

Padilla, associate professor of New Testament at Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham, AL, offers an “advanced” introduction treating a number of prolegomena to Acts against the background of changing emphases in the humanities generally and specific developments in research on Acts.

After presenting a synopsis of his book’s content and articulating his convictions regarding the assessment of Luke’s work in the book of Acts, he treats the following topics: the authorship of Acts (Luke, a companion of the apostles and Paul), its genre (historical monograph), how Luke writes history (responsibly and truthfully), the speeches of Acts in their ancient context (Luke reports in a moderate manner concerned for accuracy and truth), the theology of the speeches (key theological themes in the main speeches), and the justification of truth-claims in Acts (a dialogue between Acts and postliberalism).

In each of the first five chapters, P., in readable prose, describes approaches to the topic under view that range across a variety of interpretative perspectives and exposes the reader to some positions other than his own. The latter are reliably conservative/evangelical, and consequently a like-minded audience will no doubt be quite appreciative of this book. In some cases, readers from other perspectives will be left to wonder why mainstream Acts scholarship holds views different from those espoused by P. Nevertheless, he offers much helpful information that can be utilized regardless of one’s decisions on the basic profile of the Lukan author and work. P.’s evident interest in more overarching hermeneutical issues, on display in various places in the book, leads to the extended dialogue in chapter six between Acts (as he understands it) and postliberalism. This seems to be something of an excursus with regard to the rest of the book that might better have been separated out as a distinct project.

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*Wisdom’s Feast: An Invitation to Feminist Interpretation of the Scriptures.* By Barbara E. Reid, OP. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2016. Pp. x + 154. \$16.

In this relatively small volume, Barbara Reid has offered a concise, beautifully written invitation to studying the Christian Scriptures from a feminist perspective. After calling the reader into this world by way of *Woman Wisdom*, R. offers an overview of feminist biblical interpretation in terms of history, purpose, terminology, and the development of a feminist consciousness. These introductory remarks conclude with a “how-to” section. This seven-point guide on the art of biblical interpretation through a particularly feminist hermeneutic is exceedingly valuable in its own right, but in this context, it also serves as a *précis* for the body of the text to come.

The body of the text offers nine chapters that each explore a different passage or group of passages from across the Scriptures: the creation accounts; sin in the world; parables of the divine feminine; the role and character of Mary, the mother of Jesus; women and healing; Phoebe and other leaders and ministers; Mary Magdalene and

other apostles; Martha, Mary, and women's roles; and the passion narratives. In a brief conclusion, *Woman Wisdom* returns to send readers out into the world with these new possibilities. Taken together, these chapters present a broad cross-section of the task at stake that make up a valuable handbook. Reading the volume straight through, however, one will notice some repetition in the introductory sections of each chapter as R. gives overviews and lays out relevant terms and concepts. What this achieves, however, is the production of nine articles of foundational feminist biblical interpretation that can also stand alone and can be assigned individually in classroom or reading group settings.

R.'s writing style is crisp and engaging without denigrating exegetical depth. Each study takes on the text or texts at hand, applies a feminist hermeneutic, then explores the effects various readings have had in reception history through later Scripture, doctrine, and/or popular religious consciousness. This new contribution should find widespread use and usefulness in the undergraduate and early graduate classroom, in lay faith formation, and in current scholarly discussion.

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*The Cross: History, Art, and Controversy.* By Robin M. Jensen. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 2017. Pp. x + 270. \$35.

The cross is arguably the most important Christian symbol. In this book, Robin Jensen, a well-published theologian and historian of Christian Art who teaches at the University of Notre Dame, provides a comprehensive history of the way the cross has been portrayed, sung, celebrated, and thought about throughout Christian history. The book is richly and beautifully illustrated.

J. constructs the book around themes that are given Latin titles, e.g., *Signum Crucis* and *Adoratio Crucis*. In the course of the work she weaves historical theological reflection about the cross with various artistic elements like hymns in the cross's honor. As an art historian, she skillfully demonstrates how a Roman instrument of torture becomes a sign of triumph (the jeweled cross) and ultimately an object of devotion with the live and eventually the dead Jesus upon it.

The book also includes a history of the discovery ("invention") of the true cross in the fourth century and its subsequent fate, including its capture in the Persian invasion of Jerusalem by Chosroes II in 614 and its recapture by the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius in 628 not long before the Islamic conquest of the Holy Land. As an art historian, J. is particularly adept at describing the weaving of different images, like the tree of life, in representations of the cross.

This richly illustrated book (Harvard University Press deserves great credit for the quality of the representations) spans the entirety of Christian history and includes the cross in the New World as well as issues like the contemporary arguments over the cross as a symbol of Christian conquest or the exaltation of suffering. A fine selected