

BOOK REVIEWS

Clinton E. Arnold, ed. *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary*. 4 vols. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002. 2,924 pp. \$39.99/vol. (cloth).
Reviewed by James E. Rosscup, Professor of Bible Exposition.

This work (*ZIBBC*) attempts verse by verse comments on each NT book, but skips some verses. The volumes, beautifully produced, have many multi-colored pictures on customs, maps, and special panels on such topics as the background or meaning of key issues. Entries on the Roman calendars, the date of Jesus's birth, Pharisees and Sadducees, and the meaning of the millennium (which never prefers a meaning but is content merely to mention three views) illustrate the kinds of key issues dealt with.

Several noted scholars such as Michael Wilkins (Matthew), David Garland (Mark), Mark Strauss (Luke), Andreas Kostenberger (John), Douglas Moo (Romans, James, 2 Peter, Jude), Ralph Martin (Galatians), Peter Davids (1 Peter), Robert Yarbrough (1, 2, 3 John), and Arnold himself (Colossians) deal with individual books. A major contribution explains customs behind passages, as the custom of the Roman triumph in 2 Cor 2:14. Writers display a rich awareness of ancient literature with details that shed light from the ancient world on the NT. Endnotes for each biblical book reflect an awareness of current scholarly literature.

Here and there, users will find comments especially good for understanding NT statements. Yet the thin and cursory nature of much discussion raises a question about the need for such an elaborate production in light of a plethora of available good commentaries that say much more. The work will help at certain points, adding insights covered by other works, but probably will not be practical for individuals (ca. \$160.00 for the 4 volumes) who have less expensive access to fuller detail regarding the same issues. Vagueness, lack of definition, or scholarly timidity to commit to one view will be disappointing for many. One wonders about the absence of a single meaning for the "kingdom" in Matt 13:11, of a specific identification of the "restrainer" (2 Thess 2:6, 8) where a list of eight views leaves the choice up in the air, of reasons to defend verses in Matthew 24–25 as referring to the church rapture, and of the choice of and reasons for a particular view of the "thousand years" in Revelation 20. *ZIBBC* views Hebrews 5:11–6:11 as referring to the genuinely saved though immature (*ZIBBC* 4:34), but later comments cause ambiguity, calling people as in 6:4-8 "apostates" whose "inevitable outcome . . . is devastation" (38-39), "an inevitable curse" (39). Comments on a similar problem

text in 10:26ff. clearly view those sinning as the wicked in contrast to the genuinely saved (66-67). It is also puzzling to call those in 10:32-34 "Christians" who formerly made a good response to God, then later to say that vv. 38-39 contrast the unsaved who do not persevere with the saved who do (67). Do some who were once saved later lose salvation? No explanation of this inconsistency is given.

On the other hand, the work can also offer help though brief. James 2:14 refers to "that" faith which a person falsely professes. James 5:14 presents a definitive view of physical illness. Christ's preaching in 1 Pet 3:19 is during His time in the tomb, directed to evil angels who fell in Gen 6:2-4. The "dead" in 1 Pet 4:6 are Christians who died when persecutors "judged" them. In 2 Peter 2 false teachers who were never really saved are in view. The "sin unto death" (1 John 5:16-17) is committed by pretenders and deceivers as in 2:19 and 4:1; such persist in sin and wind up in eternal judgment, whereas by contrast those who genuinely know God (5:20) show signs of the life He gives.

In other cases, a mixture of both the good and the confusing appears. Allegorically, John 15:2a, 6 picture a professing but unsaved person; "husband of one wife" (1 Tim 3:2) means an elder who has his one wife should not have one or more concubines also; "stars" in Rev 1:20 symbolize celestial angels. The 144,000 (Rev 7:4-8) related to Israelite tribes are Jewish believers, but it is difficult to explain how in 7:9 the 144,000 Jews are "transformed into an inclusive multitude encompassing every race, ethnic group, and nation on earth" (*ZIBBC* 4:296). Another puzzle is to explain how the temple (Rev 11:1) can be "primarily a figure for the church," but secondarily the temple still standing in Jerusalem (4:311). Why both? The two witnesses in Revelation 11 are not two individuals but "representative of NT spiritual realities," but no explanation clears up what that means (4:313).

On Colossians, Arnold's brief comment takes "firstborn" (1:15) to focus on Christ's sovereignty, not on His being a prior creation. What Paul's filling up afflictions of Christ in 1:24 means is unclear. Imagery of a Roman triumph is clear in 2:15, but the triumph is not related to details elsewhere (2 Cor 2:14f.; Eph 4:8). Like other contributors, Arnold is vivid in his descriptions of background analogies that illustrate truths: the triumph (2:15), chains on a Roman prisoner (4:3), and intense athletic competition (4:12).

The volumes condense a lot of material, and either labor to state a view or to avoid stating a preference. Their main and hopefully extensive use will be as a library reference source, while individuals invest in more detailed helps that expound *all* the verses.

Cyril J. Barber. *The Faithfulness of God: Devotional Studies in I Chronicles*. Santa Ana, Calif.: Promise Publishing, 2002. 287 pp. \$12.95 (paper). Reviewed by James E. Rosscup, Professor of Bible.

Without denying that a person can mingle exegesis, exposition, and devotional truths integral to the spiritual import of God's Word, one can classify commentaries broadly into three categories: exegetical, expositional, and devotional. The present, prolific author of more than 30 books (e.g., *Judges*, *Ruth*, 1 and 2 *Samuel*, *The Minister's Library*) here crafts exposition within a devotional spotlight. As in many of his works, he evidences an ability to gather life-shaping expositional aspects of passages and focus their lessons with crystal clarity and vividly engaging readability.

In this case what Barber has produced is a simplified revision of a detailed manuscript originally intended for a series on *Judges* through *2 Chronicles*. He uses 17 chapters of 15-20 pages each to explain selected sections with provocative spiritual lessons. With lead-on or later illustrations, he surveys passages that furnish key guidelines to enrich readers devotionally.

The author sees *Ezra* as the probable writer, before 400 B. C., who used various available sources such as *Nehemiah's* library. Barber cites different views along with well-known scholars against and for his perspective (iv-viii). A two-and-a-half-page outline precedes the chapters. He does not attempt a verse by verse analysis, but picks out main episodes to furnish suggestive spiritual principles. In the long genealogy section (*1 Chronicles* 1-9), Barber keys on lessons in *Jabez's* prayer (4:9-10) and their impact for today (4:2-14). Some ideas are good, but others seem subjective and debatable—e.g., *Jabez* was possibly the youngest in his family, and his father was perhaps slain by raiding *Amalekites*. Later, Barber has provocative comments on *Saul's* decision to assure his own death before enemies could humiliate him (19-21). Three chapters on *David's* mighty men (51-99) have stimulating lessons. Other discussions include *The Marks of Friendship* (11:15-19), *The Power Within* (11:20-21), *Success Without Compromise or Regret* (11:22-25), *The Loyalty of a Friend* (11:26-27), *God-Given Success* (18:1-20:8), and *God's Wrath and Mercy* (21:1-22:1).

The main value lies in the simple, attractive lessons for personal life. Lay people, students, pastors, and speakers seeking priming ideas will receive worthwhile input from flowing emphases along with well-crafted illustrations and sometimes arresting quotes. A similar work on *2 Chronicles* by Barber from the same publisher arrived just before press time for this issue of *TMSJ*.

John Barton. *Holy Writings, Sacred Text: The Canon in Early Christianity*.
Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/John Knox, 1997. xiii + 210 pp. \$19.95 (paper).
Reviewed by William D. Barrick, Professor of Old Testament.

Holy Writings, Sacred Text is the American edition of *The Spirit and the Letter* (London, SPCK, 1997). The author is Professor of the Interpretation of Holy Scripture in the University of Oxford. He also wrote *Reading the Old Testament*:

Method in Bible Study (Westminster/John Knox, 1984; revised 1996). Readers with a decided interest in the topic of canonicity will appreciate this in-depth analysis of the early church's views regarding the authority and meaning of the OT and NT. Few seminary graduates would succeed in completing a reading of it—at times it is exceedingly heavy.

Barton's approach to the canon in this volume is historical. He attempts to demonstrate how the believing community has viewed the text of the Scriptures at a variety of points in the past. In chapter 1 (1-34, "The Origins of the Canon: An Imaginary Problem?") Barton proposes that the growth of the canon and the delimitation of the canon are independent of each other. One significant observation is that the acceptance of the Scriptures as authoritative already existed prior to any formal canonization (23). As a result, the NT itself was already established as authoritative for the Christian faith by the early second century (24, 30-31, 64). Early synods (both Christian and Jewish) tended to "concentrate on exclusion rather than inclusion, simply leaving the central core as they find it" (29). This situation paved the way for the views of Marcion.

Marcion's role in canonization is the topic of chapter 2 (35-62, "Marcion Revisited"). Barton takes issue with Adolf von Harnack's view that Marcion was a radical innovator. Instead, he argues that "Marcion can be understood better as a conservative, overtaken by events" (37). Marcion rejected the allegorical interpretation of the OT but proclaimed that it was not Scripture for the Christian even though it had been for the Jew (42, 54).

Chapter 3 (63-15, "Two Testaments, One Bible") discusses five issues. The first is the relationship of age and venerability to the canonizing of the NT (64-68). The second issue is the argument for NT authority on the basis of Christ being the fulfillment of OT prophecy (68-74). The third issue is the tension created by the early Christians who, unlike Marcion, began to view the OT as a Christian book (74-79). Barton's fourth issue is the idea that the NT served as an aid to the memory for gospel proclamation (79-91). The last issue in this chapter is the relation between oral and written traditions (91-104). Barton concludes that the authority of the NT actually derived from the fact that it embodied that which was accepted as authoritative: the gospel message (104-5).

Then, in chapter 4 (106-30, "Writings of Holiness") Barton confirms what the reader who has persevered to this point already knows: this volume is not intended as light reading. As he puts it, "The additional complication which I want to introduce in this chapter is the question whether this [that texts were preserved because of the importance of their contents] is necessarily the case" (107). This chapter touches upon two matters related to the OT canon. One is the Mishnah's use of the phrase "defile the hands" in a discussion of whether the Song of Solomon and Ecclesiastes should be considered Scripture (108-21). Barton presents an intriguing possibility that the question related to whether or not a book not containing the Tetragrammaton could be included in Scripture. This would also affect the problem of the Book of Esther, since it, too, does not utilize the Tetragrammaton. The second

matter concerns the *kethib-qere'* (123-26). Appealing to James Barr ("A New Look at *Kethibh-Qere*," *Oudtestamentische Studiën* 21 [1981]:19-37), Barton claims that the Masoretes were identifying two equally significant traditions of readings. The first was the *kethib* (that which was written in the text). It was to be copied and retained even though the *qere'* (that which was preserved in the margins) preserved the oral traditions that attempted to make the text more understandable and meaningful. According to the author, "The Q is not a *correction* of the K, but a registration of the reading tradition which enables the scribe not to be misled by it" (124). Both of these matters lead to the conclusion that, even in the Gospels, the holiness of the text itself may have been more important to the early Christians than its contents and meaning (130).

That conclusion is carried through into chapter 5 (131-56, "Canon and Meaning") in which the author discusses divergent attitudes about the canon and its meaning. He observes the differences between the ancient readers and modern readers, and between Christian readers and Jewish readers. As Barton's "Conclusion" (157-62) reveals, one of the underlying factors in the writing of this collection of essays was a partial response to canonical criticism.

C. Hassell Bullock. *Encountering the Book of Psalms: A Literary and Theological Introduction*. Encountering Biblical Studies. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001. 266 pp. \$24.99 (cloth). Reviewed by William D. Barrick, Professor of Old Testament.

Encountering Biblical Studies is a series designed for college-level Bible courses (12). This volume is intended as a course subsequent to the OT survey by Bill T. Arnold and Bryan E. Beyer (*Encountering the Old Testament: A Christian Survey* [Baker, 1999]). The layout is functional and attractive with sidebars, chapter outlines, chapter objectives, key terms in boldface type, study questions, reading suggestions, and visual aids (photographs, maps, charts, graphs, and figures). Unfortunately, the employment of endnotes (239-43) instead of footnotes works against the otherwise user-friendly layout of the text.

Bullock rightly recognizes the danger of rampant typology and hyper-messianization in the interpretation of Psalms, urging discretion and the application of NT controls (47). However, interpretation based solely upon historical and typological principles also can abuse the text. Using the words of Ps 22:1 ("My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?") as an example, he insists that "to be fair to the historical context, we should assume that they were spoken by a real person in ancient Israel, very likely even David himself at some God-forsaken moment of his life" (43). The same logic, if applied, for example, to Isa 45:1 ("Thus says the LORD to His anointed, to Cyrus"), could indicate that a contemporary individual named Cyrus existed in Isaiah's day and prefigured the future Cyrus, or that someone other

than Isaiah wrote the prophecy after the fact (*vaticinium ex eventu*). Application of this methodology to the NT could result in a preterist interpretation of passages like 2 Thess 2:1-4 and Revelation 17-18. Such interpretative methods eliminate prophetic pronouncements that have no fulfillment or representation in the author's experiential context. Bullock does not treat all the prophetic elements of Psalms in this fashion, however. Of Psalm 2 he says, "I am inclined to believe that the messianism of Psalm 2 belongs to the initial composition of the psalm and not to a later period of interpretation" (61).

In discussing the editorial seams of Psalms, Bullock declares that "the editor who installed Psalm 1 was a literary tailor of fine expertise, and he stitched these two psalms together masterfully" (60). This implies that the editor wrote parts of Psalms 1 and 2 so that their wording and structure would harmonize. The same logic could lead to the conclusion that "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty" (written by Joachim Neander and translated by Catherine Winkworth) and "Praise the Lord! Ye Heavens, Adore Him" (first published in 1796) must have been edited by Tom Fettke, Kenneth Barker, or another editor of *The Hymnal for Worship & Celebration* (Word Music, 1986) in which the two hymns occur back-to-back (numbers 8 and 9). The last line of the former hymn is "Gladly for aye we adore Him," while the first line of the latter hymn is "Praise the Lord! Ye heav'ns, adore Him." Both hymns begin with "Praise (to) the Lord." Additional parallels are present between these two hymns. However, there is absolutely no reason to assume that the editors did anything more than to arrange the placement or order of the hymns. Why should anyone think that the ancient editor(s) of Psalms did anything more than the editors of modern hymnals?

Chapter 3, "The Seams of the Garment of Praise" (57-82), provides a well-written examination of the overall structure of the Psalter in its five books. Bullock demonstrates the affinities between Books 1-3 as well as between Books 4 and 5. He also reminds the reader that the current order of the Psalter was established prior to the translation of the Septuagint between 250 and 150 B.C. (71).

In chapter 5, "Encountering Theology and History in the Psalms" (99-118), the author discusses biblical history as reflected in Psalms. Bullock stresses that the psalmists embraced that history as fact rather than fiction and focused on the divine perspective more than the human.

Nine chapters (chaps. 6-14) focus on nine different psalm genres: psalms of praise (121-33), psalms of lament (135-50), psalms of thanksgiving (151-63), psalms of trust (165-76), psalms of the earthly king (177-86), psalms of the heavenly king (187-97), wisdom psalms (199-212), psalms of Torah (213-26), and imprecatory psalms (227-38). Analytical tables displaying the key elements for each psalm are centerpieces for all nine genre discussions. Bullock's approach is level-headed. He recognizes that biblical writers were somewhat "form conscious, but not nearly so much as modern scholarship has led us to believe" (64). Likewise, on the issue of so-called enthronement psalms, he rightly concludes that even "though some scholars have made much of the supposed existence of a festival in Israel that

enthroned Yahweh, virtually no evidence in the Psalms or elsewhere in the Old Testament supports this view” (196).

There are significant omissions in a number of matters. Space will permit mention of only a few. In regard to the psalm titles (24-30), Bullock fails even to mention the theory of James Thirtle (*The Titles of the Psalms: Their Nature and Meaning Explained* [Henry Frowde, 1904]). Nowhere in the volume is there any discussion of the NT attribution of Davidic authorship to Psalms 2 (cf. Acts 4:25) and 95 (cf. Heb 4:7). Both are listed as anonymous due to the absence of psalm titles (26). In the discussion of the structure of Psalm 19, the author concludes that content alone distinguishes the two strophes of the psalm (41). However, the psalm could be divided on the basis of the occurrences of the tricolon apart from any consideration of content: vv. 1-4 (closed by a tricolon), vv. 5-6 (closed by a tricolon), vv. 7-14 (closed by a tricolon), v. 15. In addition, the formulaic structure of vv. 7-10 (construct noun + Yahweh + predicate adjective followed by construct participle + noun) signals the special nature of these verses as compared to vv. 1-6. Bullock totally ignores Spurgeon’s classic work on Psalms (*The Treasury of David*) and fails to mention the commentaries of J. J. Stewart Perowne (*The Book of Psalms* [Zondervan reprint of the 1878 edition]) and James L. Mays (*Psalms, Interpretation* [John Knox, 1994]).

In spite of some of the problems, *Encountering the Book of Psalms* is still a quality production. It would make an excellent choice as a textbook in college classes studying the Book of Psalms. Bullock is Franklin S. Dyrness professor of Biblical Studies at Wheaton College and is also the author of *An Introduction to the Old Testament Poetic Books* (Moody, 1979) and *An Introduction to the Old Testament Prophetic Books* (Moody, 1986).

John Jefferson Davis. *The Frontiers of Science & Faith*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2002. 200 pp. \$11.99 (paper). Reviewed by Trevor Craigen, Associate Professor of Theology.

A glance at the table of contents causes the reader to lift an eyebrow at some of the intriguing chapter headings, e.g., “The Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence & the Christian Doctrine of Redemption.” One almost wants to go to that chapter first!

This collection of essays, subtitled “Examining Questions from the Big Bang to the End of the Universe,” seeks to illustrate and explain certain theological difficulties by paralleling them with various known scientific principles, theorems, and laws. Chapter titles reflect this approach, e.g., “The ‘Copenhagen’ Interpretation of Quantum Mechanics & ‘Delayed-Choice’ Experiments,” which is intended to bring in a new perspective to help understand the doctrine of predestination. Receiving attention are the following: divine omniscience, determinism, full

knowledge of the future and freewill, chance and providence, predestination and election, human personhood and the image of God, the incarnation of Christ and the atonement in relation to multiple worlds, and eschatological cosmic optimism and despair. Receiving attention alongside these and in addition to the two already mentioned above are: quantum indeterminacy, the Chaos Theory, Goedel's Proof, Artificial Intelligence, and the Anthropic Principle. Notably, holding highly favored status in presentation and professed usefulness for origins is "Progressive Creation" (113-28).

In the preface Davis states his basic presupposition, with which there would be no disagreement, namely, "that the results of modern science, properly understood, are no threat to Christian faith" (7), although the phrase "properly understood" becomes the clincher. His conviction is that the Christian faith and the scientific method are complementary ways of knowing God's creative work. Later, he speaks of these as the "book of nature" and the "Book of Scripture" (128). The two "books" are quite disparate in character, however, and cannot be treated as being on a par with each other. Invariably, the interpretation of Scripture is held hostage to the prevailing scientific paradigms, theories, and opinions so that the biblical accounts of creation are treated with a great deal of elasticity. Davis did acknowledge that the scientific method has limitations when it comes to answering humanity's deepest existential questions (7).

Davis assumes that his readers will have a working knowledge of those different principles, theorems and laws to which he refers. This feature, which certainly shows the author's background in physics, could cause a few readers to abandon the book, finding it too difficult to keep up with the material. Reading it is not without benefit, however, because one realizes afresh the obvious design and order in God's creation. Furthermore, the reader also learns of how some researchers use these laws to gag God or make Him less than what He is, e.g., that God has made a universe in which His own knowledge is limited by the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle (41). Surely, it only limits human researchers and certainly not the Intelligent Designer who built it into His world and set it in operation? Summarily imposing limits on God is itself off limits! Thankfully, Davis does not appear to have defended the untenable positions.

In the first chapter, "Genesis 1:1 & Big Bang Cosmology," Davis rightly concludes that Genesis 1:1, standing alone among ancient cosmologies, presents a singular, *ex nihilo* beginning for the universe. But then his conclusion falters when he adds that as such, it exhibits "a convergence with recent big bang cosmological models" (36). Unfortunately, Davis makes no mention of the creation week as a whole, ignoring whether or not the rest of Genesis 1 with its tightly-knit six consecutive 24-hour days really allows for a big bang model. The convergence would seem to be in the eyes of the beholder! To be sure, Davis does emphasize that God by the power of His almighty word called the universe into actual existence. One wonders just what is meant, however, when he also remarks that God worked *through* the mathematical equations and quantum-mechanical laws He Himself

designed and which are uncovered by the sciences (36, 128). The influence of “progressive creation” on his thinking is admitted and causes him to accept far more time for God’s creative activity to take place than Genesis would allow Him to have (127). Further, the polemical nature of the Genesis account and its concern for the relationship between God and His world and human beings (115) does not detract from the impact of the order of events in the creation week and the obviously restricted time span involved. Further, serious deficiencies in big bang theories, which would make it difficult to continue proposing, without some major qualification, such a model for Gen 1:1, were not specifically noted. Supplemental reading is in order here. Readers should refer *inter alia* to John Byl’s *God and Cosmos: A Christian View of Time, Space, and the Universe* and to Douglas Kelly’s *Creation and Change: Genesis 1:1–2:4 in the Light of Changing Scientific Paradigms*, as well as to ICR’s *Impact* 216 (June 1991), “The Big Bang Theory Collapses” by Duane T. Gish, in order to have up-to-date responses to this troubled theory of origins. It is not as settled a theory as Davis implies.

The author reveals bias when he remarks that “a Christian theory of origins must acknowledge and incorporate the evidence for the evolutionary changes that have occurred in the history of life” (127). He apparently also accepts the probability of the emergence of life from inanimate matter over 3.5 billion years ago, the sudden appearance of animal phyla at the Precambrian-Cambrian boundary 570 million years ago, and the sudden appearance of art and other expressions of behaviorally modern humanity some 40 thousand years ago (128). The nature of the creation week and its obvious impact on the age of the earth, and the matter of sin, death, and the fall of man and their impact on the created order must all be considered in any Christian cosmological proposals. These were noticeably absent from the discussion.

In surveying the scientific developments since Bernard Ramm’s *The Christian View of Science and Scripture* in 1954, Davis omits, except for a passing reference to John Whitcomb, Henry Morris, and Gary Parker (114 n. 6, and 127 n. 53), any real mention of the young-earth, recent-creation movement and the wealth of literature and scientific papers it has produced, e.g., via the *Creation Research Society Quarterly* and CEN’s *Technical Journal* as well as the excellent *Impact* bulletins from the Institute for Creation Research. They introduce, at the least, a healthy caution to avoid unwisely identifying the plain teachings of Scripture with even the most compelling contemporary scientific and cosmological theories.

No matter how intriguing the content of the chapters may be, and no matter how interesting an exercise it may be—and that it is—to find parallels and analogies in nature or in scientific principles, theorems, and laws, for explaining theological difficulties, it must be acknowledged that the proper understanding and resolution of these difficulties will come from a study of Scripture. Non-scriptural sources are not definitive here.

The bibliography listed for chapter 6 is actually for chapter 7, which means that the one for the chapter on artificial intelligence is missing. All chapters were

marked (1) by informative reviews or concise surveys of the history and development of the principles being presented, and (2) by extensive footnotes. These resources inform the reader of a host of literature available on a wide array of subjects, constituting a valuable bibliographic resource, reason enough to have the work on one's bookshelf!

Susan E. Gillingham. *One Bible, Many Voices: Different Approaches to Biblical Studies*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999. xx + 280 pp. \$19.00 (paper). Reviewed by William D. Barrick, Professor of Old Testament.

Gillingham is a lecturer in theology at Worcester College, Oxford, England. Her volume incorporates elements from a distance-learning course for students of St. John's College, Nottingham, and elements from a later theology course for undergraduates at Oxford University (xiv). The work is for those who as adults have a relatively new interest in theology or biblical studies (xv).

The spirit of this age, if we are to believe Gillingham, is postmodernism united with pluralism. In *One Bible, Many Voices* she pleads for such an approach to biblical studies (4-5). She seeks "to show that pluralism, as one of the hallmarks of postmodernism, can serve more as friend than foe in relation to biblical studies. Far from threatening and fragmenting our understanding of biblical faith, it offers a more reasonable, open-ended, integrative and ecumenical way forward" (5).

The book has two parts: "Plurality in the Making of the Bible" (7-113) and "Plurality in the Reading of the Bible" (115-244). In the first part, four chapters present the author's view of the "disparate and diffuse nature of the biblical accounts ... with different versions and different texts being used variously by different communities" (4). Throughout these chapters Gillingham presents as fact that both testaments have undergone substantial editing (cf. 17, 20-21). Out of her conclusion that the Bible contains a diversity of theologies (cf. 31, 34), she identifies three complementary approaches to biblical studies: the historical, the theological, and the literary (44). Inherent in this system is a conviction that "it is impossible to give any biblical text absolute meaning" (45). This conviction produces the opportunity "to create new interpretations, properly controlled" (45). What is meant, however, by "properly controlled"? Theologians in a variety of traditions would offer the canon itself as one necessary control. However, Gillingham eliminates that control by arguing that "it is impossible to draw up clear boundaries for the inclusion or exclusion of particular books" (46). Therefore, there is no single authoritative canon. All of chapter 3 ("A Biblical Corpus? The Canon and the Boundaries of Faith," 46-71) develops the author's view of the canon.

Gillingham argues that a variety of translations (both ancient and modern) prove that "a pluralistic, open-ended way of reading is again the only way forward" (72). In the discussion of "The Qumran Scrolls" (77-79), she claims, "One of the

most important aspects about the Scrolls is that they have many affinities with the Septuagint, and seem to suggest a Hebrew prototype somewhat different from that used for the Masoretic Text" (77). This is a popular exaggeration running contrary to the evidence as presented by Emanuel Tov (*Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 2nd ed. [Fortress Press, 2001] 114-17), one of the most highly regarded experts in that field of study.

Contrary to its title, *One Bible, Many Voices*, the conclusion of Part One announces that no single, coherent Bible, no uniform biblical theology, no universally recognized biblical canon, and no standard biblical text exist (112). Gillingham presents Part Two as more positive in its agenda (113). The three major approaches are each granted a chapter: "Theological Approaches to the Bible" (117-43), "Historical Approaches to the Bible" (144-70), and "Literary Approaches to the Bible" (171-86). The first of these three approaches is a survey of the hermeneutics of Jewish tradition (the Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint, Targums, Dead Sea Scrolls, Peshet, and Midrash) and Christian tradition (Paul and Hebrews in the NT, a variety of church fathers from Irenaeus to Augustine, Gregory the Great, Aquinas, Richard Hooker, a variety of 17th-century and 18th-century approaches, Karl Barth and Rudolf Bultmann, and "biblical hermeneutics"). The author's conclusion is that "theological pluralism holds the key" (143).

In Chapter 6 ("Historical Approaches to the Bible"), Gillingham first presents five problem areas: myth, biblical contradictions, miracles, religious language, and the historical Jesus. Scholars have come to these problems in two different ways: a diachronic approach and a synchronic approach. The diachronic approach, or historical-critical method, can be exemplified in six different methods: biblical criticism, source criticism, form criticism, tradition criticism, redaction criticism, and canon criticism (157-69). The descriptions of these six methods are brief, but fairly objective. For example, Gillingham observes that source criticism is anti-authorial and hypothetical (162), form criticism is not science (164), tradition criticism is the most attractive approach for the pluralist (166), and redaction criticism is theologically biased (167). A very helpful set of charts (170) illustrates the diachronic relationships of these six methodologies.

The synchronic approach involves six examples of the literary-critical method: literary criticism, narrative and poetic criticism, structuralist criticism, rhetorical criticism, reader-response criticism, and holistic criticism (176-86). Again, charts (172) and a table (173) help the reader to visualize the relationships between these methodologies. The concern that is paramount in the literary approach is the readers' contemporary setting (173, 174). Gillingham argues (quite unconvincingly) that the historical, theological, and literary approaches can be integrated so as to offer "some control and constraints on ... open-ended pluralistic readings" (185).

The final two chapters of the volume apply the three approaches to the Psalter as a whole (187-231) and to Psalm 8 in particular (232-44).

Ironically, although Gillingham argued for controls and constraints to prevent abuse of the text (45, 185), in her formal "Conclusion" (245-47) she accuses

all twelve methodologies in the diachronic and synchronic approaches of being attempts to control the text and its interpretation. Where does that leave her? She confesses that it “leads us with a sense that we should be as critical of pluralism *per se* as we should be critical of any exclusivist approach which assumes that it alone has the key control” (247). Her final paragraph’s call for recognizing a “fixed” text and “open” voices in the text rings hollow. All she has left is “something of a mystery; and herein lies the challenge of biblical studies as an academic discipline” (247).

An adequate knowledge of contemporary theories and schools of thought in the realm of biblical criticism is a necessity. In the first decade of the 21st century new methodologies continue to arise and the conservative theologian finds himself ever on the defensive due to his adherence to biblical inspiration, inerrancy, and authority. What Carl E. Armerding wrote in 1983 still applies two decades later:

The issues persist today. They affect not only the evangelical scholar seeking to preserve viewpoints which radically separate him from his more liberal colleagues, but virtually every student of the OT as well. University lectureships are given on the basis of adherence to critical thought, and textbooks are judged by the extent to which they affirm the current brand of critical orthodoxy, while popular television programs disseminate the latest theories to the waiting masses (*The Old Testament and Criticism* [Eerdmans, 1983] 2).

Conservative evangelical theologians cannot sit idly by, twiddling their thumbs, hoping that the madness might somehow end without their entering the fray. Vital issues are at stake. How we approach the Scriptures determines our theology. Year by year evangelical scholars continue to give up valuable ground to liberal biblical critics by adopting their methodologies. Evangelicals attempt to baptize such theories in evangelical waters without realizing that those methodologies have never been converted. Pressured by publishers and “Christian” academia, evangelicals borrow the cloak of critical terminology to clothe their work. Though valuable kernels of truth exist in contemporary critical studies, evangelicals must take great care to irradiate the material with the unadulterated Word of God so as not to become infected by the Trojan viruses that saturate its thinking.

Gillingham’s volume should be read by conservative evangelical scholars in order to understand that the critical methodologies are part and parcel of an overall philosophy and system driven by a variety of unbiblical concepts. If a pluralist like Gillingham can see the bankruptcy of critical methodologies, what does that say about the thinking of evangelicals who continue to dabble in critical methodologies, attempting to convert them for evangelical use?

Robert Gromacki. *The Virgin Birth: A Biblical Study of the Deity of Jesus Christ*. Rev. ed. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2002. 240 pp. \$11.99 (paper). Reviewed by

Trevor Craigen, Associate Professor of Theology.

“About time!” is an appropriate exclamation at the publication of the revised edition of Gromacki’s 1974 book. The first edition was much appreciated by all who read it. Since J. Gresham Machen’s book, *The Virgin Birth of Christ*, was not found that easy to read, Gromacki’s became a most useful adjunct to it. This revised edition, which is not that much of a change from the first edition, will prove again to be a most useful and instructive addition to the personal libraries of layman, pastor, student, and professor alike. Being thoroughly saturated with references to relevant Scriptures only adds to its value as a Bible study tool or textbook. The author advised that he “tried to produce a volume that would deal with the virgin birth of Christ on a level understandable to both the interested layman and the serious Bible student” (10). He succeeded!

The sub-title, “A Biblical Study of the Deity of Jesus Christ,” although certainly indicative of the emphasis given in the book, is nevertheless, in this reviewer’s opinion, not fully descriptive enough since it is also a study of the humanity of Christ. The sub-title should read “A Biblical Study of the Deity and the Humanity of Jesus Christ.”

A concisely summarized survey of the false concepts of Christ’s person provides the reader with an informative snapshot of how down through the ages has come a sharp reaction to or rejection of the scriptural evidence for both Christ’s humanity and deity (194-99). Three chapters furnish information on the different heresies and errant thoughts on Christ Jesus, namely, “Testimony of the Church Fathers,” “Erroneous Concepts,” and “The Onslaughts of False Teaching.” These demonstrate the pride of intellect of those who were critical of the biblical statements and evidence. Rejection of the virgin birth, it was seen, went hand in glove with rejection of the inspired and authoritative, inerrant Scriptures.

Updated bibliographic resources on impeccability/peccability, such as Canham’s article “*Potuit Non Peccare Or Non Potuit Peccare: Evangelicals, Hermeneutics, and the Impeccability Debate*,” *TMSJ* 11/1 (2000):93-114, would have been good additions for chapter 13 on Jesus’ sinlessness. Similarly, updated bibliographic resources on the meaning and significance of *almah*, such as Niessen’s article, “The Virginity of the *almah* in Isaiah 7:14” *BSac* 137/546 (1980):133-50, would have been good additions for chapter 16 on this important verse in Isaiah. At the least, cross-referencing to them in a footnote would have been in order.

Since reference will be made to this book when studying the birth narratives or when seeking clarification on the humanity and deity of Jesus of Nazareth, it is worthy of having near at hand.

Christopher A. Hall. *Learning Theology with the Church Fathers*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2002. 308 pp. \$15.00 (paper). Reviewed by Larry D.

Pettegrew, Professor of Theology.

Most Christians would no doubt have to admit that they do not know enough about their Christian roots. And if this is true, most Christians do not know enough about the church fathers. And if this is true, most Christians do not know enough about theology. For anyone who is willing to read it thoughtfully, this book will help with all three problem areas.

The book is intended only “to be a primer for beginners” (12). And it fulfills its goal admirably. The author writes clearly and carefully, trying not to bore the reader or scare him off through technical theological jargon. He is convinced that the fathers are hardly ever boring, so he tries with good success to present them to the reader with enthusiasm.

The first chapter introduces the fathers and explains why we should know about their contributions to theology. Each successive chapter familiarizes the reader with doctrinal issues that the fathers debated and tried to clarify. These issues include the relation of the Son to the Father, the Trinity, the two natures of Christ, the deity of the Holy Spirit, sin and grace, providence, the Scriptures, the church, and the resurrection of the body and everlasting life. Rather than bring in many voices on every doctrine, the author explains the views of the two or three fathers who led each debate. Usually he summarizes their arguments in some detail, quoting them when helpful.

Hall also tries to let the fathers speak without needlessly intruding into the debate himself. Still, it is apparent that his sympathies lie with the orthodox views. He sides with Augustine, for example, in his debate against Pelagius.

In an age when experience has conquered doctrine in many churches, many believers have difficulty articulating the basics of theology. This book will help the serious reader to think more deeply about the importance that our spiritual ancestors placed on getting the details of theology right.

John D. Hannah. *Our Legacy: The History of Christian Doctrine*. Colorado Springs, Colo.: NavPress, 2001. 395 pp. \$25.00 (cloth). Reviewed by Clifford B. McManis, TMS alumnus and Associate Pastor, First Baptist Church, Los Altos, California.

John D. Hannah has been the department chairman and distinguished professor of historical theology at Dallas Theological Seminary for almost thirty years. This book is the by-product of his many years of study and teaching in that capacity. Hannah specifically directs this book toward pastors, Christian workers, and the laity with the hope of sounding the clarion call for true theological reformation in the evangelical church abroad (9, 20). He avers,

It is time for a reformation in the church.... [T]he greatest need in the contemporary church is to rediscover the gospel, its glory, and its power. It is time to return to the fundamentals of the faith and be refreshed in its truths, to gain anew a love and respect for the Holy Scriptures (20).

The author believes such a reformation in the church is possible, but is contingent upon Christians gaining a new and fresh appreciation of their theological “legacy” via the study of historical theology. Studying key doctrines of the faith through the lens of history has many benefits. It helps the church distinguish between the transient and the permanent. It also helps the modern church to discern error and deception from the wealth of accumulated Spirit-led illumination provided to the saints through the ages. Furthermore, studying theology in the vortex of history manifests the developmental progress that certain doctrines have undergone over time. In this sense history is a teacher and informs theology.

Hannah examines what he considers to be the priority doctrines of the church, dedicating a chapter to each. His analysis of each doctrine is from a “systematic-historical approach” (28), whereby he isolates a particular doctrine, tracing it through every stage of church history, highlighting the positive and negative development through the centuries. His chapter titles represent his doctrines of choice, which include the following:

1. Authority: Where to Go for Truth
2. The Trinity: God as Three-in-One
3. The Person of Christ: Meet the God-Man
4. The Work of Christ: What the Cross Means for Us
5. Salvation: A Story of Sin and Grace
6. The Church: God’s Gathered Community
7. The End Times: Fulfillment of Our Blessed Hope

Before analyzing the above seven doctrines in their historical context, in the preface and chapter one the author lays the foundation of his methodological approach. He warns the reader that when it comes to historical theology, multiple models exist (24-28). The author clearly lays out his presuppositions in this vast field of study. They include the authority of the Bible as a standard of objective truth, the doctrine of illumination as the Spirit leads the saints individually and collectively into truth (1 John 2:27), and the sufficiency of the Scripture. Regarding the latter point, the author believes the canon is closed and the role of history in the progress of dogma is “explanatory” and “static,” not “organic” and “expansive” (27).

One of the strengths of the book is Hannah’s lucid style of writing—he has an uncanny ability for distilling the complexities of history into digestible portions for the reader. And his objectivity as a theologian is admirable. For example, when dealing with the development of “premillennialism,” he seeks to let the historical facts do the talking. Though acknowledging that the early church “Fathers embraced

a premillennial understanding" (306), he notes that in its seminal stages it was not formally systematized by them, nor did they jointly express that the kingdom was "to be one thousand years in duration" (306). Amillennialism came to the fore under Augustine, overshadowing early premillennialism, and enjoyed a hegemonic dominance till Calvin, who labeled it "childish" (320). But with renewed interest in biblical studies following the Reformation, premillennialism began to establish itself once again, this time more systematically and persuasively. The testimony of historical data reveals that premillennialism is neither novel nor faddish, but rather has roots in church history and biblical theology.

The author concludes his book with an impassioned, practical plea for the church to proclaim and teach with clarity the priority doctrines of the Bible (339-44). The book includes a helpful glossary of terms (365-76).

This reviewer highly recommends the book for pastors and serious Bible students. Bible colleges and seminaries would do well to consider it as a fresh survey text in historical theology classes.

David M. Hay. *Colossians*. Abingdon New Testament Commentary. Nashville: Abingdon, 2000. 182 pp. \$ 22.00 (paper). Reviewed by James E. Rosscup, Professor of Bible Exposition.

This book is by the Professor of Religion at Coe College, Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Publishers view the series as giving compact critical exegesis useful for students of theology, university users, and pastors.

In Hay's view, authenticity concerns not who wrote the letter, but whether it gives truth. Yet the epistle claims that Paul wrote it, which is true or untrue. One also has to face forthrightly Paul's personal greetings in 4:10-17. How realistic is it to view the letter as reliable if it is untrue on some matters, yet truthful at other points? Hay does not think it probable that Paul wrote Colossians, yet Paul may have supervised Timothy's writing (20, 23), or a disciple of Paul wrote after Paul died (24). As a matter of convenience in the commentary, Hay refers to Paul as if he was the writer, but this is not his own belief.

Verse by verse comments are closely-knit, often terse, yet much exegetical learning cuts to the point in many cases. On frequent points, careful, good details appear, e.g., "firstborn of all creation" (1:15; 55-57), or "filling up the afflictions of Christ" (1:24; 72-74), or on Christ's triumph (2:15). In other cases, ambiguity is present, as in 1:23 on how a necessity to continue in faith and good works as a condition of salvation fits with NT salvation as a total gift (68).

The work responsibly traces thought in the letter, and tends to be on a scholarly level. Locating a detail on a verse in the course of general remarks on sections is sometimes hard. Headings introduce sections, but individual verses are not in boldface or listed separately. The patient student can by combing slowly find

a lot on essential details. In Colossians 4 Hay's comment on Epaphras' intercession for spiritual growth is interesting. Since the letter calls readers to mature (1:28-29), "one can regard it as part of the answer to Epaphras' prayers" (161).

Hay is hit or miss in relating Colossian details with biblical passages outside this epistle, and this withholds much. An example is discussing Christ's triumph over enemies in 2:15 without mention of a possible link to "led captivity captive" (Eph 4:8) or triumph language in 2 Cor 2:14f.

The bibliography at the end reflects broad, diligent awareness of recent literature. Overall, the work is among the somewhat helpful scholarly works that are brief on detail. Students using fuller commentaries (T. K. Abbott, Markus Barth, and Helmut Blanke, F. F. Bruce, Peter O'Brien, E. Schweizer, or even the older work by J. B. Lightfoot) will glean added assists from Hay only here and there.

Richard S. Hess and Gordon J. Wenham, eds. *Zion, City of Our God*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999. x + 206 pp. \$22.00 (paper). Reviewed by William D. Barrick, Professor of Old Testament.

An international team of scholars approaches the topic of Jerusalem in the First Temple from a variety of perspectives in this collection of essays. All were papers presented in a special meeting of the Tyndale Fellowship Old Testament Study Group meeting at Cambridge in 1996 (ix). Each essay is thoroughly documented by immediately accessible footnotes providing a wealth of sources and supplementary information.

In "The Temple of Solomon: Heart of Jerusalem" (1-22), John M. Monson (Wheaton College) examines Solomon's Temple in the context of recent archaeological parallels in Syria. This study of the biblical account of the Temple in the United Monarchy, the intensification of the Zion tradition, and the contemporary archaeological parallels clearly demonstrates the Temple's significance and nature. Special attention is given to the neo-Hittite temple at 'Ain Dara dating from the early first millennium B.C. (12-21).

Richard S. Hess (Denver Seminary) contributed "Hezekiah and Sennacherib in 2 Kings 18-20" (23-41), focusing on literary studies of Sennacherib's siege of Jerusalem. He emphasizes the problem of what appear to be two different accounts in 2 Kings, dealing also with relevant materials in Isaiah and 2 Chronicles. Examining the historical, critical, and literary approaches to the problem, Hess concludes that 2 Kgs 18:13b-16 is the summary and 18:17-19:37 is a resumption and expansion similar to the technique exhibited in Genesis 1-2 (37-40).

Two essays dealing with Chronicles ("Jerusalem in Chronicles," 43-56, and "Jerusalem at War in Chronicles," 57-76) were written by Martin J. Selman (Spurgeon's College, London) and Gary N. Knoppers (Pennsylvania State College), respectively. Selman develops the long-term plan of God for Jerusalem as

highlighted by the Chronicler. Rebuilding Jerusalem in response to Cyrus' invitation was a necessary step in "becoming involved in the ongoing fulfillment of the Davidic covenant" (46). Knoppers' essay "challenges von Rad's influential view that holy war in Chronicles was entirely cultic in character" (57). His primary arguments involve a proper understanding of the function of the Temple in times of war (61-64) and the pattern of holy war as portrayed in 2 Chronicles 20 with regard to Jehoshaphat (64-73).

"The Use of the Zion Tradition in the Book of Ezekiel" (77-103) by Thomas Renz (Oak Hill College, London) looks at the contribution of ancient Near Eastern beliefs regarding a holy mountain and early Israelite tradition to Ezekiel's message. One of the challenges of such a study is that Ezekiel never uses the term "Zion" even though the Temple in Jerusalem is of obvious significance in the book (86).

Psalms 120-134 receive special attention in Philip E. Satterthwaite's (Biblical Graduate School, Singapore) essay entitled "Zion in the Songs of Ascents" (105-28). The theme of these psalms is the LORD's restoration of Zion on the basis of His sovereign choosing of both Zion and David (107). After evaluating the critical views of L. D. Crow (*The Songs of Ascents*, SBLDS 148 [Scholars Press, 1996]), Satterthwaite concludes that the Songs of Ascents display a greater coherence and unity than Crow's redactionist views would indicate (113). The discussion divides these fifteen psalms into triads "under a heading which seems to encapsulate a leading theme of that triad" (117).

In the volume's longest essay ("The Personification of Jerusalem and the Drama of Her Bereavement in Lamentations," 129-69) Knut M. Heim (Wesley House, Cambridge, England) develops the use of personification in Lamentations in order to understand better how the community of Jerusalem dealt with its pain and anxiety (129-30). He proposes that Lamentations "is not a reasoned treatise on the nature of suffering; rather, it reflects a community's desperate grasping for meaning as the world around it ... has collapsed" (146). After investigating an inventory of nineteen different utterances within Lamentations (147-67), Heim identifies seven voices (three major and four minor) in the public discourse about Jerusalem's grieving process (167). He finds that the book appeals to modern readers "bewildered by their own helplessness when confronted with suffering on a global and local scale" (169).

"Molek of Jerusalem?" (171-206) by Rebecca Doyle (Holy Light Theological Seminary, Kaohsiung, Taiwan) closes the collection of essays by examining the cult of Molech (an alternate spelling more familiar to American readers) by means of biblical and extrabiblical materials. The catalyst for this study resides in the relative scarcity of information about this cult and the resulting scholarly speculation (172). First, Doyle surveys the views of a variety of scholars (172-82), concluding that there is plenty of "room for a difference of opinion as to who Molek is and where he may have come from" (184). Second, an examination of archaeological evidences from Ebla, Mari, Babylon, Ugarit, Turkey, Phoenicia,

and Carthage (184-93) finds that there are only bits and pieces of evidence and that their connections to the OT's descriptions are tenuous (194). Lastly, the study of Molech in the OT (194-204) demonstrates that the Hebrew Scriptures are the "most complete source of information that we have" (206).

The eight essays have a wealth of information about Jerusalem. The breadth of their OT investigations encompasses especially the books of 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezekiel, Psalms, and Jeremiah. Interaction with historical, archaeological, literary, and theological studies reveals the height and depth of the essays' scope. Hess and Gordon J. Wenham (Cheltenham & Gloucester College, Cheltenham, England) have performed a valuable service to OT scholarship by collecting and publishing this book.

Harold W. Hoehner. *Ephesians. An Exegetical Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002. xxix + 930 pp. \$54.99 (cloth). Reviewed by James E. Rosscup, Professor of Bible Exposition.

This monumental work which displays probing exegesis and awareness of scholarly opinion on Ephesians joins and surpasses, at least in detail, highly contributive commentaries by Peter O'Brien, Andrew Lincoln, and the 868 pages of Markus Barth. Hoehner, Distinguished Professor of New Testament at Dallas Theological Seminary where he has taught for more than three decades, argues for Paul as the author and for including "in Ephesus" in 1:1. He writes fully on each verse with penetrating analysis and copious footnotes that draw from a massive range of expertise throughout the Christian era, including primary linguistic works and other firsthand sources.

Hoehner's fairness to views and arguments combine with readable clarity and an adept use of such items as context, word study, grammar, setting, and customs. His work results from several trips for study abroad, a 33-page double-column entry in the *Bible Knowledge Commentary* (1983-85), and persevering research. His drive to "turn every stone" for evidence is plain as he weighs opinions and gives seasoned logic.

Besides the introduction and commentary, excursuses probe the destination in 1:1 ("in Ephesus"), views and structure of 1:3-14, "in Christ," election, *plērōma*, "mystery," the household code, and slavery in Paul's day. Hoehner lists commentaries, even a special bibliography on authorship (114-30), but omits a longer bibliography because it would have added another hundred pages. Other features include historical quotes on the greatness of the epistle among Paul's writings (1-2), support for Pauline authorship with answers to six major objections, problems such as fraud in the view of a pseudonymous author, a 10-page chart on how 390 works since 1519 viewed authorship, and sections on the history of Ephesus and seven theological emphases.

On each verse, Hoehner includes the Greek wording, English rendering, then comments on each word or phrase. Explanations on 1:1-2 show why Paul could know people at Ephesus, not mention personal relations, and write the letter even when 1:15 refers to having *heard* of their faith and love (140-41). Attention to grammar is meticulous, as on sealing in 1:13-14. Hoehner relates sealing to God's ownership of believers, who belong to Him as His heritage, as in 1:11.

Here is a sampling of other well-supported views. "Spirit" rather than "spirit" is meant in 1:17; inheritance in 1:18 is *God's*, but in 1:14 that of the *saints*; in 1:23 God's fullness is filling Christ and the church; in 2:8b, the demonstrative pronoun in "and that not of yourselves" refers back to 2:4-8a and more particularly 2:8a, salvation by grace through faith (Hoehner cites the demonstrative in 1:15 referring back to 1:13-14, and other examples); "mystery" in 3:3, not known by men at all in OT times but now made known is the truth that God unites saved Jews and Gentiles into one body without Gentiles having (as in OT days) to become Jews to belong (433-34). Hoehner has five supports, e.g., the "mystery" was formerly "hidden" (3:9), and a clear parallel in Col 1:26 has "but" instead of "as" in Eph 3:5.

The following are other views of the author. In 3:19 "filled up to all the fullness of God" has the preposition *eis* ("toward") denoting movement toward a goal, here the goal of knowing the love of Christ. Yet saints never are as filled as God, and never are God. "Captives" (4:8) are, in biblical usage, enemies over whom God is victor (cf. Psalm 68). Captives in Ephesians 4 are Christ's enemies (Satan, sin, death), not captives of Satan who now are redeemed captives of Christ. A text by Paul that Hoehner might include but does not is Col 2:15. The "lower parts of the earth" (Eph 4:9) are earth's lower parts, the grave, where Christ was before ascending. In "arise from the dead" (5:14), Hoehner does not favor allusion to an OT verse (e.g., Isa 26:19; 60:1). Rather Paul refers to an early hymn of Christians about repentance/encouragement, relevant to deliverance from a walk in darkness, and rising from deadness to walk in Christ's light. Hoehner needs to clarify, for he says that if "believers" continue in darkness (cf. 5:3-7), they will go into eternal wrath (vv. 5-6). Since God seals genuine believers (1:13-14; 4:30) to the day of future redemption, a true believer is secure from eternal wrath. If not, this would entail a loss of salvation by continuing in sin. Church-related people who face eternal wrath are merely professing believers, not genuine. Hoehner in 5:18a sees the present imperative prohibition ("do not be drunk") not as meaning to stop drunkenness indulged, but as not permitting drunkenness to be a habit. The believer's behavior is to be filled (controlled) with the Holy Spirit (v. 18b).

On 6:14-17, Hoehner sees the six parts of armor in a subjective sense, a practical living of truth, righteousness, peace, faith, safety from the devil's wiles, and the Spirit's empowering with the Word. Prayer in vv. 18-20 is not an added part of armor but vital in all armor to gain supernatural help.

In long works, especially of this great bulk, proofing slips can occur. A few are: p. 23, "It must concluded . . ."; p. 29, "but not to enough to discount authenticity"; p. 38, "chose" in place of "choose"; p. 837, armor to "be able stand." Tributes

on jacket flaps and back cover are by recognized scholars, Clinton Arnold, E. Earle Ellis, Frank Thielman, Martin Hengel, Graham Stanton, Doug Moo, Ralph Martin, Ernest Best, Frederick Danker, I. H. Marshall, Max Turner, and Donald Hagner. A rich use of this longest exegetical commentary ever done on Ephesians will help diligent teachers, pastors, students, and lay readers to reason through issues. The price, at first prohibitive for some, is much more manageable when one watches for discounts.

James S. Jeffers. *The Greco-Roman World of the New Testament Era: Exploring the Background of Early Christianity*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1999. 352 pp. \$19.99 (paper). Reviewed by Keith Essex, Assistant Professor of Bible Exposition.

James S. Jeffers is an associate professor at Biola University who also teaches ancient history at California State University, Dominguez Hills. This combination of expertise in both Roman history and early Christianity evidenced in Jeffers' teaching experience is also reflected in *The Greco-Roman World of the New Testament Era*. He correctly states, "If the New Testament texts are written to make sense to people in the first century, then we must try to put ourselves into their places in order to determine what the writers of the New Testament intended their readers to understand by what they wrote" (11). Therefore, the purpose of this book is to give the non-scholar an understanding of the Greco-Roman world at the time the NT was written as an aid in biblical interpretation (11, 293). This volume "tries to present [Hellenistic] society within the context of Roman control, hopefully in a way that Christians in the first century would have experienced it" (13). The book fulfills its purpose as a good introduction to NT backgrounds.

The author presents in his first chapter a short, fictional dinner discussion supposedly from first-century Jerusalem to orient the readers to the political and cultural environment of the NT (14-18). Those readers who need a fuller historical account to understand the allusions found in the first chapter are directed to an appendix where a summary of Greco-Roman history leading up to and going through the NT era is presented (293-320). The bulk of the volume surveys different aspects of first-century life (19-292). Jeffers introduces the reader to such topics as work, travel, burial practices, city life, religious and secular associations, religious beliefs, government, money, law, military, social classes, citizenship, slavery, family structure, and education in the time of the NT. In each chapter, the topics are presented with data known from Greco-Roman sources as a basis for the insights given by the author on how this aids in the understanding of the biblical material. Jeffers is concise, yet usually clear, in his discussion of both the background material and its biblical application. The volume is enhanced by a chronological chart of significant events from 50 B.C.–A.D. 90 (321-23), seven computer-generated maps

(324-29), and subject and Scripture indexes (343-52). The book has a wealth of useful information on how life was lived in the early Roman Empire.

Although the work is a fine introduction to its subject, the reader should be aware of two weaknesses. First, in his suggestions for further reading at the end of chapters two through thirteen, Jeffers tends to direct the reader to books and journal articles that are usually found only in university libraries. These resources are not the kind of material to which the non-scholar for whom the book is intended would have ready access. A better source would be the wealth of background information in Bible dictionaries, encyclopedias, histories, and archaeologies that can be found in Christian bookstores and many personal and church libraries.

A second, and greater weakness, is found in Jeffers' discussion of women in Greco-Roman culture and the NT (249-52). The author rightly states that women were viewed in the culture to be intellectually inferior to men and that their main function was that of childbearing and child rearing. Some women, particularly those of the upper classes, did break out of the traditional roles, though this was frowned upon within that society. These women were especially active outside the home in religious matters. They were primarily attracted to cults practiced by women, but also to those cults that were open to both sexes and to the official state cults. New cults gave great freedom to women to hold offices alongside men. But as the cult sought greater respectability from society, it would remove women from positions of leadership. Jeffers implies that this also happened in early Christianity. He states that Paul's teaching and descriptions "present a softened version of the larger society's patriarchal family structure" (252). Women were allowed to serve in leadership positions within the early church, although Jeffers does not know the level of leadership exerted by women because of the difficulties in interpreting some of Paul's comments concerning women. However, the only book to which Jeffers directs the reader for further information is Craig S. Keener's *Paul, Women and Wives: Marriage and Women's Ministry in the Letters of Paul* (Hendrickson, 1992). Keener's work argues that women can exercise all the ministries/offices in the church and that mutual submission in Christian marriage are the true interpretations of the Pauline texts. By his favorable citing of Keener, Jeffers apparently concurs. This reviewer would direct the reader instead to *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, edited by John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Crossway, 1991) [see *TMSJ*, Spring, 1991, 107-9].

The Greco-Roman World of the New Testament Era is a valuable introduction to NT backgrounds. However, the biblical exegete and expositor should use Jeffers' volume in conjunction with the more expansive and detailed *Backgrounds of Early Christianity* by Everett Ferguson (Eerdmans, 1993) [see *TMSJ*, Fall, 1994, 216-17].

Hebrew Grammatical Concepts through English Grammar. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2002. xvii + 189 pp. \$19.95 (paper). Reviewed by William D. Barrick, Professor of Old Testament.

Grammatical Concepts 101 for Biblical Hebrew is a manual for students who have found the vocabulary of grammatical description confusing—or, who might have “slept through lessons on grammar during high school and college” (xiii). Simplicity and information are aims of this book intended to complement standard teaching grammars (xv). Its three major parts cover the more basic concepts before the higher levels of biblical Hebrew are addressed.

Long first introduces the student to basic linguistic terms and theory (3-6), providing brief definitions for each general element (e.g., “PHRASE is a language unit referring to a string of words (a *syntagm*)—two or more—that does not involve predication ...; it does not have a subject and a predicate together,” 5). Next, he introduces the vocabulary and concepts of sound production (7-15). These two areas are followed by simple, concise discussions of the syllable (16) and translation (17-21), thereby concluding “Part I: Foundations.”

“Part II: Building Blocks” (23-120) covers twenty basic elements of grammar. It carefully defines each element, illustrates it in English, and then gives an example in biblical Hebrew. Special help is given in areas that are problematic, like distinguishing some conjunctions and prepositions (32-33). Helpful charts supplement the discussions (e.g., the catalog of semantic connections of biblical Hebrew conjunctions, 33-35). The section covering the pronoun is twenty pages long (39-58). Throughout the section, antecedents are clearly marked in the examples by means of graphic arrows and identification labels. Nine tables also provide additional visual means of organizing the information concerning pronouns. Long’s treatment of “Tense” (87-91) and “Aspect” (92-98) are more accurate than the majority of standard grammars. However, categorizing *veqatal* (*waw* + perfect) as expressing the imperfective aspect (96) is a gross oversimplification, ignoring the category of non-consecutive *waw* + perfect (cf. Robert B. Chisholm, Jr., *From Exegesis to Exposition* [Baker, 1998], 128-33) and flirting with the long-outdated theory of *waw*-conversive.

In the final part (“Part III: The Clause and Beyond,” 121-76), the section on “Predicate/Predication” (127-42) is quite detailed. It provides additional technical material to supplement earlier treatments of such elements as the noun, relative clause, adjective, adverb, and participle. “Semantics” (143-50) and “Discourse Analysis” (151-76, limited to past-time narrative) are excellent introductions on these two exegetically significant topics. The “Index of Topics” (179-89) provides an alphabetical classified listing of all major terms for easily accessing the pertinent discussions.

As in every grammar or grammar help, shortcomings (by omission and commission) are present. Participles were presented in a brief seven pages, about equally divided between the English and Hebrew examples (73-79). However,

infinitives received only a page and a half (80-81) without any Hebrew examples. In the section labeled “Verb” (84-86), the student might be just as confused after reading as he was before reading it. The distinctions between fientive transitives and intransitives would have been more readily grasped had an example like that of “run” been employed (“He runs for exercise” is an intransitive fientive while “he runs a factory” is a transitive fientive). In the eleven pages on “Mood” (105-15) there is no mention of the optative (cf. Paul Joüon, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, trans. and rev. by T. Muraoka [Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1996], §112k). The manual also suffers from a lack of grammatical discussion of the verbal concepts of causation (including the various kinds of causatives and the factitive).

Shortcomings aside, however, *Grammatical Concepts 101 for Biblical Hebrew* is a tool that every student of biblical Hebrew should keep close at hand. This reviewer intends to require it for second and third semester Hebrew courses. Grammatically challenged students and their teachers will find it a godsend.

Carolyn Pressler. *Joshua, Judges, and Ruth*. Westminster Bible Companion. Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/John Knox, 2002. 312 pp. \$24.95 (paper).
Reviewed by James E. Rosscup, Professor of Bible Exposition.

The authoress is Professor of Biblical Interpretation in United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities, at New Brighton, Minnesota. WBC volumes claim to assist laity, individuals and groups with faith and practice. The present volume is an example of liberal biblical views as distinguished from evangelical views that support the total reliability of Scripture.

In a brief, cursory introduction, Pressler assumes with many a “Deuteronomistic history” of compiling these books, with more final forms in the era of King Josiah to bolster his reforms (7th century B.C.) and the 6th century with events of 2 Kings’ last chapter (2).

Small segments of the biblical books receive summary discussions, not verse by verse examination, yet have much relevant material. One can see, for example, the self-manifestation of God in Josh 5:13-15 to give power to win in the promised land; here, God is free to do as He wills, not take sides, to display that He is awesome and His word and will are holy (41-42).

Pressler frequently does not regard historic descriptions as factually accurate. She denies that the biblical version of Jericho’s fall “really happened.” In her view, archaeology shows that at best few people were on the site when Israel began in Canaan; she assumes a date in the later 13th century (44-45), where many hold a date ca. 1405 B. C. and uphold the factuality. Little doubt can remain that her words assume that the person writing Joshua 6 made a claim that was not historically dependable, that Israel’s first battle in the land was at Jericho (45). Instead of such alleged falsifying, many well-studied scholars claim the full veracity for the account.

To Pressler, the record does not tell what happened in history, but illustrates what God regularly has done, is doing, and can do (49). The Ai account, likewise, entails a story-teller's "tale," making up Achan's sin and punishment to get across theological points which Pressler sees as artificial to the battle account. To her, the battle details also are unreliable (54-55).

The trend of undercutting historical dependability keeps popping up. The Gibeonite-Israelite treaty (Joshua 9) did not occur according to Pressler's view on archaeology and textual matters (68). She casts much doubt on the sun standing still in Joshua 10, and favors a metaphorical, not a literal, idea (80-81). The Book of Ruth is a "novella," short story (tale). Somehow, Pressler allows it as "true," yet one has difficulty with inconsistency in her also saying it lacks historical factuality (261). Positively, she does take Ruth's lying on the threshing floor and talking with Boaz, not as some writers suggest, as an invitation for sex but a decent proposal of marriage (289-90). Back in Judges 11, she feels that evidence supports Jephthah offering his daughter as a burnt offering to fulfill a misguided vow.

Helpfully, the work often sums up matters, crystallizes some issues, and explains customs. But overall it does not offer outstanding assistance, and it does not give a high view on the veracity of what the books say. More detailed works will offer far more to laity, students, or pastors who believe in reliable bases for things Pressler pronounces untrustworthy.

Richard Owen Roberts. *Repentance: The First Word of the Gospel*. Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2002. 368 pp. \$15.99 (paper). Reviewed by Trevor Craigen, Associate Professor of Theology.

Displaying something of his pastor's heart—a note that persists throughout the book—Roberts begins not with a formal preface but with "A Letter to the Reader" in which he earnestly calls for no one to leave repentance out until it is too late. The table of contents shows the material organized in sevens—the seven myths, maxims, marks, motives, fruits, models, and dangers of repentance and seven words of advice to the unrepentant. Roberts communicates like a preacher. The introduction, not surprisingly, offers seven reasons why the doctrine of repentance is being neglected or having little impact upon churches today (16-21). Commitment to success and not wishing to be divisive or negative contribute to the doctrine being given such low profile. That is an accurate assessment.

With frequent cross-referencing to and copious citing of Scripture (23-41), Roberts lays out the evidence for repentance being a very important item in the teaching and proclamation of the NT (23-41) The OT data is well summarized under seven foci (44-62), and is accompanied by an extensive use of appropriate Scripture passages drawn from all literary genre. The NT data receives thorough treatment under seven 'doctrines' (63-83). Again, an insertion of appropriate Scriptures

dominates the content. To maintain the “seven-motif,” these chapters could have followed the pattern by being given headings such as “The Seven Foci of Repentance in the OT” and “The Seven ‘Doctrines’ of Repentance in the NT.” In fact, Roberts displays an amazing ability to outline everything in sevens. The reader quickly notices this common denominator but soon begins to appreciate the skillful touch of the author in compiling these breakdowns—they may very well prove to be a good mnemonic device. God’s message to Nineveh, for example, is outlined under seven salient features (58-60), one of which is particularly memorable, namely, “the mercy God is always greater than the mercy of those servants He employs to proclaim it” (59).

Techniques such as the listing of questions and pertinent Scriptures, the use of repetitive lead-in phrases, and numbered lists of information, communicate well and draw the reader in and hold attention. A good listing of the different kinds of sorrows—there are twelve, not seven of them—which have no necessary link to repentance shows that thought had been given to the subject (176). A list of twelve statements on what private confession of sin must be (193-94) and a list of ten suggestions for public confession (196) are both of pastoral value.

In all chapters, appropriate stories from his own personal ministry experience illustrate and enhance the points being made. Some of these highlighted the angry resistance of individuals in the congregation to his preaching. It was instructive to observe how he handled those awkward situations. Judging by such incidents, one sees Roberts as wise and patient, yet a forthright counselor who brought Scripture to bear upon life. He writes as a personal witness of the impact of preaching repentance on a congregation and of the fruit of it in individual lives in different parts of the world. He cites cases of pastors who attempted to justify their immorality while weeping crocodile tears, which should trouble the reader who is in pastoral ministry. It should strengthen the resolve to be an example of purity to those who believe.

Roberts’ pastoral concern rings out in the earnest appeal to the reader to think on whether or not he bears fruit worthy of repentance (27) and in his other calls to think soberly on the possibility of false repentance. One example of this would be the comments made on legal as opposed to evangelical repentance, i.e., what a person does for himself as opposed to what he does for God (115). Discipleship labs or small groups may very well benefit from using this book as a basis for thoughtful reflection on sin and repentance, humility, and sanctified living. Personal devotional use is a valid option.

On the matter of national repentance (289-92), the author concisely surveys the biblical references thereon and then asks if all that could be done today is being done to call a nation to repentance. It makes one stop and think. What of the nations today in the church-age and what of them beyond the rapture of the church?

A degree of overlap in content does occur, with the last three chapters in particular picking up on and reiterating much of what had been put forward in the earlier chapters. The book may not have a systematic theology format, but the reader

quickly realizes (1) that its format and style helps gain a fuller understanding of this important doctrine, and (2) that it is a treasure trove of biblical cross-references. That definitely makes it worth having in one's personal library!

Huub van de Sandt and David Flusser. *The Didache*. Minneapolis: Royal Van Gorcum/Fortress, 2002, and Kurt Niederwimmer. *The Didache*. Minneapolis: Augsburg/Fortress, 1998. Reviewed by William C. Varner, Professor of Bible and Director of IBEX, The Master's College.

Two separate volumes, issued in the last four years by the same publisher, provide the best scholarly studies of the "The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles" that have appeared since the document itself was found in 1883. Fortress Press is to be commended for this achievement, which combines their efforts with those of Dutch and German co-publishers. The first volume, henceforth referred to as "Sandt and Flusser," is part of the multi-volume project originally titled *Compendia Rerum Judaicarum ad Novum Testamentum* ("Collection of Jewish Matters Related to the New Testament"). The series has been a joint effort between Dutch and Israeli scholars, and this volume continues that practice with Huub van de Sandt, a professor at Tilburg, and David Flusser, a late professor at the Hebrew University. The second volume, henceforth referred to as "Niederwimmer," is part of the growing *Hermeneia* series of commentaries on the Bible and related literature.

Continental scholars have had far greater interest in the Didache and in Patristic writings in general than English-speaking scholars. Therefore, much that has been written about the Didache has been in German or French. Indeed, Niederwimmer's volume was translated by Linda Maloney from a German edition published in 1989.

Before we compare and contrast these volumes, it may be good to summarize the scholarly consensus about the Didache which these volumes affirm. In 1873 the Greek Orthodox Metropolitan Philotheus Bryennios discovered a complete copy of the Didache in a monastery in Constantinople. He edited and published it in 1883. In 1887 the manuscript was transferred to the Greek Orthodox patriarchate in Jerusalem where it remains today, referred to as "Hierosolymitanus 54." The entire manuscript consists of 120 folio pages and a colophon at the end states that the scribe was one "Leon" and the date he finished his copying was Tuesday, June 11, 1056. The Didache portion consists of less than five folio pages in a clear miniscule script. The Didache contains fourteen brief chapters and around 100 "verses." Most of the other works contained in the manuscript were already familiar "subapostolic writings" such as the Epistle of Barnabas, the two Epistles of Clement and the twelve epistles of Ignatius of Antioch.

It was the text of the Didache, however, that was the real "find." Sandt and Flusser compared the excitement caused by its publication in 1883 to the attention

later given to the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls (24—a bit overstated in my opinion). Scholars had considered it a lost work that had been obliquely referred to as “The So-Called Teaching” by Eusebius and Athanasius in the fourth century. A Latin version known as “*Doctrinae Apostolorum*” was referred to by “Pseudo-Cyprian” around 300 and by Augustine around 400. The last mention of a “Teaching of the Apostles” (“*Didache Apostolon*”) was by the Patriarch Nicephorus in 829. After this, the *Didache* disappeared from history until Bryennios published it in 1883.

The Jerusalem manuscript is the only known complete copy of the *Didache*, although most scholars think it lacks a few final lines due to its sudden ending. There have appeared two small scraps of the Greek *Didache* among the Oxyrhynchus papyri fragments and a small section of it in Coptic was discovered soon after the Greek papyri. Also, two small sections appear in the “Ethiopian Church Order” in a paraphrased translation (Sandt and Flusser, 24-26). Finally, the Greek “Apostolic Constitutions” (ca. 380) incorporates most of the *Didache* in a highly expanded, commentary form.

The *Didache*’s sixteen brief chapters are structured into four clearly separated thematic sections: the “Two Ways” moral document (1-6); a liturgical treatise centering on the Eucharist and baptism (7-10); a treatise on church organization (11-15); and an eschatological section (16). The “Two Ways” section is based on the double love command (“Love God and Love your neighbor”) and also includes a section of positive commands in 1:3–2:1 which clearly echo the admonitions of the Sermon on the Mount. Most scholars, including the authors of these two volumes, clearly discern a Jewish context in much of the Two Ways section. Hillel’s famous dictum about the “Negative Golden Rule” appears, for example, in 1:2. These authors, especially Sandt and Flusser, expend much effort to locate the essence of this section in an already existing Jewish tradition of ethical teaching. With the addition of the admonitions from Jesus, this section probably served as a pre-baptismal catechetical manual. This seems clear from 7:1: “As for baptism, baptize in this way. Having said all this beforehand (i.e., all that was written above), baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, in running (literally ‘living’) water.” The section on the “Eucharist” (sections 9, 10) appears to set the observance in the context of a larger meal (the Agape). The prayers to be recited are very similar to a Jewish prayer ending the meal (the “*Birkat Hamazon*”). The ritual order, interestingly, is the cup and then the bread. While the “liturgy” is very simple, there is a reference to this being a “sacrifice.” Niederwimmer, despite his Catholicism, argues that the language does not at all describe the later sacramental sacrifice of the Mass, but the worshipers’ “sacrifice” was intended to describe their praise and prayer itself. He cites in this regard 1 Pet 2:5, Heb 13:10, 15, and Jas 1:27. “The whole action of the congregation is understood as a sacrifice before God” (196-97).

The section on how to treat traveling apostles, teachers, and prophets (11-15) expands and applies further the command mentioned in the NT to show

hospitality to itinerant teachers (e.g., 3 John 5-8). It also offers some firm guidelines on how best to prevent unethical “teachers” from presuming on the kindness of local congregations as they make their way around. “If the person is just passing through on the way to some other place, help him as much as you can, but he shall not stay with you more than two or three days—if that is necessary” (12:2).

The last section on eschatology (ch. 16) is brief and centers on the ethical parenthesis that should be heeded in light of the future events. Much of it echoes the teachings of the “Olivet Discourse” in Matthew 24. The increase of wickedness, the antichrist (“the one who leads the world astray”), the resurrection of believers, and the “Lord coming on the clouds of heaven” are mentioned. For those hungry to find confirmation for the specifics of their eschatological scheme, the Didache will disappoint with its general description of future events.

As to the date and provenance of this fascinating ancient document, both of the two works affirm the current consensus that the Didache appeared no later than the end of the first century A.D. and that it probably originally circulated in the area of Syria. The evidence that points to this is the “primitive” characteristics of the “liturgy” that it describes; the simple organizational structure of the local assembly (*episkopoi* and *diakonoi*, like Phil 1:1); the continued presence of apostles and others in an itinerant practice, unlike later resident monarchical bishops; and the use by the Epistle of Barnabas of sections of the Didache around the year 125.

What is the difference between the volumes of Niederwimmer and Sandt/Flusser? Simply put, the former is a commentary on the text of the Didache, and the latter is a detailed study about the issues raised in the Didache. That difference between the two justifies their inclusion in the series of works in which they are found. The *Hermeneia* is a series of commentaries and the *Compendia* is a series exploring the Jewish/Christian relationship at the end of the Second Temple Period and the beginning of the Rabbinic period. If a reader is looking for help on a specific passage in the Didache, then Niederwimmer will provide more help than any other work on the Didache that this reviewer has seen. If the reader is looking for a very scholarly and thoroughly researched study of the various issues that the Didache raises, then Sandt and Flusser is the best study of that type that has ever been written.

Protestants, and particularly evangelicals, have generally steered clear of Patristic study. This is understandable in light of their “Sola Scriptura” heritage, but it is, I fear, to our detriment in the long run. Should we not be interested in how those Christians closest to the apostles understood the teachings of the apostles? Should the excessive allegorizing of “Barnabas” or the strong emphasis on the authority of the “episkopos” by Ignatius scare us away from the deep spirituality of a Polycarp or from the simple advice on local church practice in the Didache? Even if someone is simply looking for confirmation of their own beliefs and practices (a less than noble aim for studying the fathers), we should spend more time on these fascinating books.

It is helpful that some Christians around 100 A.D. instructed us to immerse

in cold, running water those being baptized, even if they allow pouring with warm water if the situation demands it (7:1-3). It is helpful to know that around A.D. 100 the episkopoi were selected by the local congregation and not elevated above the presbuteroi as eventually developed in church order (15:1). It is helpful to know that around A.D. 100, the day on which believers were to gather for the breaking of bread was Sunday, not the Sabbath as some would have us believe (14:1). It is helpful to know that around A.D. 100 Christians did not teach that Jesus came in A.D. 70 as some preterists teach. It is interesting to know also that these early Christians taught that a separate resurrection of believers will take place at the Lord's coming (16:6-8) instead of a general resurrection, as some would have us believe today.

No, I do not need the Didache as an authority for what I believe, but I also want to know if what I believe is contrary to what the earliest Christians believed. Even if a student does not purchase one of these excellent books, he should check out the Didache on his own. He can find it in a number of editions of *The Apostolic Fathers* that are available today.

Mark S. Smith. *Untold Stories: The Bible and Ugaritic Studies in the Twentieth Century*. Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2001. xix + 252 pp. \$29.95 (cloth).
Reviewed by William D. Barrick, Professor of Old Testament.

Ugaritic studies are sometimes overlooked by evangelicals because they have tended to be more enthusiastic about the Qumran scrolls and recent discoveries like the Tel Dan inscription, the James ossuary, and the more recent Jehoash Inscription. Smith's volume demonstrates that Ugaritic studies are alive and well throughout the world. The volume is a selective survey of Ugaritic and biblical studies from 1928 to 1999. Proceeding in historical order, four periods are covered: 1928-1945 (between the two world wars), 1945-1970 (post-World War II), 1970-1985, and 1985-1999. For each of these four periods the author provides a list of basic texts and tools produced, a discussion of major advances, a presentation of the major figures and academic programs, and "an issue representative of the intellectual climate of each period" (7). Smith stresses "questions of grammar, literature, and religion over issues of archaeology and history" (9).

This book has a wealth of anecdotal material about key players in Ugaritic studies. This reviewer found himself drawn into the intriguing web of scholarly interaction between men like Cyrus Gordon, E. A. Speiser, William Foxwell Albright, Theodor Gaster, Marvin Pope, and Frank Moore Cross. Tantalizing tidbits of information open the door for a peek at events in the lives of major Ugaritic and biblical scholars. The following are but a few examples: Frank Moore Cross was a student of Frank R. Blake whom Cross considers "the best language teacher I ever had" (25). Blake characteristically illustrated grammatical phenomena by appealing to Tagalog. Cross commented, "I think I was half through the first term before I

discovered that Tagalog was not a Semitic language, and tradition has it that several finished their degrees still under the impression that Ugaritic and Tagalog were sister languages” (43). Godfrey Rolles Driver, son of Samuel Rolles Driver, “was a young prodigy. At age sixteen he helped his father with the 1910 production of *Gesenius’ Hebrew Grammar*” (57). Marvin Pope (author of the Job and Song of Songs commentaries in the Anchor Bible) was a student of William Stinespring who was Albright’s brother-in-law (65). Cyrus Gordon’s tenures at Dropsie and at Brandeis produced Ugaritic programs in which Kenneth Barker, Walter Kaiser, and Edwin Yamauchi participated (76, 77, 79). David Noel Freedman, whose father wrote material for the Ziegfeld Follies, graduated from UCLA at the age of 17 (109).

Anyone reading this book will gain a heightened appreciation for the role of Ugaritic in biblical studies. Smith provides a thorough report on works still in progress that will continue the production of quality tools for the study of both the archaeology and the texts from ancient Ugarit. His discussion of major themes helps the reader to understand the scope of Ugaritic studies. In one particular area, that of myth-and-ritual (82-100), Smith’s discussion is heavier and more extensive—perhaps due to his own personal interest and involvement in that area of Ugaritic studies.

Mark S. Smith is the Skirball Professor of Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Studies at New York University. His books include *Laments of Jeremiah and Their Contexts* (Scholars Press, 1990), *The Origins and Development of the Waw-Consecutive* (Scholars Press, 1991), and *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry* (Scholars Press, 1997).

David Noel Freedman aided in the editing of *Untold Stories*. He “quipped that the piece sometimes reads like a phone book, with too much detail and too many figures” (8). Those details and many figures were what this reviewer found so interesting. It is a must read for those who love the areas of OT studies, archaeology, and Ugaritic.

R. C. Sproul. *Saved from What?* Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2002. 128 pp. \$8.99 (cloth). Reviewed by Trevor Craigen, Associate Professor of Theology.

A sermon preached, then scripted and printed, led up to this little book, which could be described as an extended gospel tract. It could also serve the purpose of being a primer on the doctrine of salvation, prompting further detailed study of just what salvation is. The book makes for easy reading—an hour or so will do it. The use of personal anecdotes and a number of Scriptures from different settings as illustration adds color to the book. It is neither textbook nor commentary nor exposition of a specific passage, but a topical sermon delivered at a Christian Booksellers Convention, a sermon sparked by a survey which showed that many evangelical believers could not give an adequate definition of the gospel (15).

Eight chapters arranged under three obvious questions—"Saved from What?," "Saved by What?," and "Saved for What?"—nicely cover the points the author wished to emphasize and the different terms he chose to bring forward and define, such as "reconciliation" and "redemption," "expiation" and "propitiation," and "justification" and "adoption." Sin and man's depravity, as well as the absolute necessity of substitutionary atonement, God's holiness, Christ's righteousness, and the believer's blessed future in eternity are also concisely presented.

Interestingly enough, the sermon which gave rise to the book was based on that graphic description of the great day of the Lord in Zeph 1:14-18. However, given the audience and the occasion, the author had a certain amount of freedom in deciding what to use as the launching pad for his subject matter. As he himself indicated, this passage certainly does highlight the outpouring of God's wrath, and as he also noted, the end of this minor prophet's book does give the promise of redemption. His theological system forced him to overlook that this redemption relates to Israel's millennial future. Further, one would have to question the citing of Deuteronomy 28 as having some application for people or church today (73-75). And certainly, one would have to question whether or not the NT teaching of the church as the bride of Christ really does look back to Exodus 21 and the law on indentured servants (87-88). Strange! Inadequate or incomplete comments can always be found when an extensive topic is being so concisely surveyed. Yes, a mental note was made of other points to be explained in more detail were this book to be used in having someone think further about the gospel and salvation.

Provocatively, Sproul answers his first question by stating that the need is to be saved *from God*. As he puts it, "God in saving us saves us from Himself" (25). This unusual way of expressing it makes the reader pause and think a little before nodding okay and moving on.

This book, unless the reader determines to make use of it, is likely to be placed on the shelf with a murmured "that was a nice read" and perhaps thereafter remembered on occasions. The publisher's foreword shows a real desire that readers would have the most important question in life answered for them as they read *Saved from What?* If it serves that purpose, then rejoicing would certainly be in order.

Ben Witherington III. *New Testament History*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001. 430 pp. \$26.99 (cloth). Reviewed by William C. Varner, Professor of Bible and Director of IBEX, The Master's College.

Ben Witherington, Professor of New Testament at Asbury Theological Seminary, has written prolifically on NT themes, especially in the areas of "Jesus Research." (Note especially his *The Jesus Quest: The Third Search for the Jew of Nazareth* [Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1995]). It is not surprising, therefore, that Witherington often refers to his own publications in this present book, especially

his socio-rhetorical commentaries on Mark and Acts.

Inevitably, a book with this title invites comparison with another well-known work by F. F. Bruce (*New Testament History* [New York: Doubleday and Company, 1971]). As a matter of fact, I. Howard Marshall mentions this in his laudatory recommendation on the back cover: "I can think of no higher praise than to say that this book may well do for this generation what F. F. Bruce's *New Testament History* did for an earlier one." Since this reviewer was part of that "earlier" generation that profited from and utilized Bruce's volume often, a comparison is appropriate, especially since Witherington and his publishers chose the same title for this book. Though we should also evaluate Witherington's volume on its own merits, we should explore the question of whether this volume will serve this generation in the same way as Bruce's did his.

The book carries readers from the time of Alexander the Great to the reign of Domitian and the exile of John. More specifically he explores the "intertestamental" events (two chapters); the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus (three and a half chapters); the apostolic events (eight and a half chapters), and the post-70 events (two chapters).

Bruce's treatment was more detailed on the pre-John and Jesus history (fully one third of his book). This reviewer thinks that Witherington could have given more detailed coverage of this period, especially the Hasmonean period (only three pages, 40-42), which left such a deep impression on the background history of Second Temple Judaism.

Witherington seeks to explore the geographical, political, social, and religious influences that shaped the leaders and movements of the day. The degree to which he succeeds in doing this is debatable. He seeks to accomplish this purpose by a series of more focused sections he calls "A Closer Look." In these he gives greater attention, for example, to "The Pharisees" (45-48), "Time and Calendars in Antiquity" (62-64), "Josephus the Jewish Historian" (84-86), "Zealots or Bandits?" (87-89), "Essenes and Qumranites" (93-96), and "Significance of the Sanhedrin" (148-50). These are some of the most helpful contributions of the book, not only for the insight into these important subjects, but for the insight they sometimes provide into Witherington's personal views. This can be seen, for example, in "Q and A on Q" (100-103) and "Miracles and History" (120-21).

The fact, however, that Witherington works in his particular interpretation of the data should not be surprising or objectionable in itself. In a very interesting "Prolegomenon" (14-28) he makes a very good case for the statement, "There is no such thing as uninterpreted history" (15). It is obvious that Luke and John were not attempting to be neutral about their subject matter since they provide clear statements that their writing was evidently tendentious (Luke 1:1-4 and especially John 20:31). The question that must be asked about a historical treatment of certain events is whether the facts are illumined or obscured by the presentation.

Witherington appears to affirm that the "historians" who penned the first five books of the New Testament did not obscure the facts, although it would be

helpful if he made that clearer at times. For example, while our author seems to argue for the historicity of the resurrection (it is the best explanation of the subsequent changed lives of the apostles and the existence of the church), one wishes that he had attempted to address the charge that the Gospel writers present contradictory accounts of the post-resurrection events.

A few more criticisms are in order. Witherington is too dependent on Hayes and Mandell's work, *The Jewish People in Classical Antiquity: From Alexander to Bar Cochba* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1998) and less attentive to the classic work of Emil Schurer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*, both in its original and in its revised editions (rev. and ed. by G. Vermes and F. Millar, Edinburgh: Clark, 1973). This shows up also in his refusal to see any real "Jewish" commitment on the part of Herod the Great. Anyone attempting to tout Herod as a consistent, God-fearing Jew has a huge task on his hands. Witherington's rejection, however, of the magisterial work on Herod by Peter Richardson, *Herod the Great: King of the Jews and Friend of the Romans* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1996), is disappointing. It is well known that Herod, in addition to building many lasting monuments for his Jewish subjects, most notably the Temple, also constructed some pagan temples, although not in Judea. To conclude that "Herod was not a monotheistic Jew," as Witherington does (footnote, 53) simply is not warranted by the evidence. Herod was the consummate survivor. He knew whom he had to please to keep his position: the Romans who put him in power and kept him there. His temples in honor of Augustus were simply acts of gratitude to his patron, not indications of his polytheism! These buildings were evidence of his political "kowtowing," not indications of some religious commitment. Richardson's evidence of Herod's many acts of benevolence towards his Jewish subjects also contradicts the charge of his commitment to paganism. This reviewer does not want to be accused of defending the sadistic behavior of Herod, especially toward his own family. Witherington's rejection of his Jewishness, however, does not take into account all the facts. We simply do not know for sure what Herod personally believed. To imply that he was a polytheist, however, goes far beyond a sober consideration of all the facts that we know about him.

Readers who hold to the traditional evangelical positions on authorship of the Gospels and the literary relationships between the Synoptic Gospels need to know that Witherington believes that only Mark was composed before A.D. 70 (363). He assigns the Gospel attributed to Matthew to the mid to late 70s and denies that the apostle assembled its contents, probably only contributing the "M" material unique to the Gospel, such as Matthew 1 and 2 (381-83). He suggests Luke wrote his two volume work in the late 70s or early 80s and ended the account at about A.D. 64 (Acts 28) because he had gotten too old to bring the story any further up to date (387). Such conclusions seem to be motivated by the author's commitment to (1) Markan priority, (2) the literary dependence of Matthew and Luke on Mark, and (3) the existence of the mythical "Q" document (100-103, 378-81). Though this is not

the place to give evaluations of these positions, let it be said that such ideas were foreign to the patristic writers, some of whom remembered the apostles, and also were foreign to Gospel scholarship for 1,700 years after the apostles!

I do not want to leave the impression that Witherington's book is without real value and positive contribution. He knows his subject well and has communicated it clearly. I am not ready, however, to have his book replace the classic work by F. F. Bruce on my course reading lists.

K. Lawson Younger, Jr. *Judges/Ruth*. The NIV Application Commentary. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002. 511 pp. \$ 24.99 (cloth). Reviewed by James E. Rosscup, Professor of Bible Exposition.

This is as a fairly good contribution by the Professor of Old Testament, Semitic Languages, and Ancient Near Eastern History, at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Illinois. It is in a series representing, on several biblical books, some well-known scholars: Daniel Block (Ezekiel), David Garland (Mark, also Colossians and Philemon), Douglas Moo (Romans, 2 Peter, Jude), Craig Blomberg (1 Corinthians), Scott Hafemann (2 Corinthians), Walter Liefeld (Pastoral Epistles), and Craig Keener (Revelation). Brief evaluations for more of these appear in this reviewer's forthcoming revision/expansion of *Commentaries for Biblical Expositors* (Grace Books International: The Master's Seminary, Sun Valley, California, fall 2003). Several volumes are available, others in preparation. Each volume works through a biblical book, offering three parts on each passage: the original meaning, bridging the biblical setting and today, and then contemporary applications.

One finds a variation in value between different authors' works, with some explaining the text well and others being quite cursory, and with some being top-heavy in application but inadequate in commentary leading up to it. One sometimes wishes for more explanation to lay the groundwork. Younger does a fairly consistent job of providing light on the passages, then making usable applications. He devotes 387 pages to Judges and 104 to Ruth, then provides Scripture, subject, and author indexes. He surveys introductory concerns fairly well, for example on Judges' main theme to give selectively the consequences of disobedience to God and His law (23). One can doubt his concept that numbers such as 40 years may not be literally accurate but a round or figurative number for a generation (25). Quite a number of evangelical works on Judges are unmentioned in an extended bibliography (50-58) even when they have seriously discussed problems (cf. e.g., Paul Enns, *Judges*, and Leon Wood, *The Distressing Days of the Judges*).

Sometimes comments on phrases are missing in general surveys of sections, for instance "lead captive your captives" (Judg 5:12; 151). One looking for verse by verse help is frequently disappointed. The decision of editors to have bits and

pieces of explanations of a passage in three different sections can disunify matters and make it difficult for a student who is trying to work out the whole picture or find where an explanation occurs. One can see, for example, Jael's killing of Sisera (Judges 5) strung out in various places. Still, much insight is present for the patient, even if the "user unfriendly" approach turns readers away with only a partial picture.

Younger often helps on customs, as when he argues in Jephthah's coming home that he was surprised (shocked)—as seen in the word *hinneh*, "look"—in 11:34b, suggesting a look of recoil when off guard (264). The commander, having made a vow, did not expect his daughter, but an animal, to come out first, since homes then included a room for animals (263). Younger favors the view that Jephthah offered his daughter as a sacrifice, a calloused wrong (262-67). He goes on to make helpful applications about wife or child abuse in today's world (268-70).

Insight on Samson's desire for the Philistine woman being "of the Lord" (Judg 14:4) is helpful. "God uses Samson in spite of his wrong motives and actions (cf. Gen 50:20)" (302). Many comments on details are perceptive, for example, on Samson's sins based on selfish will going against God's laws. Yet often no helpful suggestion is offered. One case is the silence about how Samson may realistically have caught 300 foxes or jackals and managed to hold them until he could tie and loose them to destroy Philistine grain (326). Wisely, contrary to some interpreters, Younger sees Ruth's encounter with Boaz by night as showing decency and integrity (463).

All in all, the less technical work is one of the more frequently contributive, careful efforts on the two books. Younger does furnish considerable expertise on context, grammar, words, customs, and overall content, and often is rich in sensible application. Teachers, pastors, students, and lay people will benefit.