sweep throughout the land of Canaan with the subsequent occupation of the land left to the individual tribes. He also includes a number of beneficial charts. For example, he gives several that show inner-biblical thematic/content parallels (e.g., within Samuel; 110-11, 217-18) as well as a chart comparing Chronicles with Samuel–Kings (480-81; cf. 406-7). At several points he provides charts comparing four dating systems for the Divided Monarchy (Bright, Galil, Hayes/Hooker, and Thiele) with reference to a certain set of kings (417, 426, 448-49, 456-57, 463). As examples of some specific conclusions, he identifies Thutmose III as the pharaoh of the Exodus (62), contends that Jephthah sacrificed/killed his daughter (144-46), and suggests that the Egyptian ruler So is to be regarded as Tefnakht I (740-718 B.C.) (454-55).

Hamilton provides a helpful overview on several issues, but never takes a clear position. After discussing various proposaals concerning Joshua's long day, he contends that the language favors the stoppage of the sun rather than an eclipse, but does not affirm whether it actually happened or whether the passage represents a poetical description (52-55). With regard to the textual questions about Goliath's height (257) and about 1 Samuel 17 (259-61), Hamilton provides a concise overview of the options, but does not make a case for any position. He asks key questions about David's demands of Solomon when the rule over Israel was changing hands, but gives no answers (356). He offers primary positions concerning the chronological priority of Ezra and Nehemiah, but ends the discussion on an ambiguous note. A number of these issues are not "iron-clad" (i.e., they have no simple answer); however, they merit at least a general answer since the author raised the question in the first place.

Oddly, Hamilton places significant emphasis on the judges who do not receive the Spirit of God. He highlights this reality and presents it as something significant, but does not make an ultimate point (116, 119), leaving the reader somewhat confused. Contra Hamilton, the expression "whose young woman is that" is a common Hebrew idiom for "belonging," but it may not mean that Boaz viewed a young woman as a man's possession (194). By identifying the location of the "Mount Sinai" to which Elijah fled as Arabia (435), Hamilton implies that he might regard the "Mount Sinai" of the Pentateuch as a location on the Arabian peninsula as well. Unfortunately, he uses the casual phrase "goes to church" to describe

Hezekiah's visit to the Israelite Temple to pray (459).

The volume, as most written works do, has a few errors that escaped the editorial process. On page 15, a space is needed before "[see Num. 13:8....", an incorrect year is given for a work (72, the book by Schaeffer), Jehosheba hid her nephew Joash, not her brother (449), and David purchased the threshing floor of Araunah, not of "Ornan" (487).

In spite of the concerns cited above, Hamilton's volume makes a significant contribution to the "big picture" of historical literature. He is to be commended for his many charts, attention to inner-biblical coherence, and sensitivity to rhetorical structure. The volume could use an index for the various charts Hamilton includes throughout the book. Hamilton does an admirable job of introducing his readers to the flow of OT historical literature, pursuing certain specific issues along the way.

Fred A. Hartley III. *Everything by Prayer. Armin Gesswein's Keys to Spirit-Filled Living*. Camp Hill, Pa.: Christian Publications, 2003. x + 165 pp. $10.99 (paper). Reviewed by James E. Rosscup, Professor of Bible Exposition.

One of the twentieth century's famous national and international prayer leaders, Gesswein (1907—2000) was a key figure behind the scenes in Billy Graham's crucial 1949 Los Angeles evangelistic campaign. Tributes from men like Bill Bright and A. W. Tozer to Gesswein's strategic modeling of prayer appear (2-5, 8).

Ten chapters review topics such as prayer's strategic role in the upper room (Acts 1), Gesswein's leadership in prayer, Jesus' teaching and example, prayer in evangelism, pleading God's promises, prayer in sync with the Holy Spirit, prayer's vital place for the church, prayer and sovereignty, and prayer permeating the inner life. All of this is in Hartley's engaging style. He is Senior Pastor of the Lilburn Alliance Church, Lilburn, Georgia. The book's many truths can ignite momentum in prayer whether read alone or in a study group. Each chapter closes with study-guide questions for meditation and interaction.

This reviewer led seminars at a youth retreat in which Gesswein gave the keynote messages in the 1960s. For this reviewer, Hartley's book brought fresh motivation as did the memory of that occasion. Gesswein's messages were provocative. It was clear as the older Gesswein challenged the group that he exemplified the way prayer can permeate everything (cf. Phil 4:6). One phrase that he often pressed home was "plead the promises of God," i.e., let Scripture on God's will shape all of prayer and life. Those who realize Gesswein's example as a humble, focused prayer warrior will treasure even the 6 pp. of pictures on him (between 85-87).

Further sayings that can grip the heart appear. Gesswein said, "I was born for thanksgiving" (33), "Prayer is so major we dare not minor on it . . ." (52), and

"True prayer doesn't start with us; it starts with God. The only prayer that reaches the throne, started there" [actually, even selfish prayers "reach" Him] (55). One is touched by the tribute to Pearl Goode, intercessor to whom Billy Graham's wife Ruth attributed much of the *human* secret behind her husband's ministry (85).

This book offers further sayings of this stalwart believer. "Prayer must be frontal, not peripheral" (3). "We will one day be surprised to learn the invisible interplay between the private little prayer meetings and the great big public results" (3). "If the Holy Spirit doesn't do it, there is nothing to it" (9). Some sayings mislead. "When Christ ascended into heaven all he left behind was a prayer meeting. The early church didn't have a prayer meeting; the early church was the prayer meeting" (12). Though allowing prayer its great role, those fair to God's Word should recognize many other things that Christ left on earth—such as His work of redemption, His resurrection, His teaching true to but building on the OT, all His miracles as evidence of who He is and how He cares, His followers to pray and spread His Word, the expectation of His future coming to consummate His program. And the early church, while often in prayer, was many more things than just prayer. Christians ought not to push some rating system that their own man-made opinion arbitrarily exalts.

Still, the often refreshing book rightly claims that the book of Acts "shows the intimate and unfailing connection between prayer and every work of God" in ministry now (25). Gesswein wrote several books, but said he did not write one on prayer because God already had given this. In one place he speaks of "the Bible, my *real* Prayer Book" (33); on another page he inconsistently says it is the book of Acts (88). Gesswein *did* write a book on prayer: *With One Accord in One Place* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Christian Publications, 1978]. One Gesswein book, *How Can I Be Filled with the Holy Spirit?* (100), has much that is in Hartley's book, Chapter 7.

Even when citing some opinions with which many will differ, the book is a valuable stimulus for pastors, students, and lay people. It has a good focus on Bible promises that tell Christians what to expect, shape motivation, sharpen direction, and spark more and better prayer (cf. examples in Chap. 6, especially 89, 92).

Andrew E. Hill and John H. Walton. *A Survey of the Old Testament.* 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000. 608 pp. $32.99 (cloth). Reviewed by Keith Essex, Assistant Professor of Bible Exposition.

When the first edition of *A Survey of the Old Testament* was published in 1991, it was intended as a textbook to complement the 1981 revised edition of *A Survey of the New Testament* by Robert H. Gundry. The authors, Andrew E. Hill and John H. Walton, both professors of OT at Wheaton College and Graduate School, sought to follow Gundry's lead "to bring together the most significant data

from Old Testament historical and literary backgrounds, critical or technical introduction, biblical commentary, and Old Testament theology" (14). In 1994, a third edition of Gundry's NT textbook was issued in an expanded and more visually attractive format [see *TMSJ* 6 (1995):101-2]. This second edition of *A Survey of the Old Testament* follows the updated format of its NT counterpart.

Very little of the actual text of the first edition has changed in this edition. Most of the previous material is repeated verbatim in this new work. Five basic changes mark the new edition. First, topics previously introduced in five introductory chapters are now scattered throughout the major chapters and appendices of the book. Before working through the OT books in the order of the English canon, the authors introduce the reader to OT theological themes and geography, though these are no longer referred to as chapters (19-44). The discussions of ANE history (146-66), archeology (289-303), OT canon (383-99), and the basic methodology of higher criticism (571-75) are interspersed throughout the text. Though most of the changes pose no major problems for the reader, the presentation of the historical background of the Pentateuch (147-53) after the discussion of the Pentateuch itself [which interacts with the historical background] (45-143) is a weakness, particularly for the beginning student.

Second, significant terms that appear in bold face within the text are defined in a glossary (588-92). This is a very helpful feature for the first-time OT student. Third, the suggestions for further reading have added volumes written from 1990-2000. Fourth, the visual presentation has been enhanced. New maps have been included (116, 186, 241, 260, 270, 277, 422, 445); the quality of the pictures and time lines have been sharpened; 'boxed' material further explains the main text (50, 93, 127, 175, 185, 244-47, 278, 376, 413, 470, 539); and wider margins are provided for student notations. Fifth, the chapters devoted to a discussion of the biblical books now begin with a statement of the key ideas of the chapter. Also, some chapters have added questions for further study and discussion at the conclusion of the authors' presentations.

The viewpoint of the authors on major OT issues remains constant from the original text to this second edition. The historical reliability of the Pentateuch, including an early date for the patriarchal era and the Exodus, is affirmed (53-58, 65, 83-86). Further, the unity and early dating of the books of Isaiah (415-17) and Daniel (452-54) are supported. Late dates for Joel, post-exilic [the authors' do not hyphenate pre-exilic, post-exilic, pre-classical, and pre-monarchic in this second edition] (473-74), and Obadiah, shortly after the fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C. (488-89), are preferred. The one major rewritten section of the revised text is the discussion of the "rhythm of thought" in Hebrew poetry (314-15). The older work used the traditional examples of synonymous, antithetical, synthetic, emblematic, and chiastic parallelism, based primarily on thoughts or ideas. The newer edition uses the categories semantic parallelism [based on word usage], progressive parallelism [based on logical sequence], and grammatical parallelism [based on choice of grammatical forms].

The release of the second edition of *A Survey of the Old Testament* shortly after the publication of *Encountering the Old Testament* [see the review above] invites a comparison of the two works. In the opinion of this reviewer, this textbook by Hill and Walton is more detailed, more reliable, and more consistent, and it is less costly than Arnold and Beyer. If the teacher and student can live with black and white in the place of color, *A Survey of the Old Testament* is the better choice. However, a new colored (and more expensive) edition of Gundry has been released [Spring, 2003]; can a new colored (and more expensive) edition of Hill and Walton be far behind?

Stephen R. Holmes. *Listening to the Past.* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002. 167 pp. $17.99 (paper). Reviewed by Larry Pettegrew, Professor of Theology.

Stephen Holmes is a minister in the Baptist Union of Great Britain, a lecturer in Christian Doctrine at King's College, London, and associate lecturer at Spurgeon's College. His book deals with theological method, and particularly, as the subtitle of the book indicates, "the place of tradition in theology." Holmes admits that Baptist theology and tradition are not often allies. But he tries to make the case that, handled properly, historical theology is vital to understanding doctrine correctly.

The book consists of a series of independent essays. Actually, only chapters 1, 2, and 10 deal specifically with the theme. Chapter 1, for example, is entitled, "Why Can't We Just Read the Bible?" Holmes responds, "but the Bible we have, if it is a translation, is shaped by a tradition of Bible translation, and by its translator(s)" (6). In fact, "the standard editions of the Greek New Testament bear witness on nearly every page to the textual criticism that has come up with this text . . . and so we cannot even find a text of Scripture that has not been 'handed on' to us by those who came before" (6-7). Holmes then explains how John Calvin and the Anabaptists differed on the place of tradition in theology.

Other chapters are case studies of how tradition helps understand doctrine. As in any book of essays, some of these chapters are more useful than others, depending to some extent on the reader's knowledge and interest. For those interested in historical theology, Holmes' chapters on Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo*, the tradition of the doctrine of divine simplicity, and Karl Barth's doctrine of reprobation (as contrasted with the Reformers) will be instructive. In one notable chapter entitled "Calvin Against the Calvinists?," Holmes takes up the issue of whether later scholastic Calvinists actually disagreed with Calvin in theological method or in the content of theology. His answer is no, though some will not be convinced by his explanation. Those who enjoy reading and thinking about the theology of Jonathan Edwards will appreciate Holmes' insightful explanation of Edwards' doctrine of the will.

Some essays may not be as helpful. In one chapter, Holmes examines the views of Cyprian and Augustine to suggest that Baptists, in the spirit of ecumenical unity and charity, ought to consider various methods of baptism to be acceptable. And perhaps only a few will be interested in his chapter on how Samuel Taylor Coleridge's neoplatonism impacted his view of the state.

This book is not for everyone, of course. It deals with fairly complex theological issues. But if one is interested in any of the individual essays, historical theology, or in the overall topic of how tradition should impact theological method, the book is worth one's time.

Victor H. Matthews. *A Brief History of Ancient Israel.* Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 2002. 171 pp. $16.95 (paper). Reviewed by Michael A. Grisanti, Associate Professor of Old Testament.

A "concise" history of Israel is a great idea to enable students of the Scriptures to gain a "panoramic" understanding of God's dealings with his people. Matthews, a professor of religious studies at Southwest Missouri State University, authored this volume to serve as supplemental for courses dealing with the OT in general or Israel's history in particular. He attempts to deal with the most important events in Israelite history, the most important characters and places, overview a basic chronology, consider significant extra-biblical documents that relate to Israel's history, and examine archaeology's contribution to the "recreation" of Israel's history (xi-xii). He has sought to be "student oriented" (xii) by avoiding lengthy recitation of scholarly arguments and by providing inset boxes, keyword cues, and parenthetical documentation. Words in bold print throughout the text receive fuller definition in a glossary at the end of the book. After the body of the text, Matthews provides a brief listing of key events from Israel's monarchy period (2 pp.), a glossary (4 pp.), bibliography (17 pp.), and indices (ancient sources, author, and subject). Matthews has provided numerous useful charts, translations of relevant ANE parallel accounts, and helpful glimpses into key parts of ANE history and rulers.

Besides these helpful features, Matthews' volume represents a mixture of good and bad features. In his introduction, he indicates his general approach to the subject when he says the writers of Israelite history use "exaggerated, propagandistic, or theological reasoning" (xiii). Although Matthews does not disregard OT historical narratives altogether, he views them as potential sources of information that are not necessarily accurate.

A few examples will illustrate Matthews' approach to OT history. Any historical reconstruction based only on the biblical text must be viewed as tentative. As an example, Matthews' contends that the Solomonic Temple must have been smaller than the structure described in the biblical text in light of scholarly

conclusions about Solomon's wealth (46). In several places the biblical historians inserted information about later events into accounts of Israel's early history (56). The Septuagint text, in certain portions, is superior to the Hebrew Bible's presentation of Solomon's reign (57). The author introduces a statement about Solomon's redistricting of Israel with "if there is any historical character to Solomon's 'district list'" (58), implying that it may not have historical validity. He suggests that the accounts describing Israel's and Judah's conquest of Moab (2 Kgs 3:4-27; 2 Chronicles 20) were edited long after the events they describe and contain erroneous information (67).

Although Matthews does provide helpful overviews of the interrelationship between Israelite and ANE history and a sketch of recent discussions on key issues, his view of the composition of the OT historical books diminishes the value of a number of his discussions. His work provides an enlightening (and brief) introduction to current critical discussions in the realm of Israel's history, but it will provide little of value for the preacher of God's Word.

Bruce Milne. *The Message of Heaven & Hell. Grace and Destiny*. The Bible Speaks Today Series. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2002. 351 pp. $16.00 (paper). Reviewed by James E. Rosscup, Professor of Bible Exposition.

Twenty lucid chapters divide into three main parts, five on the theme in the OT, six in the Gospels, and nine in the rest of the NT. Then Milne, pastor of the First Baptist Church, Vancouver, British Columbia, gives nineteen pages as a study guide of review questions that can help users firm up ideas. He attempts to guide readers from Genesis to Revelation on some key passages. He reasons for destinies of bliss in heaven that endures eternally, and punishment in hell that also is without end. He reasons that biblical passages unite with or directly claim such destinies, rather than arguing on a philosophical and speculative basis (12-13). In his claim, the God of the Bible "assures us unambiguously, and repeatedly, that he will meet us in eternity" (13). Individuals dare not become engrossed in materialistic complacency, satisfied only with a present existence, and fail to prepare to meet God in a destiny after this life (13).

It is unfortunate that Milne's five pages of bibliography (18-22) omit some well-known American books on heaven and hell. One wonders why A. J. Conyers on *The Eclipse of Heaven* (1992) finds no place. Followers of John MacArthur will note that Milne does include his work *The Glory of Heaven* (1992). Many notable books on hell are absent: Harry Buis, *The Doctrine of Eternal Punishment* (1957), John Blanchard, *Whatever Happened to Hell?* (1993), Larry Dixon, *The Other Side of the Good News* (1992), John Gerstner, *Repent or Perish* (1990), David G. Moore, *The Battle for Hell* (1995), Robert A. Peterson, *Hell on Trial, The Case for Eternal Punishment* (1995), Peterson and Edward Fudge (the latter arguing for annihilation-

ism), *Two Views of Hell, A Biblical and Theological Dialogue* (2000), and William G. T. Shedd, *The Doctrine of Endless Punishment* (1885, 1986).

Though missing these works—just as no author has read or uses everything—Milne writes in a carefully informed, very readable manner. He begins where the Bible does, in Genesis, later gets to Jesus in the Gospels, and still later to the rest of the NT. He argues capably against theories that Abraham, Moses, and David reflect no hope of a life beyond death (27-31). Even in Genesis 1 and 2:14, the God of the Bible is, in Milne's conception, personal, powerful, and present, holding men to an account (32-52). Sin has wages as in Genesis 2–3 (53-72). Milne views Psalm 16 as the seed, context, and flowering of a heavenly hope with pleasures at God's right hand (73-82). Daniel 7:9-14 in his interpretation argues for a future kingdom and an accounting of the life before God who judges men's works, and Dan 12:1-3 refers to consequences after resurrection for both the righteous and the unrighteous (96-106).

Once in the NT, Milne sees Jesus' insistence on a future kingdom beyond the present age, with the righteous received into it and the unrighteous headed for another destiny. He cites Matt 13:24-30, 36-43 and 25:31-46 (109-29). He sees an eternal hell in Mark 9:42-48, where the fire of punishment "never goes out" (v. 44), "their worm never dies" (v. 48), and the "fire is not quenched" (vv. 48, 144-61).

The author presents arguments fairly for the view that the unsaved will be annihilated, not suffer eternally in enduring, conscious punishment (151-54), but thinks that an eternal duration fits the issues more naturally. In his development, good chapters appear on the hope of resurrection and its relation to eternal destinies (chap. 15), ministering hope in view of heaven (chap. 16), viewing sufferings in light of future reward (chap. 17), being godly in light of a real hope, as in 2 Peter 3 (chap. 19), and what Rev 20:11-15 shows. One of several emphases in the latter passage is that works are not the basis of being safe, of being in the "book of [eternal] life"; rather the way of acceptance is God's gift in grace. Milne's Chapter 20 on the New Jerusalem articulates well the features of blessing for those God admits to the eternal city.

For premillennialists, one drawback is Milne's doubt about a millennial state before the ultimate state. But he accepts the New Jerusalem as an actual, literal city on an order we cannot now adequately visualize (310).

Overall, this is a lucid, well-reasoned evangelical case for heaven and hell, taking these seriously in believing and living with genuine faith that prepares to be in heaven so as to avoid the awfulness of hell. Details on NT passages are not as helpful as Peterson's first book above, but are often valuable. The work needs a Scripture index. Its OT section could show the relevancy of God taking Enoch (Gen 5:24), the passage about Saul and the witch of Endor (1 Samuel 28), and Pss 49:15; 73:24-26, to name a few passages related to a life beyond the present existence.

Frederick J. Murphy. *Early Judaism: The Exile to the Time of Jesus*. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2002. xviii + 474 pp. $37.95 (cloth). Reviewed by Dennis M. Swanson, Seminary Librarian.

One of the welcome consequences of breaking the scholastic monopoly on the Dead Sea Scrolls several years ago has been the resurgence of studies related to Judaism and Judaic influences in the NT world and text. Literature in this field has literally exploded in the last five years with at least a dozen notable works and many more of less notoriety.

The author of this work is professor in the Department of Religious Studies at Holy Cross. This work is a completely revised version of his 1991 *The Religious World of Jesus: An Introduction to Second Temple Palestinian Judaism* (Abingdon, 1991). Written to supply a text for his courses, the author purposes to "balance the effort to appreciate Judaism for its own sake, on the one hand, and the desire to shed light on Jesus and the early Christians on the other" (xiii).

The work is an amazing resource of factual information, well written and well conceived structurally. It has beneficial indexes and two helpful glossaries (of terms and of persons) and several useful charts, and the author often places explanatory boxes within the text. The chapters progress clearly and logically, covering the history of Israel in survey form, from Abraham to the Babylonian captivity and then with a little more detail from the Restoration to the NT era. Murphy dedicates separate chapters to Apocalypticism, the Dead Sea Scrolls, various Jewish sects, the Roman rule over Israel, the Jewish revolt, and the interesting subject, "Jewish Foundations of New Testament View of Christ."

However, the potential of this book is not realized because of what this reviewer would call a "conservative minimalist" view of Scripture and a resultant misunderstanding of the text. "Conservative minimalist" means one who takes the text of Scripture as only one of many texts to be examined in constructing a theology or reconstructing a history of the biblical world. Scripture is important, but no more or less important than other texts. The author says this in his introduction:

> The canon of Judaism or Christianity is that body of writings accepted as authoritative and normative. Belief and practice are measured and judged by these writings. By choosing to include some writings in the canon and exclude others from it, each religion has defined its contours. The normativity of the included texts is expressed through the notion that they are inspired—that is, that God is responsible for them in some way (1).

He further states, "When we limit our study to the canon of the Hebrew Bible or the New Testament, certain viewpoints and prejudices are reinforced that are supported by the principles of selection that led to the formation of the canon in the first place" (6-7). For the author, canonization is merely a human effort to collect religious writings that support a group's preconceived ideas of how they wanted their theology and worldview to be formed. Inspiration becomes nothing more than a "label" placed on texts by groups to validate their views or manipulate

followers into acquiescence. Such biblical constructs as inspiration, inerrancy, and authority, are explicitly and implicitly denied throughout this book.

In the view of the author, the NT distorts the Judaism of the era, saying that the "treatment of Judaism is, on the whole, biased" (ibid.). A key purpose of the author is to present a "more balanced portrait of Jewish society" (ibid.) than one receives from simply "analyzing the apostle Paul or the Gospel of Mark."

The author's view of the OT text does not attain to a high level either. He affirms his belief in the compilation JEP theory for the Pentateuch (22) and the Deuteronomistic History theory to the remainder of the historic books (23). The Old Testament, in his view, was the product of redactors and editors and the final version of the majority of OT books was not finalized until late in the Judean monarchy or after the Babylonian captivity through the Hasmonean era. As a result, different sections of the OT are contradictory to each other or express entirely different world-views (26).

Theologically, the author misunderstands the entire concept of the sacrificial system, stating, "[T]he basic idea of much of the Israelite sacrifice seems to have been that of a gift in thanksgiving for a favor or in hopes of getting God's favor" (48). Prophecy is not predictive in any way; it is simply men writing words of encouragement to an oppressed people by utilizing "literary fiction" (163) to display an illusion of prediction, strengthening the encouraging words. Most important, Jesus is not the divine Second Person of the Trinity (407), He is simply a man on a mission to purify Judaism and speak out against the oppressors of His era, whose followers later ascribe to Him deity (349).

Stylistically the reader is struck by the fact that with all the author's rather dogmatic pronouncements about history, culture, and interpretation of biblical and extra-biblical texts, the work has no footnotes or endnotes. Only a few in-text citations appear in the book. The end of each chapter has a bibliography that would be much more useful if collected as a whole, but no one is quoted and almost no references are given for additional study or to check on the author's work. This being the case, it is no surprise that the bibliography is bereft of works from conservative or evangelical scholarship.

In the short space of this review it is impossible to list all the interpretative and theological errors. Though the author calls himself a Christian (xii), it is impossible to understand what he means by that since he denies or modifies every cardinal doctrine of the Christian faith. This book is an excellent example of a genre of material coming forth from the failed and heretical "Historical Jesus" movement.

Jacob Neusner. *Judaism When Christianity Began: A Survey of Belief and Practice.* Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002. vii + 202 pp. $19.95 (paper). Reviewed by William D. Barrick, Professor of Old Testament.

A renowned and sometimes controversial expert in Judaism and rabbinic studies, Jacob Neusner has published more than 800 books. He is currently research professor of Religion and Theology at Bard College (Annandale-on-Hudson, N.Y.).

Judaism, according to Neusner, is the faith of the community that calls itself "Israel" as a supernatural social entity, because they identify themselves with the divine redemption out of Egypt (2). It is monotheistic, but set apart from Christianity and Islam in that it "recognizes no other revelation than the Torah, the Teaching, set forth by God to Moses at Mount Sinai, and encompassing the prophets of the Hebrew Scriptures" (3). Supernatural Judaism treats all other religions as nothing more than forms of idolatry. It is open to those who would convert from such religions and embrace the supernatural conviction set forth in the Torah. One example of such conversion is that "a cousin of Adolf Hitler has converted to Judaism, and today does teach Judaism at an Israeli university" (153).

Both Christianity and Rabbinic Judaism were making their classical statements from the first to the sixth centuries (6). Judaism's classical statements are embodied in a vast library of literature from the Mishnah through to the Palestinian and Babylonian Talmuds. Within that literature the Torah of Sinai is defined as the "chain of tradition" which includes that which was passed on by Moses to his successors but not included within Scripture (7). In order to clarify this concept, the author sets forth the following definition:

> Rabbinic Judaism is thus the Judaism that sets forth the whole Teaching of Sinai, written and oral, and that points to its sages, called "rabbis" (a general title of honor, ultimately made particular to the sages of Judaism), who in a process of discipleship acquired ("received") and transmitted ("handed on") that complete Torah, oral and written, that originates with God's instruction to Moses. (8)

There were, however, forms of Judaism that conflicted with Rabbinic Judaism during this formative period. Among them were the Qumran sect that produced the Dead Sea Scrolls, an Alexandrian sect represented by Philo, and the earliest disciples of Jesus (9). All three identified themselves as "Israel" and constructed their foundation on the Hebrew Scriptures. None of the three should be identified with Rabbinic Judaism since the latter is what emerged out of the initial period of conflicting Judaisms and prevailed as the statement of pure Judaism (10).

With the identification of Judaism established, in successive chapters Neusner systematically describes the theological tenets of Rabbinic Judaism: "Revelation and Scripture: The Oral Torah" (15-27), "God: 'In our image, after our likeness'" (29-43), "The Holy and the Unclean: Sanctification and Pollution" (45-54), "Exile and Return" (55-66), "Return to Eden: The Sabbath and Sacred Time" (67-78), "The Story Judaism Tells" (79-90), "The Community of Israel" (91-101), "The Chain of Tradition: The Oral Torah" (103-17), "Miracles in Nature: Illness and Healing" (119-34), "Sacred Space: The Land and Pilgrimage" (135-46), "Sacrifice, Repentance, and Atonement" (147-61), "Death and Afterlife" (163-74), and "The Representation of the Faith: Art and Symbol in Judaism" (175-88).

Throughout this volume the author reiterates his point that the Torah cannot be limited to either the written Torah or the revelation given to Moses at Sinai (27, 48, 187-88; esp. 103-17). Both "the Torah that is memorized" and "the Torah that is in writing" (103) persist in Judaism. The latter contains "ipsissima verba from Sinai" (111, cf. 108). In other words, "the Torah revealed at Sinai encompasses everything: Scripture, Mishnah, Talmud, Aggadah—even what on the basis of reasoned inquiry the latest generations of disciples discern!" (111).

Christianity diverged from Judaism in Christ's claim to be a new Moses rather than a prophet or sage (24). Judaism's possession of the oral Torah also distinguished it from Christianity (112). Christianity's representation of Christ as the last Adam was borrowed from Judaism's view of Israel as the last Adam (57). As for the miracles performed by Christ, comparable claims have been made about various Rabbinic sages (119-20). Neusner implies that the Israel of Jesus' day had not repented or subordinated itself to the will of God, since the Messiah will come only when Israel has done so (172-73).

This volume will be of interest to those who wish to understand the basic tenets of Rabbinic Judaism. It will not satisfy the reader in search of a clear description of what Judaism was like in the early Christian centuries. Neusner himself concludes that "we cannot construct in the first five centuries C.E. an account of a Judaic religious system comparable to Rabbinic Judaism. The sources do not permit" (9).

John Piper. *Let the Nations Be Glad! The Supremacy of God in Missions*. 2nd ed. Revised and Expanded. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003. 256 pp. $14.99 (paper). Reviewed by Trevor Craigen, Associate Professor of Theology.

The back cover of this book lists nine evangelical writers or influential leaders who give it their enthusiastic endorsement. An eye-catching, heart-stirring sentence opens the preface: "My passion," writes Piper, "is to see people, churches, mission agencies, and social ministries become God-centered, Christ-exalting, Spirit-powered, Bible-saturated, missions-mobilizing, soul-winning, and justice-pursuing" (9). His passion is much in evidence in the seven chapters to follow. The refrain, "Making God Supreme in Missions," accompanies each of the headings of the book's three parts. The second half of each heading identifies the content of the chapters involved: Part 1 (chaps. 1-3) is headed "The Purpose, the Power, and the Price," Part 2 (chaps. 4-5) "The Necessity and the Nature of the Task," and Part 3 (chaps. 6-7) "The Practical Outworking of Compassion and Worship."

Gems of expression pop up often in these chapters and make the reader pause in reflection before moving on, e.g,. "Passion for God in worship precedes the offer of God in preaching. You can't commend what you don't cherish" (17), "Prayer is the walkie-talkie of the church on the battlefield of the world in the service

of the Word" (67), "Persecution can have harmful effects on the church, but prosperity it seems is even more devastating to the mission God calls us to" (95), and "Missions exists because *worship* doesn't" (206). The careful wording of some headings evokes interest, e.g., "The Belittling of God's Glory and the Horrors of Hell" (28), "God's Self-Exaltation: Signpost to Human Satisfaction" (32), and "The Nerve of Urgency" (115). Questions as headings also garner attention, e.g., "What is a People Group?" (188), "What is a Language?" (189), and "What do 'Reached' and 'Unreached' Mean?" (192). A judicious blend of commentary on selected biblical texts and the insertion of appropriate mission-field anecdotes and examples serves well in challenging the reader to think more seriously about missions than he has done before.

A footnote graciously directs attention to David Doran's book, *For the Sake of His Name: Challenging a New Generation for World Missions*, because Piper wishes his readers to know that Doran has interacted with him on the Great Commission "and so may provide a perspective that I am neglecting" (234). Concise but adequate treatment of the singular and plural use of *ethnos* ["nation"] and the use of *Panta ta Ethne* ["all the nations"] in the NT (161-67) leads Piper to conclude that this latter phrase is understood as "all the nations (people groups)" (167). Forthrightly and unabashedly he also asserts in full accord with the biblical data: (1) that the unsaved will experience eternal, conscious torment in hell, (2) that the work of Christ is the necessary, God-provided means for eternal salvation, and (3) that people must hear of Christ to be eternally saved (115-38). The extended, informative footnotes in this section provide additional resource material both negative and positive on these three crucial areas, unfortunately distorted by open theism. Piper's evaluation of Cornelius (Acts 10) as representative of a kind of unsaved person in an unreached people group who is seeking God in some extraordinary way might very well be open to question, but the reader will have been forced to think exegetically about it—and that is always good.

God's zeal for his own glory receives emphasis several times over and especially so in a four-page listing of selected texts (22-28). It would be a weightier theme were Piper to tie it in with the grand fulfillment of the biblical covenants, prophecies, and promises in the millennial kingdom. This would certainly underscore the title *Let the Nations Be Glad!* and aptly describe the international state of affairs at history's end.

As a result of attentive and thoughtful reading, some may become missionaries and some may become world Christians (238), and some churches may find their members becoming senders or fellow-workers of the truth who directly participate in God's purpose (236). Want to galvanize missions? Then, don't delay, get this book and use it!

Oliver W. Price. *The Power of Praying Together. Experiencing Christ Actively in*

Charge. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1999. 187 pp. $11.99 (paper). Reviewed by James E. Rosscup, Professor of Bible Exposition.

This stimulus for better church prayer meetings is by the General Director of Bible Prayer Fellowship in the Dallas, Texas area, and pastor of Metrocrest Bible Church there. The late John Walvoord, former President of Dallas Theological Seminary and author of many books, wrote the Foreword. The back cover has commendations by Tony Evans, Howard Hendricks, Irwin Lutzer, Sammy Tippit, Elmer Towns, and others. Chiefly, the 13 practical chapters seek to rekindle passion in believers to attend and have spiritual prayer meetings with a strong sense of Christ's presence and control.

Price emphasizes four truths to help transform dull prayer gatherings: (1) claim Christ's presence by His Spirit; (2) trust Him to take charge in each heart; (3) be willing for Him to change each participant as He desires; and (4) permit Him to bring all into harmony with the Father and with each other (12). The author concentrates on these because he sees the need of the hour as Christ's obvious presence and active leadership (14). He recognizes the urgency of private prayer, but chiefly looks at prayer with others.

Readers will share Price's alarm about many not wanting to attend a church prayer session, and will agree that it is unfortunate when a church is said to have prayer-meeting members and members of other kinds (20). Each chapter ends with review questions whose answers help readers reflect on true values. Also, exercises can help readers practice prayer with family members at home and others at church meetings.

Some distinctions are problematic. An example is the citing of Armin Gesswein's idea (cf. the latter's book, *With One Accord In One Place* [Harrisburg, Pa.: Christian Publications, 1978] 13) that in Acts one does not read of "the church prayer meeting," because "The church was the prayer meeting" at the beginning. With great respect for prayer's cruciality in the church, the church is far more than a prayer aspect; also, in Acts 12, the whole church gathered to pray for the imprisoned Peter. Another arbitrary opinion is seeing Acts 1 as the only chapter in Acts without "acts" or "action" episodes (39). The believers, even while waiting (trusting), were *acting* in prayer by applying Scripture as Peter took the lead in replacing Judas in accord with God's will. Later, Price strikes a better note by saying that in Acts 1, "As they waited in prayer, they were acting [note the word] on the basic truth that without Christ they could do nothing" (40). Indeed, they were *doing* something, acting fruitfully and not in the spiritual nothingness of being unfruitful (cf. John 15:5).

Another problem appears amid good things in the book. Somehow the author restricts praying in Jesus' name to ideal situations of knowing in advance that a request is "completely in harmony with His sovereign will" (75). So, praying in Jesus' name is limited to cases where God answers "yes," and cannot also include "wait" or "no" scenarios. A problem is that many mature Christians at times gain

"no" answers as screened by God's wisdom and love, and can submit thankfully to God at such times realizing that His infinite mind knows better. They can err, God never can. Was not Paul praying in Jesus' name, even three times (2 Cor 12:7-9), though God did not remove his "thorn" but taught Him a sufficient grace? Later (after p. 75), Price on p. 80 seems to take a different view; here, he says that those praying in Jesus' name may need to "wait" for God's timing. Also, in other prayers by those seeking God's will for His glory, what name are they praying in as best they know at the time? Readers will need to wrestle with this.

Another puzzle is the troubling wording, "Worship is the highest form of prayer . . ." (145). All God-honoring prayer is in essence genuine worship in aspects such as praise, intercession, petition, and confession. So, does the author mean to say that "Worship is the spiritual essence present in *any* God-approved prayer"? Price later on acknowledges that "For the dedicated believer, all of life is elevated to the level of divine service" (182). All can be worshipful.

Among the book's many good emphases are believers' asking Christ to take charge (chap. 7), to change themselves and others (chap. 8), and offering a sacrifice of praise (chap. 11).

All in all, this work can be a catalyst for better praying alone or in groups. It is by a man long devoted sacrificially to all-out effort to honor Christ and help His people. Any who earnestly desire to improve times before God's throne and assist the church can profit in some or even great measure by teachable receptivity to this book's many good teachings.

David Prior. *The Message of Joel, Micah, and Habakkuk: Listening to the Voice of God*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1998. 279 pp. $15.00 (paper). Reviewed by Keith Essex, Assistant Professor of Bible Exposition.

This book is part of *The Bible Speaks Today* [BST] series, the OT works edited by J. A. Motyer and the NT by J. R. W. Stott. David Prior, a former pastor in South Africa and England who is presently involved in an outreach and training ministry to business people in London, previously contributed to the BST with the NT volume on 1 Corinthians (1985). His present exposition joins the BST works already in print on The Minor Prophets from the well-known English evangelical writers Derek Kidner (Hosea, 1981) and Motyer (Amos, 1974). The series editors in the General Preface to Prior's recent contribution state, "*The Bible Speaks Today* describes a series of both OT and NT expositions, which are characterized by a threefold ideal: to expound the biblical text with accuracy, to relate it to contemporary life, and to be readable" (9). Prior has met the threefold goals of the BST in this work on Joel, Micah, and Habakkuk, the last two with excellence. He has provided an adequate exposition of the text with insightful contemporary application in a very readable style.

Prior bases his interpretation of these three prophetic books on previous evangelical commentaries. He references other volumes continually, particularly those in the EBC, NICOT, TOTC, WBC, WEC, and the exegetical and expository volumes on the Minor Prophets edited by T. E. McComiskey. While Prior is to be commended for selecting the best works available for the evangelical expositor, his own interpretive work is no more than a summarization of what is found in greater depth in these other volumes. The expositor would be well advised to follow Prior's lead and use those commentaries himself, rather than use only the present author's summaries. The writer does help the reader by repeatedly placing Micah and Habakkuk and their messages in their historical context and regularly relating the messages of all three prophets to their OT theological context. On the basis of this historical and theological context, Prior draws parallels between the prophets' messages and contemporary life. He particularly shows how the religious and social issues confronted by the prophets are found in the present Western religious and business communities. His application of these prophetic messages is not a call for the church to reform Western society, but for Christians to live as God's representatives in the secular culture. He states, "But when we fail to engage relevantly, truthfully and compassionately with the marketplace, the marketplace enters the holy place and begins to take it over. . . . God, meanwhile, wants to meet his people at depth as we gather in the holy place, and then propel us out into the marketplace—to make a difference by being different" (12). This he sees as the thrust of these three prophets, and the whole Bible, in their contemporary application.

A major weakness in Prior's work is his unwillingness at times to state a preference for a preferred interpretation when there is disagreement among evangelical commentators. This is especially seen concerning the date of Joel. The book could have been written any time over a span of 600 years, from the ninth to the third centuries B.C. (19). Prior sees this uncertainty as helpful. "It is in many ways providential that the book cannot be dated or traced to a particular person in a particular setting. The events described in it are, at one and the same time, unprecedented and timeless" (21). However, later he admits the full significance of 2:17 cannot be known because of the uncertainty of the dating of Joel (60).

A further weakness is his handling of "The Day of the Lord." Prior sees this day of the Lord as any time God steps into history to do a special work, either of judgment or blessing. Minor events of individual lives and major events in the nations can properly be called the day of the Lord. However, in a special way, "the day of the Lord, for Joel, applied to what was happening then, what would happen soon and what would eventually happen when God called the nations to account" (48). This triple perspective, according to Prior, is a key to understanding Joel in relationship to the rest of the Bible (48). The first stage of this day took place in Joel's own time with the coming and the removal of the locusts according to 2:19-27 (64). Joel 2:28-29 looks ahead to the second stage, the pouring out of Holy Spirit that began on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2 and continues to come upon believers today as they become a part of the people of God (69-79). The final stage is the

eschatological day when the whole world will be summoned before God according to 3:1-21 (80-102). Prior is fuzzy concerning the outworking of the eschatological details, except that God will finally judge His enemies and reward His people. This same kind of fuzziness is evident in his eschatological discussions in Micah and Habakkuk. The author states concerning Micah 4, "[T]here is a temporal thickness to these prophecies, which prevents us from stating categorically when or how they find their fulfillment" (148).

In spite of these weaknesses, this volume in the BST, like its OT and NT counterparts, will aid the expositor, particularly as he thinks through the contemporary application of the biblical text.

Mark A. Seifrid and Randall K. J. Tan. *The Pauline Writings: An Annotated Bibliography*. IBR Bibliographies #9, Craig A. Evans, ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003. 245 pp. $12.50 (paper); Kenton L. Sparks. *The Pentateuch: An Annotated Bibliography*. IBR Bibliographies #1, Craig A. Evans, ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003. 160 pp. $14.50 (paper). Reviewed by Dennis M. Swanson, Seminary Librarian.

The *IBR Bibliography* series has been an ongoing project since 1992. The purpose has been to produce 14 volumes of bibliographies designed to "guide students to works relevant to their research interests" (*Pentateuch*, 9). This reviewer has examined most of the previously released volumes (see *TMSJ* 7/1 [Spring 1996]:121-23; and *TMSJ* 12/1 [Spring 2001]:113-15).

Several changes in the series have occurred with the issuance of the latest two volumes. Craig A. Evans of the Acadia Divinity School has assumed the general editorship of the series from Tremper Longman III and the series preface has been re-written. The new preface no longer mentions the "five year updates" to the bibliographies previously promised, but never fulfilled. Interestingly also, the new preface mentions "rabbi's" as a target audience (9 [both works]).

The structure of the bibliographies is unchanged from previous volumes. They arrange the source entries in clear and well-conceived categories, and give full bibliographic information. The majority of the entries have helpful annotations. Each has an index of authors who are cited in the bibliographic entries themselves.

Sparks work on *The Pentateuch* brings together over 700 entries of various thematic and interpretative issues related to the Books of Moses. The entries offer a great variety and pull together sources mainly from periodical material and multi-author works. There is a balance in the selected entries, which has not always been the case in the series. The entries reflect great currency, the overwhelming majority of the entries dating from 1990 to the present. Designed for M.Div., and Th.M. students, this work should be a front-line bibliography for several years.

Seifrid and Tan's work on the *Pauline Writings* is an equally impressive

collection. It includes over 800 entries on all of the majority interpretative issues related to the Pauline corpus. It opens with two useful sections on additional "Bibliographic Tools and Surveys" and the "History of Modern Interpretation." Decidedly different from previous volumes in this series, the authors have listed a significant number of commentaries under headings for each of the Pauline epistles, a helpful addition. As with Sparks' work, this volume demonstrates both breadth and balance in the entries and will serve students well in initial stages of research.

This reviewer has been critical of several past entries in the IBR series because of bias toward a particular theological or methodological slant instead of providing a full spectrum of research literature. These most recent additions are refreshingly free of such and represent outstanding contributions to the field of bibliographic assistance for students and busy pastors.

Wolfgang Stegemann, Bruce J. Malina and Gerd Theissen, eds. *The Social Setting of Jesus and the Gospels*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002. xv + 404 pp. $22.95 (paper). Reviewed by Dennis M. Swanson, Seminary Librarian.

Seeking to answer the question, "What can one, with the help of historically informed social-scientific models, know about the 'historical' Jesus from the New Testament that cannot be known by other approaches?" (vii), this volume is the compilation of papers presented at the Fourth International Meeting of the Context Group in Tutzing, Germany in 1999.

The group dedicates itself to interpreting the NT by means of historiography and utilizing social science research, once they find a "suitable model" (3) to facilitate such research. It advocates a minimalist-to-radical-minimalist approach to Scripture. In fact their view of Scripture is only assumed and never defended; the idea of an inspired, inerrant text as the source of propositional truth would be considered nonsensical. In fact, this reviewer could not find one mention of the word *Scripture* or discussion of any level of inspiration.

At the beginning of the book, this reviewer was struck by two things: (1) the disdain for any approach to NT studies that affirms absolutes in theological truth, and (2) the acrimony toward those who disagree with the contributors' affirmations. One example is Malina's statement:

> For the most part, social-scientific research in New Testament studies has been concerned with interpreting written documents, not with the general storytelling of historians. In other words, its concerns have been exegetical, not historiographical. . . . This is perhaps why, so far, there has been no "life" of the historical Jesus based on social-scientific interpretations. . . . Nonetheless, what has been done with the social sciences is significant, much of it important enough to be plagiarized by John Dominic Crossan (4).

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This is a technical work, not for the faint of heart. The authors assume a familiarity with various social-science constructs and make no effort to explain their models, except for why their selected model is chosen over another competing model (15). They use a great deal technical jargon from the social sciences, such as the so-called "forming," "storming," "norming," "performing," and "adjourning" phases of small group development that the authors ascribe to the ministry of Jesus (11-15). One author speaks of the "public self," the "private self," and the "in-group self" of Jesus (38), stating that if Jesus did think that He was the Messiah, no one would have heard about it in His lifetime because to assert such "private self" beliefs would be a shameful practice (39).

Other chapters discuss "Jesus as Fatherless Child" (65-84); Jesus' baptism by John and His walking on water in terms of "altered states of consciousness" models (108-111); demon possession as a "socially accepted way to deal with tensions, because it allowed those possessed to do and say what they could not do or say as a sane person" (165). In a chapter entitled "The Jesus Movement and Network Analysis" (301-32), the travels of Jesus and His disciples are evaluated in terms of an "ego-centered network" (325).

All of this is simply what one might call the "Quest for the Historical Jesus" on steroids. It is the full-scale abandonment of Scripture as inspired and historical-grammatical hermeneutics as a viable methodology for interpreting the text. Paul's warning about those who are "always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (2 Tim 3:7) is the best summation for this thoroughly useless book.

Dave Swavely. *Decisions, Decisions*. Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian and Reformed, 2003. 189 pp. $11.99 (paper). Reviewed by Larry Pettegrew, Professor of Theology.

Books about decision-making and how to know the will of God are not rare. But Swavely, a TMS graduate, has written one of the most biblical and helpful. The book is somewhat in the line of Garry Friesen's *Decision Making and the Will of God*, and John MacArthur's little booklet, "Found: God's Will."

Swavely begins his work by focusing on some key spiritual qualities and motives that are foundational for a decision-making process that honors the Lord. In a later chapter he reemphasizes the importance of one's own spiritual condition in decision-making with a consideration of walking in the Spirit, recognizing God's sovereignty, and praying for wisdom and providence.

He graciously considers and rejects mystical methods that are often used in Christian circles for determining God's will. These include special revelation outside the Bible, supernatural signs, and fleeces. Says Swavely, "Gideon is a profound example of how not to make a decision!" (37). Swavely's conviction is

that God speaks to us today through the Word of God "made understandable in our hearts and minds by the Holy Spirit of God, and that is the *only* way he speaks today" (18).

In chapter four, Swavely nicely differentiates between the different "wills" of God, such as the sovereign will, the secret will, and the moral will. "I am convinced," writes Swavely, "that much of the confusion and frustration experienced by Christians who are 'seeking the will of God' comes from failing to distinguish between the sovereign and moral will" (51). What about such popular language as the "perfect will of God," or the "individual will of God," or the "center of God's will"? Swavely deals with these phrases in a biblical manner.

Other chapters include biblical evaluations of the role of feelings, impressions, peace, circumstances, counsel, desires, and prayer in decision making. He concludes the book with chapters on the principles, the process, and the picture of biblical decision-making.

Decisions, Decisions is a book that above all honors God and His Word. It is a book that both church leaders and lay-people need to keep in mind for themselves as well as for friends and counselees who are in the process of decision-making.

Bill Thrasher. *A Journey to Victorious Praying. Finding Discipline and Delight in Your Prayer Life.* Chicago: Moody, 2003. 250 pp. $10.99 (paper). Reviewed by James E. Rosscup, Professor of Bible Exposition.

This stimulating and articulate book is by a professor of Bible and theology at Moody Bible Graduate School. The thirty chapters relate prayer to such subjects as the Spirit, the Word, group times, discipline, fasting, waiting on God, praise. Two appendices are on selected Bible prayers and stimulants to prayer. Plaudits on the first page and back cover are by Lyle Dorsett (biographer on E. M. Bounds, 1990), Gary Bergel who heads up Intercessors for America, Warren Wiersbe, Stephen Olford, Howard Hendricks, R. Hughes, and others.

A driving concern is Christians' desperate weakness, needing God. Thrasher articulates prayer as "helplessness plus faith" (19), "opening up our needy lives to Him [God]" to resolve human anxieties (19), as Paul does (Phil 4:6). Praying in Jesus' name is seen as praying in line with His character, reputation, authority, and will, living for God's name (24, cf. Ps 115:1). Chapter 4, "Turning Your Temptations into Victorious Prayer," is one of several good chapters. Much as O. Hallesby said in his book *Praying*, believers should come to God in their weakness, defeat, need, and trust. Chapter 5 on help by praying in the Spirit profitably points to depending on God who can lead a life into Christlike fervency and compassion (43). The eighth chapter delves into help when one does not know how to pray, and Chapter 11 into Scripture's help, as in George Mueller's using the

Word to motivate prayer. Likewise, Chapter 14 counsels on praying Scripture, i.e., praying God's thoughts and will, recognizing His authority at the throne.

Chapter 10 on "Understanding How God Works" cites Oswald Chambers' words, "Prayer does not fit us for the greater work; prayer is the greater work" (131). With due respect, it seems more sensitively balanced with God's Word to say that prayer and other acts of obedience to God's Word in ministry are the greater works. Of course, prayer should saturate and help with other shaping factors; it is a valid part of a whole picture.

A focus on the role of fasting (chaps. 20-22) is a good contribution. An interesting observation from Philip Schaff's church history is that early Christians of the first three centuries fasted Wednesday and Friday, not on Monday and Thursday as Pharisees had (cf. Luke 18:12) (145-46). Thrasher lists believers who fasted—Martin Luther, John Wesley, George Whitefield, Jonathan Edwards, David Brainerd, Henry Martyn, Andrew Bonar, and Hudson Taylor (147). And how many more! The praise emphasis (chap. 27) shows how God can, with the attendant reality of Christians' praise, accomplish such things as transforming lives mentally and emotionally, giving spiritual health, enhancing human relations, fostering faith, increasing a sense of God's presence, and sharpening perspectives.

Chapter 23 on "waiting" starts too slowly. One gets to the fourth page (160) before learning what Thrasher means. To him, waiting includes such things as listening to God's Word, abiding, committing to fulfill God's desires, and obeying in faith (166-67). This puts a lot into waiting. In OT word usage and context, waiting involves trust, patient confidence, and expecting help. Listening in Scripture, while closely coordinated with waiting in the concord of spiritual attitudes, is being alertly attentive to God's Word in earnest readiness to obey. Trusting (i.e., waiting) is patient confidence that the Word engenders when one listens (among many "wait" texts, cf. Isa 40:29-31).

This book rates favorably for its many-faceted helps and clear writing in fostering refreshing prayer that seeks God. Digesting ideas from a few pages daily and steadily practicing them before God can improve prayer's fervency, breadth, depth, and balance in sharpening Christian living as a whole.

Gerald H. Wilson. *Psalms Volume 1*. The NIV Application Commentary. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002. 1024 pp. $32.99 (cloth). Reviewed by William D. Barrick, Professor of Old Testament.

The primary goal of The NIV Application Commentary is to provide the biblical expositor with a tool that will bring the message of Scripture into a modern context (7). To expedite that goal, the commentary is divided into three sections: "Original Meaning" (containing traditional exegetical material), "Bridging Contexts" (explaining the timeless truths of the text that move the reader closer to present-day

application), and "Contemporary Significance" (modern application). If the individual contributors scrupulously adhere to the aims of each section, this series will be widely and profitably utilized in this generation and those to come. The last two sections of each psalm study are the obvious focus of this volume and are extremely helpful as guides to application for the devotional reader as well as the preacher.

Throughout his 27 years of teaching Old Testament, Gerald Wilson has successfully guided his students and challenged them to apply the Scripture to their lives and ministries. He is Professor of Old Testament and Biblical Hebrew at Azusa Pacific University, an Evangelical Friends (Quaker) theological institution where he has been recognized for excellence in teaching, scholarship, and service. His Quaker context, with its adherence to pacifism, seems to have prompted some observations regarding early Jewish pacifism (29) and may have influenced his interpretation at a few points by at least making him more sensitive to interpretive issues surrounding military language in the Psalms (e.g., 135-39, "Bridging Contexts" and "Contemporary Significance" sections for Psalm 3; cf. 721 where the author briefly explains how his Quaker context relates to his treatment of war in the commentary).

In the "Introduction" (19-81), Wilson makes some general observations about the collection, authorship, and title of the book of Psalms, as well as its historical use, poetry (poetic conventions, art, and techniques), psalm types, and psalm headings. His treatments of meter (36-39) and parallelism (39-48) are on target and balanced in the discussion of the differing views. His caution regarding extended chiasms (52) is greatly needed in a day when some have run rampant with chiastic discoveries. Unfortunately, in his discussion of psalm titles (75-81) the author makes no mention of the work of James Thirtle (*The Titles of the Psalms: Their Nature and Meaning Explained* [Henry Frowde, 1904]). Thirtle's theory deserves discussion in any serious commentary on Psalms.

Following certain psalms, the commentator inserts various excurses on psalm types (e.g., 119-26, royal psalms; 139-48, laments). These discussions are more extensive than the introductory comments made in the first part of the volume (57-75). Scripture (996-1013) and subject (1014-24) indexes are helpful, but the latter is inadequate.

In the "Bridging Contexts" section for Psalm 1, Wilson alerts the reader to the fact that he cannot expound exhaustively every facet of each psalm. As he explains, "One never reaches the bottom of the well from which God's life-giving water flows" (99). What he shares in this section is a personal selection, not the last word on insights or issues pertinent to each psalm. Even though this section of the commentary is generally well written, an occasional set of applications seem a bit overdrawn (cf. 258-65 regarding Psalm 11). A weakness shows up in a text like Psalm 22 which would seem to provide an opportunity for greater instruction about the Messiah rather than multiplying more anthropocentric applications, but the work provides only a tantalizing messianic taste in its final paragraph (428-29).

Psalm 2 is certainly a crux in messianic studies, but Wilson has chosen to

stick with a past Davidic-dynasty interpretation (108). To do so, however, the author has to do some fancy footwork regarding the apparent world domination of the king (109) and ends up suggesting that the final admonition (v. 12) may have been "appended to the psalm at a later date when the messianic interpretation was already well established" (113). Wilson offers a scenario for a gradual messianization of Psalm 2 in his "Bridging Contexts" section (114-17). In his treatment of Psalm 45, he refers to "elements of ambiguity" that allow passages "to be exploited messianically" (703). His reluctance to accept a number of messianic references in the Psalms (cf. 313 regarding 16:10) carries over even in his handling of the Servant Songs of Isaiah (282 n. 16).

Throughout the commentary Wilson tackles selected NIV translational problems (e.g., 178 regarding Ps 6:2, 202 regarding 8:2, 268 regarding 12:2). His freedom to include translation critiques is a credit to the objectivity of the series' editors. No translation is perfect. Respectable commentaries must deal forthrightly with such issues regardless of the translation chosen as the base for the series.

Every expositor of the Psalter should have this volume (and its yet unpublished companion for Psalms 73–150). This commentary has no equal. All others come up short in both quantity and quality of exegesis. Wilson does not shun difficult interpretive problems (e.g., 638-41 regarding 40:6-8) and repeatedly provides readers with a better understanding of the Hebrew text (e.g., 451 in regard to the meaning of *nepěš* in 24:4). He consistently invokes Hebrew poetic devices when they are pertinent to sound exegesis (e.g., chiasm, 361, 495; merism, 203, 941; inclusio, 345, 967; wordplay, 182, 252-53; repetition, 158, 502-3). In the realm of application, only the 3-volume work of James Montgomery Boice comes close in value (*Psalms*, Baker, 1998). Wilson also introduces readers to significant interpretive topics like the covenant lawsuit (766-68). Occasionally he treats the readers to a pertinent word study that helps clarify the meaning of the text (778-79). As with many commentaries on lengthy books, the earlier psalms are treated more fully than the later. Footnote references to previous discussions are a welcome convenience for expanding the commentary on the later psalms.

Recommending this commentary in such glowing terms does not mean, however, that it has no shortcomings. For example, discussion regarding the divine name *YHWH* lacks an adequate historical and theological explanation (199-200). Due consideration must be given to Louis F. Hartman's article regarding the names of God in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (ed. Cecil Roth [Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House Ltd., 1971] 7:680-81). This venerable Jewish encyclopedia declares that non-pronunciation of *YHWH* is not consistent with ancient Jewish practice and actually resulted from an aberrant interpretation of the third commandment. Another unfortunate bit of misleading information regarding the divine name arises in the author's discussion of Exod 3:14 when he writes, "this type of imperfect verb form [*'ehyeh*] describes action that is not complete—either because it is continuing or because it still lies in the future" (210; see also, 349 n. 35). Neither incompleteness, continuousness, nor futurity are characteristic of the Hebrew imperfect (see Gary V.

Long, *Grammatical Concepts 101 for Biblical Hebrew* [Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2002] 94).

In addition, Wilson's treatment of divine hatred (Ps 11:5) reveals either a weakness in his bibliology or an unfortunate choice of wording. In an attempt to resolve the difficulty one might have with the concept of divine hatred, the author says, "[W]e need to acknowledge that these human words were transformed when they were recognized as the authoritative Word of God" (253). Such an approach seems to deny the Holy Spirit's superintending the writer of this psalm as he wrote (cf. 2 Pet 1:21).

Although the author normally accepts the ascription of Davidic authorship to those psalms whose headings make the claim, sometimes he questions the accuracy of the heading as well as Davidic authorship. A prime example is Psalm 20, which he dates to a time following the building of Solomon's temple (382-84). Furthermore, he places Psalm 23 in an exilic (637) and Psalm 26 in a post-exilic setting (476-77).

This volume is well worth the purchase price even with its imperfections and the need to read it with a critical eye. Wilson's contributions far outweigh any of this volume's shortcomings. There is still room for a solidly evangelical, exegetical commentary on the Psalms, but until such a commentary appears, this is the one to have.