

# SCRIPTURE, CULTURE, AND MISSIONS



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## *Book Reviews*

***Lukan Authorship of Hebrews.* By David L. Allen. NAC Studies in Bible & Theology. Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2010. 416 pages. Hardcover, \$24.99.**

The authorship of Hebrews has been a puzzling question for biblical scholars since the days of early church fathers. Many suggestions have been made and various evidence has been presented, but no scholarly consensus has been reached. Most modern scholars are skeptical that the author of Hebrews will ever be known. Although the authorship of Hebrews no longer attracts much scholarly attention these days, it has always been a fascinating topic for David Allen, Dean of the School of Theology at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Ever since he was first introduced to the topic in college, he never stopped asking questions and searching for answers. He later completed his doctoral dissertation on this topic. Even after the completion of his dissertation, his quest for the authorship of Hebrews did not stop. He continuously worked on his thesis by revising and expanding his argument with new insights and evidences. His 35 years of research culminated in the publication of this volume.

Allen argues for Luke's independent authorship of Hebrews. He bases his argument primarily on the apparent similarities in linguistic features, purpose, and theology between Hebrews and Luke's other known works, namely, the Gospel of Luke and Acts. In addition, he offers a serious rebuttal to the common assumption that Luke was a Gentile and thus was not likely the author of Hebrews. He then provides a historical reconstruction of the background and provenance of Hebrews in light of the Lukan authorship.

Allen divides the book into seven chapters. In chapter one, he traces the history of the study of the authorship of Hebrews and points out that Luke has been frequently mentioned, even by early church fathers, either as a translator, editor, or author of Hebrews. In chapter two, he evaluates three candidates who gained the most support among modern scholars (Barnabas, Apollos, and Paul). He quickly dismisses Barnabas and Apollos because there are no extant letters written by them that can be compared with Hebrews. He is, however, more careful in dismissing Paul because of the strong church tradition and the internal evidences that seem to support the Pauline authorship. Nevertheless, he concludes that Paul is less likely the author of Hebrews because there are apparent differences in style and theology between Hebrews and Paul's letters.

In the next three chapters, Allen presents hard evidence that he considers "the weight-bearing walls" for his argument. In chapter three, he examines the linguistic features with a focus on the lexical, stylistic, and textlinguistic similarities and parallels between Luke-Acts and Hebrews. He presents the following findings: (1) There are 53 words unique to Hebrews and Luke-Acts and 56 words unique to Hebrews and Paul's letters. Although the number of unique words is pretty evenly divided between Luke and Paul, Allen leans toward Luke because he finds a few other words, including some medical terms, which are unique or common to Luke and Hebrews but never or rarely used in Paul. (2) The writing style of Hebrews is more similar to

that of Luke than of Paul. Allen regards this as the most forceful evidence against the Pauline authorship of Hebrews. He first points out that unlike other Pauline letters, the prologue of Hebrews lacks Paul's name and his characteristic salutation. He then identifies 39 specific Greek usages or phrases that are unique to Luke-Acts and Hebrews and an additional 25 Greek usages that further illustrate the similarity of Luke-Acts and Hebrews, although they are not unique to these three books. (3) The Old Testament quotation formulae in Hebrews are much more akin to those in Luke's Gospel than in Paul's letters, although they are not identical to the usage of either Luke or Paul. (4) The prologues of Luke, Acts, and Hebrews are similar in length, literary style, perspective, and word choice. (5) Acts 7 and Hebrews 11 are strikingly similar in word choice, Old Testament quotation formulae, and roles attributed to Abraham, Moses, and David. In addition, many words and ideas expressed in Acts 7 are found elsewhere in Hebrews. (6) Luke-Acts and Hebrews have a tendency to superimpose a chiasmic framework and parallelism over the entire discourse, which is rare in other books of the New Testament. From these linguistic observations, Allen concludes that although there are lexical similarities among Luke, Paul, and Hebrews, the stylistic similarities between Luke and Hebrews and the stylistic dissimilarities between Paul and Hebrews point to Luke as the author of Hebrews (or at the very least as co-author with Paul).

In chapter four, Allen compares the purpose of Luke-Acts with that of Hebrews with special attention given to the lexical and semantic parallels between the Lukan prologues and the prologue and hortatory sections of Hebrews. From this analysis, he concludes that both in Acts and Hebrews there is significant emphasis on the concept of the "Word" and the "hearing of the Word" and that Luke-Acts and Hebrews all exhibit a pastoral concern for the readers who are wavering in their faith. In chapter five, Allen highlights the theological similarities between Luke-Acts and Hebrews, especially in the area of Christology, eschatology, and prophetic fulfillment. In terms of Christology, he insists that both Luke-Acts and Hebrews focus on Jesus' ascension and exaltation and present Christ as the high priest, as the ruler over Israel in the fulfillment of the Davidic prophecies in 2 Sam 7:14, and as the Son in Ps 2:7. With regard to eschatology, all three books employ the pattern of promise and fulfillment and place less emphasis on the parousia than in Mark, Paul, or John. In addition, they reveal similarities in the concept of salvation, in the theology of the cross, in the use of the priestly terminology, and in the understanding of the new covenant.

In chapter six, Allen deals with the common assumption often used against the Lukan authorship of Hebrews, namely, that Luke was a Gentile and thus was not likely the author of Hebrews which was clearly intended for a Jewish audience. Allen asserts that neither Paul's statement in Col 4:10-14 nor Luke's mastery of the Greek language warrants this assumption. By contrast, he contends that "the men of the circumcision" in Col 4:11 can refer to the Jewish Christians of a stricter mind-set concerning the law and that Luke's name was mentioned last in this passage probably because he was especially close to Paul. In addition, Allen points out that there is no evidence that even Epaphras who is included in the second group along with Luke was a Gentile and that Col 4:10-14 was never used by early church fathers to speak of Luke as a Gentile. In further support, Allen presents evidences from the Luke and Acts that point to Luke as a Jew. Going one step further, Allen identifies Luke with Lucius mentioned in Rom 16:21 and characterizes Luke as a Hellenistic Jew born in Antioch of Syria. For evidence, he refers to Luke's special interest in An-

tioch in Acts and to the codex Bezae that has the first “we” narrative in Acts 11:28 as occurring in Antioch.

In the final chapter, Allen offers a historical reconstruction of the circumstances surrounding the writing of Hebrews in light of the Lukan authorship. His reconstruction goes as follows: Luke wrote his Gospel and Acts independently while he was with Paul in Rome (c. AD 60-63) in order to exhort Theophilus, a former high priest who served from AD 37 until AD 41. He then served as Paul’s amanuensis for the Pastoral Letters during Paul’s second Roman imprisonment. In AD 67 or 68, probably after Paul’s death and thus independently of Paul and after Timothy’s release from prison, he wrote Hebrews from Rome to encourage the converted former Jewish priests who were in Antioch of Syria and were under immense pressure to revert to Judaism and defend their nation against the perils from the Romans. Allen thinks that these priests are those mentioned in Acts 6:7 and they relocated in Antioch due to the persecution that arose over Stephen’s death. Allen concludes his argument for Luke’s independent authorship of Hebrews with the following closing statements: “The cumulative effect of the evidence implicating Luke is substantial. If the field of suspects for authorship is narrowed to include only those who are New Testament writers, then the evidence points to Luke. Having evaluated the available clues in this case of authorship attribution, I conclude that the missionary doctor, in Rome, with the aid of the Holy Spirit, wrote it” (378-79).

Undoubtedly, Allen has produced one of the most comprehensive and thorough monographs on the question of the authorship of Hebrews and probably the most convincing argument for the Lukan authorship. He deals with every pertinent issue that has been raised and examined every piece of evidence that has been presented. Practically no stones are left untouched and no evidence is left unexamined. His analysis of the linguistic evidence is painstaking and his immense knowledge of the secondary literature is apparent. Furthermore, his argument is well structured and his points are communicated clearly, though the subject matter occasionally becomes highly academic and technical. Also noteworthy is his rebuttal to the common assumption that Luke was a Gentile and thus was unlikely the author of Hebrews.

There are certain limitations in the lexical approach, subjectivity in the theological analysis, and uncertainty in the historical reconstruction. For this reason, Allen heavily relies on the analysis of stylistic and textlinguistic similarities and parallels between Luke-Acts and Hebrews for his argument. The uniqueness and significance of several Greek usages which Allen presents as evidence are, however, highly debatable. Interestingly, most of the similarities and parallels in Old Testament citation formulae and literary structure between Acts and Hebrews which Allen presents are found in the speeches incorporated in Acts. There is no doubt that Luke influenced the form, structure, and even content of these speeches, but if any of these linguistic features in the speeches came from the original speakers rather than from Luke, the basis for Allen’s comparison becomes weaker. Allen’s historical reconstruction in chapter seven is innovative and engaging, but the connections of Theophilus with the former high priest, the recipients of Hebrews with the former Jewish priests mentioned in Acts 6:7, and Luke with Lucius mentioned in Romans 16:21 are weak and need additional support. In addition, Allen’s argument that Luke wrote Hebrews after Paul’s death and thus independently of Paul is based on a particular reconstruction of the events mentioned in the Pastoral Letters that are historically uncertain and difficult to harmonize.

Can Luke be the author of Hebrews? I would say, “Yes.” Am I convinced

that he is? No. In my judgment, evidence is still insufficient to render the final verdict. Nonetheless, I think that Allen makes a significant contribution by successfully demonstrating that the question of the authorship of Hebrews is still open and that Luke is certainly a viable option. Moreover, his argument for Luke's independent authorship is intriguing. Whether one agrees with the conclusion drawn in this book or not, he/she cannot ignore or dismiss Allen's work too quickly.

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***Key Events in the Life of the Historical Jesus: A Collaborative Exploration of Context and Coherence.* Edited by Darrell L. Bock and Robert L. Webb. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009. 931 pages. Softcover, \$70.**

Darrell L. Bock, Research Professor of New Testament Studies at Dallas Theological Seminary, and Robert L. Webb, lecturer in New Testament at McMaster University and executive editor of the *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus*, have edited a fine addition to the ever-growing amount of material in the last few decades on historical Jesus research. This volume is the culmination of over ten years of research and collaboration of the Jesus Group in the Institute for Biblical Research, which Bock and Webb co-convened (vii, 4, 84). The seminar members decided to study twelve key events (or sets of events) in the life of Jesus that (1) had a high probability of being historical, and (2) were likely important in developing an accurate framework for understanding Jesus (4, 83). Thus, the book consists of a chapter devoted to each event in order to (1) find its historical core, (2) examine its socio-cultural context in order to better understand the event, and (3) evaluate its significance for a better understanding of the historical Jesus (6, 83).

The strength of this volume comes from the impressive contributors, most of whom are well-published, highly-regarded experts in historical Jesus studies. It is the finest volume to date on historical Jesus research by imminent scholars from the evangelical Christian or "biblically orthodox Christian" tradition (7, 84). In addition to a co-authored introduction by both editors, Webb also writes a helpful primer on the historical enterprise of historical Jesus research and essays on Jesus' baptism and the Roman examination and crucifixion of Jesus. Bock writes the final summary chapter and an essay on the Jewish examination of Jesus. The following authors contribute one essay on a key event in the life of Jesus: Craig A. Evans (exorcisms), Scot McKnight (the Twelve), Craig L. Blomberg (Jesus' table fellowship with sinners), Donald A. Hagner (Synoptic Sabbath controversies), Michael J. Wilkins (Peter's confession of faith), Brent Kinman (Jesus' royal entry into Jerusalem), Klyne R. Snodgrass (cleansing the temple), I. Howard Marshall (the Last Supper), and Grant Osborne (Jesus' empty tomb and resurrection appearances)—an impressive list of contributors and an important selection of subjects.

All of the contributors write excellent essays that clearly demonstrate the historicity of their assigned event as well as how the event affirms the veracity of the four-fold canonical Gospel portrait of Jesus. Some of the most helpful insights in this book come from Hagner's essay, which contends that (1) all positions in this historical quest have some faith basis, and thus are somewhat subjective, (2) the burden of proof ought to be on those who deny the historicity of the Gospel tradition, (3) those who affirm the historicity still ought to evaluate it critically (269), (4) history is full of unexpected events and surprises, and (5) the typical quest for the historical

Jesus is a misnomer because at best it comes up with an artificial construct due to limitations in the historical method (288).

Here are two suggested improvements: (1) add an index of terms, and (2) lengthen the conclusion chapter to give more consequences for this important study (850-52). Further, here is a caveat for readers who believe in biblical inerrancy, such as this reviewer. Co-author Webb makes unwarranted assumptions and claims of redactional changes by the evangelists that are problematic, such as the claims that Jesus' baptism and the theophany were likely two separate events (112, 143), that Luke 1 is historically problematic (129), that Jesus was a disciple and protégé of John the Baptist (135), and that Jesus' eschatology changed through the years (140).

At the 2010 annual meetings of the Evangelical Theological Society and the Society of Biblical Literature, Bock and Webb presented a summary of the present book. Bock noted that the contributors abided by the high standards of historical attestation used in historical Jesus research. They then evaluated twelve key events that clearly made it above the very high standards, showing that even with the restrictive ground rules in historical Jesus research, one can still find out who the historical Jesus is. One can then use these events to gain a core understanding of Jesus with which even the most critical scholar ought to be able to agree (826). Consequently, "what emerged from the Jesus of history [in the picture resulting from the research approach used by the scholars in this book] was the Christ of faith" (851). Skeptical scholars who responded to Bock and Webb at the SBL meeting kindly said they would not accept the work of conservative historical Jesus scholars as credible or worthwhile until those scholars listed what parts of the Gospels they deem are unhistorical in order to prove their objectivity. Commendably, Bock did not accommodate this flawed challenge. Yet, he continued to explain and defend the findings in the book. Even if they do not convert the skeptic, they can clarify the position of the traditional view.

This collection of essays does an excellent job in challenging moderate-to-skeptical historical Jesus scholars by using their own ground rules of historical study to analyze twelve key events. Thus, this helpful volume for everyone interested in this field of study, from the student to the scholar, is not just a *description* of historical Jesus research; rather, it is a prime example of how to *do* historical Jesus research properly from a mostly traditional/conservative perspective.

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***Jesus Research: An International Perspective. The First Princeton-Prague Symposium on Jesus Research. Princeton-Prague Symposia Series on the Historical Jesus. Edited by James H. Charlesworth and Petr Pokorný. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009. 307 pages. Softcover, \$35.00.***

The Princeton-Prague Symposia on Jesus Research met in Prague in the spring of 2005 and Princeton in April of 2007 (ix). The international scholars invited to participate in the symposia are well known in Jesus Research. This review will examine the volume containing the papers presented at the first symposium, which focused primarily on methodology, a matter with which scholars are concerned and amateurs usually are not (xxi, 6). The presenters were searching for a hidden consensus in Jesus Research (4). The contributors to this volume are James H. Charlesworth, Stanley E. Porter, Jens Schröter, Carsten Claussen, Gerd Theissen,



Michael Wolter, Klaus Haacker, Rudolf Hoppe, Petr Pokorný, Craig Evans, Tom Holmén, Ulrich Luz, and Brian Rea. Interestingly, the participants prefer the term “Jesus Research” over the more traditional term “study of the historical Jesus” (xxii). This is because they find the Jesus of history and subsequent confessions about him and adoration of him hopelessly entangled and impossible to separate. Their biased perception is unfortunate.

This book is not for the novice in Jesus Research. Nor does it approach the subject from a traditional perspective. For that purpose, one is better served by Craig Keener’s *The Historical Jesus of the Gospels* or Darrell Bock’s trilogy on the historical Jesus. By contrast, the writers of this present volume “do not imagine that they can find the ‘real’ Jesus behind the perceptions and theologies of the Evangelists” (14, 37). Instead, they take the typical clinical historical view that deals with probabilities and possibilities of who Jesus was (14, 79, 97). Surprisingly, though, they actually discover some positive findings. For instance, in one of the better chapters, James Charlesworth shows the old critical paradigm of viewing John’s Gospel as non-Jewish, non-historical, and ignorant of ancient Palestine is no longer viable. Charlesworth posits not only the Jewishness of this Gospel but also the accurate description of pre-AD 70 Jerusalem architecture and topography by citing five fairly recent archeological corroborations (61-66). However, the last part of the essay is not as helpful. Charlesworth claims that term “Palestinian Jesus Movement” is better than the allegedly anachronistic term “Christian” since first-century believers still considered themselves to be Jews (68-69). Yet, there are at least three problems with this claim. First, the movement was no longer *just* Palestinian by the time of Paul’s first missionary journey in Acts 13. Second, this claim minimizes Acts 11:26. Third, by the early 50s many believers were Gentiles.

The strengths of this volume are that it (1) incorporates early Jewish writings, such as the pseudepigrapha and Dead Sea Scrolls, archaeological findings, and socio-rhetorical studies in Jesus research, (2) uses top-notch scholars, and (3) reflects fairly recent historical Jesus research, although from the moderate-to-liberal perspective. Thus, one expects to see nontraditional interpretations, such as (1) Jesus was a disciple of John the Baptist in the desert (52, 171), (2) Jesus sometimes thought the *eschaton* would begin either in his or his followers’ lifetimes (57), (3) Cana was Jesus’ base of operations from John’s perspective (96), and (4) Gospel contexts can be inaccurate constructs (191, 198). One should contrast these views with those of more conservative scholars such as Keener and Bock.

A weakness throughout the book is that the authors only implicitly reach their goal of focusing on methodology and finding a consensus. Were it not for Charlesworth’s summary of what was to follow (4-13), one might have missed the methodology. Most of the articles focus on the application of a methodology rather than the description of that methodology. More methodological explanation by each author would have improved this book. Another weakness is the lack of theological balance, although the choice of authors has a commendable international balance. The conservative view is mostly missing, except when criticized in or relegated to a footnote (e.g., 29n45, 78n28; 92n91; and 220n96). The least helpful chapter is by Ulrich Luz, in which he compares Jesus and the founding of Christianity with two leaders who founded religions in Japan in the last two hundred years. His purpose is to cause one to re-think what is allegedly unique about Jesus and Christianity by examining seven areas of correspondence (243-51), but his summary is very short (254), and his application is lacking.

For a reader who believes in the historical veracity of the canonical Gospels, such as this reviewer, what is the value in reading a book written by scholars who doubt this truthfulness (78)? One must be aware of and follow these scholarly conversations in Jesus Research in order to dialogue effectively with these scholars. Then, one can add to the conversation based on the perspective of the inerrancy of God's Word. This reviewer looks forward to the next two volumes in this series. They are from the 2005 symposium, and they are not yet in print. They will include research from an even wider number of disciplines than the present volume, such as numismatics, canonical criticism, onomastics, orality in Gospel transmission, and time perspective (15).

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***Halos and Avatars: Playing Video Games with God.* Edited by Craig Detweiler. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2010. 248 pages. Softcover, \$19.95.**

While the relationship between the church and various forms of entertainment has often been characterized by opposition, in the years following the explosive popularity of film, for example, the theological academy has seen fit to dialogue critically with it. When it comes to the medium of the video game, however, theology has had little if anything to say about it. The fact that theology is routinely late to the party when it comes to matters of pop culture notwithstanding, theology is actually simpatico with almost any other humanities discipline when it comes to indifference towards video games; there is no denying that for the majority of scholars, theological or otherwise, video games do not exist, at least not academically speaking.

Craig Detweiler, associate professor of communication at Pepperdine University, believes that such indifference need not be the case. By serving as editor of *Halos and Avatars*, a collection of essays regarding God and video games, he hopes to bring the serious discussion of gaming to the collective attention of a theologically minded audience. In his own words, the book "is an effort to take games seriously, to wade into an emerging field and make sense of an expanding phenomenon" (4).

The book is divided into three sections, each containing essays pertaining to distinct aspects of video gaming from a theological perspective. The first section, "Playing Games with God," is the most explicitly theological of the three, as its essays deal specifically with the possibility of video games communicating to the player theologically. "Halos," the second section, consists of essays that look more toward the inner mechanics of video games. The final section, "Avatars," includes essays concerning the role-playing players assume and the nature of virtual personas.

Because of the difficulty of reviewing a collection of twelve unique essays, this reviewer will highlight two found to be the most substantive. In the first essay, "From *Tekken* to *Kill Bill*: The Future of Narrative Storytelling?" Chris Hansen asks, "If games replace films as our preferred stories, how will they alter our understanding of narrative arc, character development, and our own sense of calling?" (19). He answers by comparing and contrasting video games and film and ends with a potential theological implication: he posits that the video game's ability to provide multiple paths to one conclusion (or even to different conclusions) could pose significant problems for the player's view of biblical truth (31).

A second essay of note is the final essay of the book, John W. Morehead's "Cybersociality: Connecting Fun to the Play of God." In the latter part of his essay,



he discusses a “theology of play,” a particularly fascinating theological concept. After noting that few theologians have ever approached a theology of play, Morehead intimates that, given the current proliferation of digital technology today, there is much potential for research to be done in this area (181-83).

The most significant value of *Halos and Avatars* is found in the underlying presupposition adopted by all of the contributors: that the medium of the video game is worthy of theological consideration and critique. Some of the authors do more towards the support of such a contention than others, but it is quite clear from the essays that theologians, ministers, and laypersons who are interested in the relationship between theology and pop culture would do well not to look upon video games with disdain. Strength is also found in several of the contributors’ thoughts regarding the implications of the interactivity of video games for biblical truth. Outside of the aforementioned example, this is perhaps best illustrated by Rachel Wagner’s essay, “The Play is the Thing: Interactivity from Bible Fights to Passions of the Christ,” in which she argues that interactivity of video games makes them “not suitable for portrayal of the passion of Jesus” (62). The very fact that the player has some control over what transpires in a video game can hold severe theological consequences.

The book does have two significant weaknesses, however. First, it is clear that some of the essay authors’ experience with video games is minimal. As an experienced gamer, this reviewer can assert with certainty that even gamers who are not theologically minded would quickly gather that some of the authors do not know as much about what they are discussing as they think they do. Second, the conclusions reached by several authors hold potential problems for the interpretation of biblical truth. While space does not permit listing them all here, perhaps the most illustrative is found in Detweiler’s conclusion for the book, in which he states, “[Jesus] was eventually fragged during a deathmatch on an unexpected field of battle. . . . After three days, Jesus respawned, took his place as Administrator, and redefined the way the game is played” (196). Though it is clear that Detweiler is attempting to frame the story of redemption in gamer parlance, by doing so he actually risks biblical interpretation using non-biblical terms and the trivialization of Christ’s salvific work.

On the whole, however, *Halos and Avatars* should be seen as a work that seeks to take theological discussion to an area it previously has not been and for that, it should be commended. Theology has been in serious dialogue with television and film for quite some time. With the proliferation of video games having significant narrative structures, theology would be remiss to ignore such an increasingly influential medium.

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***Proverbs 10–31*. By Michael V. Fox. The Anchor Yale Bible. Volume 18b. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009. 729 pages. Hardcover, \$60.00.**

This volume of the Anchor Yale Bible series is a continuation of Fox’s volume on *Proverbs 1–9*. Although the volume continues Fox’s previous work, it can be read independently. Fox’s commentary is composed of six primary parts: 1) an introduction, 2) the commentary proper, 3) four more or less self-contained essays, 4) textual notes, 5) a new translation of the book of Proverbs, and 6) a bibliography. In the introduction Fox takes up important issues related to the interpretation of Proverbs 10–31. First, he addresses how to read Proverbs as a collection. Fox argues that there

are “proverb pairs” and even, on occasion, “proverb clusters” that form an interpretive context. He explains these groupings as the result of associative thinking, that is, “[w]hen one thought gives rise to another or one word evokes a related one” (480). However, he does not see larger, elaborate structures in chapters 10–29. As Fox sees it, “It is far-fetched to imagine editors compiling proverbs according to grand and detailed designs” (481).

Next, Fox deals with the hermeneutical considerations for reading an individual proverb by focusing on its form and describing the templates that may have been used to construct a proverb. His description of the disjointed proverb template in which there is “a gap between the [parallel] lines [that] invites the reader to fill it” (494; e.g. Prov 15:16) is especially helpful for interpretation. Fox provides pointers for identifying this type of proverb, detecting the gap, and finding appropriate ways to fill it.

The commentary proper deals with the text verse by verse or unit by unit. Fox presents his translation of each unit followed by commentary. The length of the commentary varies widely from two or three paragraphs to several pages, on occasion, including an excursus alongside the commentary. Technical discussions take place in a smaller font immediately following the commentary. Textual variants that Fox accepts, but that deviate from the Masoretic Text, are listed below the translation and most often addressed in the technical discussions. This format enables a readable commentary that also provides its technical basis.

Throughout the commentary Fox interacts with three primary dialogue partners: 1) Ancient Near Eastern Wisdom, 2) medieval Jewish Rabbis, and 3) modern scholarship from Franz Delitzsch to the present day. These dialogue partners reveal much about Fox’s work. First, the work focuses on the historical authors and/or editors responsible for producing the text of Proverbs 10–31. It describes what they meant and how they put the text together by analyzing the historical, literary, and linguistic features of the text, each area in which Fox is quite skilled. It does not include an attempt to incorporate that historical meaning into universal theological discussions or bring out contemporary application. Second, the traditions that shape Fox’s perspective are Jewish scholarship and modern critical scholarship. He rarely, if ever, deals with Christian interpreters from the ancient, medieval, or reformation periods. Third, his view of the Bible is consistent with modern historical-critical scholarship.

Following the commentary proper, four essays outline Fox’s reconstruction of the fundamental ideas that gave rise to the book of Proverbs as it is. The essays deal with the following topics as it pertains to wisdom: 1) the growth of wisdom, 2) ethics, 3) revelation, and 4) knowledge. From these essays Fox paints the following picture of the wisdom of Proverbs: wisdom is a human cognitive enterprise that seeks to discover what is good. What is good is what is consistent with the ideal of harmony. At first, the collectors of Proverbs viewed wisdom as a means to an end, not necessarily ethical and not requiring revelation (i.e., divine law) since humans are able to uncover what is good. Over time their picture of wisdom becomes more overtly ethical and theological. The first shift occurs when wisdom becomes a means to avoid evil, relating wisdom to revelation. Finally, wisdom becomes transcendent, and revelation is wisdom.

The commentary closes with textual notes, a translation, and bibliography. First, the textual notes include an analysis of textual variants for Proverbs 10–31. Fox catalogues the textual variants and offers commentary on the significance of

each variant and its possible implications for the meaning of the text. Second, the translation that Fox offers is fresh and enlightening. Fox possesses excellent technical expertise in Biblical Hebrew, and he is sensitive to preserving the structure and rhythm of the Hebrew in such a way that the English translation has a rhetorical effect similar to the original. Third, the sixty-page bibliography covers both volumes of the Proverbs commentary.

Fox's commentary skillfully does what it aims to do. It offers virtually no help in relating the text to universal (especially Christian) theological discussions, nor does it provide ways for relating the text to contemporary life issues, but anyone looking for a commentary that aims to describe the meaning of those who produced Proverbs will find this work competent, erudite, and insightful.

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***ReJesus: A Wild Messiah for a Missional Church.* By Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2009. 216 pages. Softcover, \$19.99.**

In an evangelical subculture that has become somewhat self-obsessed with the inner-workings of church and its mission, Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch attempt to get at the heart of the issue. The authors argue that when addressing the obvious errors in the church today, the focus is frequently on the externals and not on its core. In so doing, church critics may be on target in their appraisal, but the subsequent suggestions for re-addressing the situation actually provide more of the same instead of working at the root of the real issue. For the authors, a contrast between the "way of Jesus and the religion of Christianity" (6) demonstrates how far we have come from being defined by Jesus and the church of the New Testament.

*ReJesus* asserts that the only solution for the church struggling in a culture that has long since abandoned any semblance of Christianity is to re-Jesus the church. In other words, Christology must become the center and driving force. In the introduction, Frost and Hirsch explain that the starting point for any theology of missions or any approach to ecclesiology must be Christ. In fact, to recalibrate the church is to shift the "entire enterprise along Christological lines." (6) It is Christology that drives missiology (defined by the authors as "our purpose and function in the world"), and missiology allows us to define ecclesiology.

After setting the tone for the project, chapter one turns to an examination of how an encounter with Jesus changes the essence of life itself in following Him. This dramatic change leads us to personal renewal as discussed in chapter two. The believer should be transformed by the very person of Jesus. Of course, these personal transformations lead to a basic change in the way congregations function. Chapter three focuses on the need for a radical Christianity defined as a return to the root of the faith itself in Jesus. This means entering into the chaos of life and a struggling church with what the authors term as "radical traditionalism" (83), a rediscovery of the original rules laid out by Christ and being defined by them.

Chapter four frames the heart of the volume as the authors advocate an iconoclasm of the images of Jesus we have erected in our minds. They take on the feminized Jesus found in William Holman Hunt's famous painting, *The Light of the World* or the ethereal Jesus of Pompeo Batoni's *Sacred Heart*. In the midst of the discussion of how Jesus is co-opted for everything from marketing to entertainment, we discover the image of the wild Jesus who refuses strict categorization or co-option. Any

attempt at harnessing the wild Jesus of the Gospels will actually “devastate the way of Jesus from the inside” (128).

The truth of the gospel of Jesus defines our Trinitarian theology, according to chapter five, where the authors carefully define a theological framework for re-Jesusing the church that does not fall prey to a Jesus only or oneness theology. In the concluding chapters, Frost and Hirsch point out how the church should engage the culture. The heart of a holistic ministry in the minds of the authors is the center point between overlapping areas of orthodoxy, orthopraxy, and orthopathy. It is in this re-Jesused center that the church actually reflects the claims of Christ and functions as the community perpetually shaped and changed by the gospel.

There are a few drawbacks to the work. One is that the book needs stronger editing. There are little mistakes throughout (e.g. the varying capitalization of Christology). Another is a creative aspect of the book that works against its presentation. Scattered throughout the text are small vignettes of individuals that attempt to demonstrate how one could be a “little Jesus.” Some of these, like William Wilberforce or Harriet Beecher Stowe, stand out as men and women devoted to overturning the evil of slavery that marked their time. But most of the individuals highlighted, like Rigoberto Menchu, Dorothy Day, Father Damien of Molokai, and Simone Weil, suggest to the reader that a “little Jesus” is someone who works for social justices and causes. Though this is not their intent, the reader could be left with the idea that liberation theology or a return of the Social Gospel accomplishes the vision of re-Jesusing the church.

The main point that Frost and Hirsch defend—that Jesus should be the core identity that shapes the church—cannot be denied by any person serious about the church. Yet the authors fail to go far enough. Their re-Jesus sounds more like the Jesus of Barth and of neo-liberalism than that of the historical proclamation of the church. Perhaps this is an oversight on their part, but those holding to the centrality of Jesus must also deal with Jesus as the Word. And while the authors hold to a seemingly high view of Scripture, their failure to connect a picture of Jesus to the whole of Scripture instead of just the Gospels causes the book to fall short. The failure of affirming Jesus without simultaneously affirming the revelation of him in Scripture leads to the tired, worn path of liberalism where Jesus continues to be made into the image of existing social issues read onto the Gospels.

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***Why Johnny Can't Sing Hymns: How Pop Culture Rewrote the Hymnal.* By T. David Gordon. Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2010. 192 pages. Softcover, \$12.99**

Perhaps the issue of pop culture and church music has not been exhausted; perhaps it has. Nonetheless, T. David Gordon, professor at Grove City College, offers his own critique of contemporary worship practices in *Why Johnny Can't Sing Hymns*. Following his book, *Why Johnny Can't Preach: The Media Have Shaped the Messengers* (inspired by Rudolf Flesch's *Why Johnny Can't Read*: and *Why Johnny Can't Write*), Gordon continues his quest to address major shortcomings in conservative Reformed churches. Whereas his first book was motivated by his experience with cancer, this book reflects on the loss of his infant daughter (many years ago) to leukemia. Direct and uncompromising, it is based upon the central belief, “I think

contemporary worship music is often of a lesser literary, theological, or musical quality than most traditional hymnody” (15). Gordon’s purpose is to persuade his readers “to be wary of using contemporary Christian music in worship services at all, to object to its common use, and to zealously oppose its exclusive use” (36).

Gordon follows a very simple progression. He acknowledges that he is primarily concerned with music that “sounds” contemporary because that genre is “fading, transient, or ephemeral” (60). It communicates the meta-message of “contemporaneity” and banality because pop music cannot demand a commitment of itself. He argues that earlier generations never considered listening to church music in leisure time because it was sacred, following that with a summary of Ken Myers’s description of high, folk, and pop music. Pop music suffers from an ignorance of tradition and poor quality while high music demands well-trained musicians and the “creativity of masterly poets” (131; he grudgingly admits, however, that folk music may be “the most appropriate idiom for Christian hymnody” [87]). He concludes with the claim that churches should not use music (or any other means) to “reach” a community, and that indeed the Woodstock generation introduced the guitar in church to appease itself and not younger generations, which apparently do not like guitars (159).

Frankly, the book itself is rather inconsequential. His well-taken points (churches do not advertise “Theologically Significant Worship” on their marquees, pop music tends to be monogenerational, and pop lyrics lose their impact when “not set to music” [135]) are borrowed from other authors, primarily Myers in *All God’s Children and Blue Suede Shoes*. It is a purely contemporary product with little lasting value and almost no meaning outside of a narrow cultural context, filled with examples of hubris, ignorance of music history and the music industry, and unawareness of a huge body of literature already devoted to the topic. Though he claims not to be a musician, he stands in judgment of all music that falls outside an amorphous “traditional” genre that only he can identify. He claims to know the message of all contemporary music regardless of the author’s intent and worries only about the opinions of “mature” Christians. In the end, it seems as if Gordon believes the church should be some kind of cultural catacomb for trained musicians, regardless of the mission of the church as given by Jesus Christ.

An interesting question arises from reading this book. Gordon does not try to hide his disdain for the Free Church tradition, disregarding it as “sub-Christian” (122) because it rejects the universal church and her Reformed liturgies. A number of Baptists (including this reviewer) have recently argued that Baptist leaders should be more aware of historical resources for congregational worship and not so dependent on the latest trends in evangelical church practices. This book should give them pause. Most Baptists, especially those who take the Great Commission seriously, should not want to be associated with Gordon’s type of holdover from Puritan practice (that a church should be more concerned with perfecting itself than the world around it). Any kind of elitism which would result from pursuing high culture flies in the face of everything Jesus taught and explains why parts of Gordon’s traditions (he currently attends an Anglican church though he is an ordained Presbyterian minister) have fallen on such hard times. The Free Church tradition intentionally (and biblically) rejects any sort of professionalization that would divide clergy from laity, church from church, and Christian from lost. However, this does not mean that Baptists should celebrate mediocrity, as Gordon insinuates. It simply means that Baptists should remember that God cares much more about the heart than the

quality of the offering.

*Why Johnny Can't Sing Hymns* will be read by few and impress fewer. However, it serves as a sober reminder of why Baptists should resist the temptation to drift into uncritical traditionalism in the historic liturgical sense (out of the uncritical traditionalism of a different kind that currently characterizes so many Baptist churches). God has provided churches with invaluable resources from throughout history, but the moment those resources become a snare (something used to divide Christians and churches into different classes) they must be dismissed. May the Baptists who investigate those resources in order to enrich their congregation's worship be strongly warned that they must never adopt Gordon's mindset towards God's church.

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***MissionShift: Global Mission Issues in the Third Millennium.* Edited by David J. Hesselgrave and Ed Stetzer. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2010. 312 pages. Softcover, \$26.99.**

Many evangelical missiologists remain locked in debate over a few missiological issues of vital importance. *MissionShift* will help to clarify these issues. Editors David Hesselgrave and Ed Stetzer differ with one another to some extent as they react to the thoughts of the other contributors to the book. The book is a compilation of three essays with five responses to each. Stetzer writes the introduction and a response to each essay. Hesselgrave writes the conclusion. Charles Van Engen writes the first essay: "Mission Defined and Described." Keith Eitel, Enoch Wan, Darrell Guder, Andreas Köstenberger, and Stetzer respond to Van Engen. The late Paul G. Hiebert writes the second essay: "The Gospel in Human Contexts: Changing Perceptions of Contextualization." Michael Pocock, Darrell Whiteman, Norman Geisler, the late Avery Willis, and Stetzer respond to Hiebert. The late Ralph Winter writes the third essay: "The Future of Evangelicals in Mission." Scott Moreau, Christopher Little, Mike Barnett, J. Mark Terry, and Stetzer respond to Winter.

An apparent de-emphasis on biblical limitations to missiological creativity is a recurring theme in *MissionShift*. Van Engen explains that evangelicals are searching for creative definitions of mission (22). Eitel cautions, however, that "creative tensions without biblically firm boundaries will result in compromises that undermine the message we have to offer to the world" (34). Köstenberger agrees with Eitel (64). Stetzer's characterization of Eitel's position is inappropriate: "He applies his concerns to any 'creative' missiology. This is the slippery slope argument—which the Pharisees applied to Jesus and the Judaizers to Paul" (73). Eitel only applies his concerns to creative missiology "without biblically firm boundaries." Stetzer also uses the term "Pharisees" in his response to Köstenberger and says that "Köstenberger follows Eitel's argument down the slippery slope" (78). In contrast, Hesselgrave agrees with the concern of Eitel and Köstenberger: "Left to their own devices, Evangelical mission thinkers and practitioners tend to become overly creative and unduly adventurous" (278).

In his response to Hiebert's essay, Whiteman endorses C5 contextualization, which can involve believers attending a Mosque and continuing to use Muslim forms. Whiteman says, "I am convinced that there are no sacred forms, only sacred meanings" (124). Geisler correctly notes, however, that "forms communicate

meaning” (142). He explains that “the C5 approach leads to syncretism, as field research has shown” (141).

In the final essay, Winter advocates a larger role for social ministry in evangelical mission work, and he spoke glowingly of the philanthropy of Bill Gates and Madonna (188). Little provides an appropriate retort: “Oprah can build schools; Madonna can sponsor orphanages; and Bill Gates can promote global health, but only the church is entrusted with the apostolic role of gospel proclamation” (217). Evangelicals who exercise good stewardship of limited resources will prioritize gospel proclamation over social ministry. In sum, a thorough reading of *MissionShift* will encourage caution in contextualization.

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***The Historiographical Jesus: Memory, Typology, and the Son of David.* By Anthony Le Donne. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2009. 310 pages. Hardcover, \$49.95.**

The title of this volume provides the reader with an apt summary of the book’s central subject: historiography, social memory theory, typology, and the label of “The Son of David” as applied to Jesus. The compilation of these subjects as the book progresses makes for a rather technical and difficult read at times, but the book is still profitable for the detailed illustration it presents on how social memory theory may be applied to New Testament research. Le Donne’s key interest lies specifically within the field of historical Jesus research and how this realm of studies may be advanced further by approaching historiographical concerns from the perspective of a modified method of social memory theory. A positive contribution can be made to historical Jesus research, according to Le Donne’s thesis, by approaching historical inquiry through the analysis of memory refraction (i.e., the distortion between the remembered past and the actual past that inevitably results because memory recall is always perspectival, interpretative, and selective). Le Donne posits that this memory refraction can be discerned in the New Testament in typological interpretation (13-14, 50-52, 65).

Put more simply, Le Donne believes that research into the historical Jesus is lamented by many historians because they misunderstand the primary goal of historical study. The goal is not to arrive at a *provable* but, rather, at the most *probable* knowledge of the past. The actual events of history belong to the past and are not available for objective verifiable analysis. Historical inquiry, therefore, is concerned not with verifying the earliest historical facts but with postulating the earliest memory of the plausible past (70, 87). With this conception of history in mind and the demand for absolute historical attestation set aside, Le Donne avers that the historian can delineate what the most original memory of an event likely was by familiarizing oneself with his theoretical model of the mnemonic cycle and tracing the development of successive memory refractions as they move from one memory cycle to the next in diachronic fashion. Since interpretive traditions from previous to subsequent memory cycles share a recognizable continuity as they progress, the most plausible original historical memory that gave rise to similar and divergent traditions may be isolated, after distinct mnemonic cycles are compared and contrasted with each other (74). New Testament typology is important to Le Donne’s argument in this regard because it evidences a way of remembering that allows one to follow



chronological trajectories of thought relevant for Jesus studies (13-14, 59, 91).

The first three chapters in the book provide the reader with explanation of historiographical matters and then culminates with a delineation of Le Donne's thesis in chapter four. In the remaining five chapters, Le Donne applies his historiographical method of social memory to the title "Son of David" as used of Jesus in the Gospel narratives. He concludes that the title functions as a dual indicator with both Davidic and Solomonic connotations and that it is the product of typological interpretation (94, 268).

A few critical thoughts deserve mention. First, this book is demanding. The concept of social memory theory as a historiographical model is complex and makes for a hard-to-follow presentation at times. Second, Le Donne's overall conception of history stands in need of correction, especially from a biblical perspective. Admittedly, the presentation of history from personal memory means that all history is selective and interpretive to some degree. That history is told from some particular "point of view," however, does not mean that we must speak only in terms of plausible or probable history from memory. This is especially true when speaking of biblical history, for the doctrine of inspiration assures us of the historical objectivity and veracity of both Old Testament and New Testament events as they are recorded in Scripture (cf. 2 Tim 3:16-17). The foundation of the Christian faith is grounded not in a likely but in an absolute and truthful history (cf. 1 Cor 15:12-19). A historiographical method, therefore, that questions the validity of the Gospel portraits of Jesus is fundamentally flawed.

Third, Le Donne maintains that typology is illustrative of memory refraction and relegates it to a "means of remembering" (59, 77) and "a manifestation of the mnemonic process" (261). Such a view of typology differs drastically from the traditional, biblical view of typology, which understands it to be the study of correspondences between Old Testament types and New Testament antitypes within the framework of salvation history, whereby the former predictively foreshadow the latter by divine design. Classifying typology as memory association of present events in light of past events fails to represent adequately the concept of biblical typology. Typology, as Jesus taught and as the New Testament writers understood it, sees Old Testament persons, events, and institutions as being predictive of his person and work (cf. Luke 24:27, 44-45; John 1:45; 3:14; 5:39, 46; Rom 5:14; 1 Cor 5:7; 10:6, 11). Typology should be understood as a form of prophecy and not simply as a way of remembering.

On a more positive note, however, *The Historiographical Jesus* is beneficial for the introduction and application it provides of social memory theory. Since this is a relatively new method for approaching historiographical questions in historical Jesus research, those who are unfamiliar with this methodological approach to New Testament studies will find this book to be a useful resource on key terminology in the field and on the theory of memory recall. Additionally, one can still find value in some of his observations, even if his conception of history and his method do not permit him to speak in definitive historical terms.

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*2012 and the End of the World: The Western Roots of the Maya Apocalypse.* By Matthew Restall and Amara Solari. Lanham, MD: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, 2011. 160 pages. Hardcover, \$16.95.

December 21, 2012, is the end.

If you are one of a host of interpreters who are committed to the thesis that the Mayan City El Tortuguero has yielded a Mayan calendar that covers 5,126 years and culminates this year with intense apocalyptic ramifications, then you believe that December 21, 2012, is the cataclysmic end of the world as we know it! Some things recounted in this book are beyond question. First, the discovery of the Mayan calendar in question, based on the famous Long Count and beginning in 3114 BC, is a remarkable discovery. Second, the calendar itself, chronicling such a long period of time, is in a class of its own. Third, unquestionably those who believe that the information contained in the calendar has an apocalyptic nature are sufficiently excited about the prospects of such a climax to civilization that they have succeeded in creating 2012 mania. Like other apocalyptic predictions, which seem to come more and more frequently, a large number of people are stirred to act totally beyond reason in the thirty to sixty-day period immediately preceding “the end of the world.”

Nevertheless, Restall and Solari, from the University of Pennsylvania, are not buying into the mania. Quite to the contrary they contend that there is nothing at all apocalyptic about the calendar. According to them, the calendar simply covers a period of time from one Mayan “beginning” to the end of that period, with virtually little anticipation of any end of the world or apocalyptic kingdom. Their fascinating accounts of the calendar provide a brief history of the discovery and the nature of the calendar itself. They present an overview of Mayan civilization and its expectations—particularly during the days of the Conquistadores—and then an assessment of the inroads of the Roman Catholic church, especially the Franciscan Padres, who, in the viewpoint of the authors, actually are the order most seriously responsible for the spread of apocalyptic views in the new world.

Although this reviewer has read the book, I find myself insufficiently prepared to make much of a judgment since I have had little opportunity to study the civilizations of ancient Central and South America. What Restall and Solari indicate about the nature of the calendar and its lack of apocalyptic prediction certainly makes reasonable sense. Because I have long been an observer of latter-day apocalypticists’ exaggerated anticipation, I can certainly believe that such conspiratorialists have seized an otherwise fairly innocent expression of antiquity and turned it into something that it is not.

However, when it comes to the authors’ understanding of the Bible and the Franciscans and the conditions of late medieval Catholic church, they could afford to do a little more homework. At one point they speak of “the book of the Revelations,” making one suspect that despite speaking of the book, they have not paid much attention to it. At another place they imagine millenarian advocates as seeing a millennium followed by a time of great trouble in the world when, in fact, no chiliast I know would be expecting a tribulation period to follow the millennium. There are some, of course, who would see one last great conflict in the battle of Gog and Magog; but even that point would be debated among others. Furthermore, the general position of the Roman Catholic Church has not been premillenarian but inevitably it has held to other apocalyptic positions, such as the idealist position advocated by Origen or the historicist or preterist position advocated by others. The confusion in

the mind of the authors seems to be that the Franciscans certainly had vivid doctrines of unending bliss and eternal punishment and unquestionably taught those to the Native Americans with enthusiasm. Beyond preaching, this included paintings of heaven and hell left behind on structures, and undoubtedly they anticipated the intervention of God at the end of the age—but were they millenarians? That would not be defined as premillennial interpretation today in any sense.

All of that said, I would recommend to all Christians this book as a relatively quick read. This reading of less than 150 pages will enable you to deal with those who come with whatever apocalyptic fancies to which they may turn as the year 2012 winds down. As a final word, even if the Mayan calendar did call for some sort of an apocalypse to take place December 21, 2012, I do not counsel any unusual measures for the storage of food, water, and medication and strongly suggest that no one pack a suitcase. After all, Jesus is the one who said, “No man knows the day or the hour of the return of the Son of Man.” That being the case, there is little need for concern in the Christian community.

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***Justification: God's Plan & Paul's Vision.* By N. T. Wright. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2009. 279 pages. Softcover, \$16.50.**

This book is Wright's response to John Piper's *The Future of Justification: A Response to N. T. Wright*. Unlike the traditional Protestant understanding of justification, Wright argues for transformative, sacramental, and eschatological justification. Wright divides his work into two parts: his personal apology for this work and his own exegetical defense of his new understanding of justification. In the first part, Wright's primary concern is to justify what E. P. Sanders and James Dunn accomplished in the New Perspective on Paul movement. Wright compares the New Perspective movement to the Copernican revolution. What Paul fought against within Judaism is not the works of the law as a faithful and natural response to the grace of God, but ethnic demarcation that prevented Gentile believers from becoming genuine covenantal members. Therefore, “justification by faith” must mean that every Gentile could be a member of God's covenantal community, not by observing the ethnic regulations of the law, but by believing that Jesus abolished the ethnic wall between Jews and Gentiles on the cross. Judaism in the day of Jesus and Paul urged Jews to obey the law not in order to be saved but to maintain their covenantal membership. To see justification as a once-and-for-all event of forgiveness would be similar to a premodern Ptolemaic form of biblical exegesis.

Wright provides two fundamental critiques of Luther's doctrine of justification by faith alone. First, he claims that Luther's doctrine misrepresents the gospel as if it were all about “my relationship with God” alone and “my salvation” alone (25). This privatized understanding of justification ignores the covenant context of this Pauline doctrine and has failed to promote the ethical implications as well. The concept of Christ's imputed righteousness, however, is the worst damage portrayed by Luther and his Protestants. Wright contends that Christ's personal moral perfection cannot be an individual Christian's personal moral attribute. He asserts that the idea of Christ's imputed righteousness results from the Reformers' overreaction against the medieval Catholic misrepresentation of salvation. Wright asks his readers to realize that the phrase “the imputed righteousness of Christ” is not in the Bible (46).

In the second part of this book, Wright attempts to provide exegetical evidence for his New Perspective on Paul from his reading of Galatians, Philippians, Corinthians, Ephesians, and Romans. If one wants to know specifically how Wright constructs his exegetical arguments, one must review the biblical index of this book. Sometimes, he just ignores key verses that would challenge his argument and does not present any direct answer to the questions that his critics have raised. In particular, biblical texts such as Romans 5:1 and 2 Corinthians 5:21, which clearly refer to the present realization of justification, do not receive substantial response. According to Wright, the righteousness of God in justification refers to God's faithfulness to fulfill his covenantal blessings with human beings through the seed of Abraham. Justification is not about how to stand before God, the righteous judge, but about the divine declaration that a believer is already in that covenantal community. Justification has an "already and not yet" structure. The most problematic argument Wright makes is that believers' present justification is by grace, but their future justification is by their sanctified lives or works. Present justification is the anticipation of the final justification that believers should receive at the *eschaton*.

Evangelical Protestants who hold the supremacy of Scripture over tradition would agree with Wright that we should not take the Reformers' teachings as "infallible." However, a careful reader will wonder whether Wright himself follows the fundamental principle of *sola scriptura* when he reads Paul's critiques of Judaism from extra-biblical sources more than from the New Testament's canonical witnesses to it. Wright's readers should not abandon the emphasis on individual appropriation of justification. Jesus challenged Nicodemus to be born again by the regeneration of the Holy Spirit. A young rich man came to Jesus in order to find a way of personal salvation. The jailor of Philippi asked Paul, "What must I do to be saved?" The problem is not the personal appropriation of the doctrine of justification but the privatization of that doctrine in an unbiblical way that does not pay attention to God's covenantal community and His plan for all human beings.

Unfortunately, Wright makes an unwarranted argument that Luther's doctrine of Christ's imputed righteousness upon Christians is nothing but a varied Medieval Catholic notion of Christ's infused virtue by grace into sinful humanity. Wright misidentifies Luther's doctrine of imputed righteousness with the Catholic treasury of merits concept from which one may earn moral perfection. However, this is exactly what Luther and other Reformers condemned. One should not overlook that Wright does not present any documentation that could verify Luther's usage of God's imputed righteousness as the infused virtue of Christ. What traditional Protestants teach from the imputed righteousness of Christ is the transmission of Christ's perfect judicial status before God to those who are united with him by faith. Surprisingly, Wright seems to advance the concept of imputed righteousness when he argues that Christians should "inhabit appropriately the suit of clothes ('righteousness') that one has already inherited" (145).

No one would oppose Wright's argument that justification is not only a present reality but also an eschatological hope. However, many traditional Protestants would disagree with Wright about the nature of future justification. Good works would be the evidence or fruits of present justification but should not be the basis of future justification, as Wright argues. In order to prove his argument for eschatological justification based on works, Wright makes a surprising claim that is exegetically unacceptable and out of the context. According to him, the Gentiles in Rom 2 who do the works of the law written in their conscience are not pagan Gentiles but

“Christian Gentiles” (190). Since Paul promises peace and eternal glory to those Christian Gentiles who keep the law in Rom 2:10, argues Wright, eschatological justification based on works is a Pauline doctrine. However, Paul’s point in the first three chapters of Romans is that neither Jews nor Gentiles can be saved based on their works and, therefore, everyone is under the wrath of God. Rom 2:10 has nothing to do with eschatological justification based on works. Rather, that verse seriously challenges Wright’s argument.

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