

Matthews's moderate view on the authorship of the books appears in nearly every chapter, arguing for multiple authorship of the Pentateuch, Kings, and Chronicles and questioning the traditional view of authorship on other passages. More egregiously, at times, the author even questions the accuracy of the text. He accuses the authors of the text of being inaccurate (63, 76, 84, 105), agenda-driven (84), biased (111), and not reporting the events accurately (139).

Overall, the book is at times both interesting and frustrating to read. As far as tracking the events that changed the course of history for God's people, Matthews does an adequate job. However, what's missing is the acknowledgement of the sovereign, guiding hand of God throughout Israel's history. That one truth assures readers today that God's people were not just stumbling throughout the Middle East looking for a home, but in fact were supernaturally led by a loving God who is guiding them to an ultimate hope in Christ.

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***The Original Story: God, Israel, and the World.* By John Barton and Julia Bowden. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004. 334 pages. Softcover, \$20.00.**

"All features considered, *The Original Story* is one of the best guidebooks to the Hebrew Bible now available." That is the quote offered by the publishers of this survey Old Testament. Unfortunately, that praise is hyperbolic.

The book is written for beginning students and does have some helpful components. Sidebars, pictures, and illustrations are abundant and the glossary is helpful for anyone new to the study of the Old Testament.

However, at times, the authors seem to struggle with the attempt to write to an elementary audience about complex topics. The book is marked by simple vocabulary and colloquialisms (with words like "dogged," "fuzzy," "gloomy," "tussled," "scrappy," and "peters out"), reading like it was written by someone with more training in education than in theology. The authors do not interact with many noted Old Testament scholars, especially those who hold differing views. Often they approach difficulties with a bias that leaves little room for belief in the absolute truth of the text, and in fact, they seem to discount the possibility. Sadly, this reference gives impressionable students license to make sweeping theological assumptions without proof and without considering evidence to the contrary.

By far, the most common ingredients in the text are the statements questioning the accuracy of the Bible. The authors question the authorship of the Pentateuch (40, 44, 60, 82), Job (74), Psalms (33), Proverbs (32), and Isaiah (44, 192-96) in general; and Genesis 1-11 (122), Adam and Eve (121-22), the stories of Noah (61, 121-22), Abraham (61), Moses

and the ten commandments (86), David and Goliath (121-22), Jonah (119), and Daniel (121-22) in particular. In fact, the further you read in the text the more you discover how little of the Bible the authors actually believe. They question creation in favor of science (49-50), claim that an attempt to date the ten commandments to the time of Moses is "a deliberate attempt to gain status for them" (86), express their opinion that it is "highly doubtful" that David and Solomon ever reigned over an empire (133), advocate that the people of Israel did not go into exile (145), question the truthfulness of the decree of Cyrus (157), equate prophetic visions to "hallucinations," (195), and compare believing that God actually spoke to the serpent to believing in Santa Claus (121).

Ironically, one of the most cogent criticisms of this work is raised by the authors themselves. They acknowledge that one of the most difficult questions to answer for a minimalist is the question of the degree of accuracy of the text (121-22). Who determines which parts of scripture are true and which are not? In the end, the question remains unanswered for them. Their final conclusion to the question of the formation of scripture is "we can never be certain we got it right" (300).

In the end, the publishers did get one point right. This book is "very readable." Unfortunately, anyone interested in a survey of the Old Testament that affirms the supernatural origin and inerrant nature of scripture won't like what he or she read.

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***Pastoral Care and Counseling with Latino/as.* By R. Esteban Montilla and Ferney Medina. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2006. 146 pages. Softcover, \$ 16.00.**

As the Latino/a population in the U.S. grows faster than the projected estimates, the need for effective ways to minister to people of Latino/Hispanic heritage becomes increasingly urgent. Therefore, *Pastoral Care and Counseling with Latino/as* is a timely and relevant book. Montilla and Medina use the terms Latino/a and Hispanic interchangeably throughout the book. However, they have preferred the use of Latino/a as evidenced by the title of the book. The authors are well qualified to write this book due to their educational, professional, and ministerial training, which includes pastoral experience, board certification in chaplaincy, and pastoral counseling. Additionally, their Latino/a heritage gives them a unique experiential vantage point to address the issues presented in the book.

Montilla and Medina strongly and correctly emphasize that "the Latino/a population is a polyculture combining a heterogeneous and multi-colored group of people" (6) that include a variety of ethnicities and backgrounds. They provide an overview of the Latino/a culture and emphasize the collectivistic aspect of this group of people and the importance of community and family relationships. They further recog-