

Shorter Notices

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The Cambridge Companion to The Hebrew Bible/Old Testament. Edited by Stephen B. Chapman and Marvin A. Sweeney. Cambridge Companions to Religion. New York: Cambridge University, 2016. Pp. xvii. 525. \$120; \$39:99.

An anthology of twenty-three essays by well-published biblical scholars, grouped under five headings: text and canon; historical background; methods and approaches; subcollections and genres (e.g., “The Pentateuch and Israelite law”; “The Former Prophets and historiography”); and reception and use (e.g., “The Hebrew Bible in Judaism”; “The Hebrew Bible in art and literature”). The two editors have chosen topics and contributors wisely. Though of diverse religious affiliations, they are able to “engage productively in biblical scholarship together” (3). As the editors note, some newer approaches and methods are not represented in the volume, e.g., contextual or “advocacy” approaches such as feminist, African American, Native American, Hispanic/Latino/a, and Asian, and interdisciplinary perspectives such as postcolonial hermeneutics. Some essays are detailed surveys of scholarship such as Richard Nelson on the Former Prophets and historiography. Thomas Dozeman introduces Anglophone readers to the important contributions of Continental scholars to the Pentateuch and Israelite law. Another valuable contribution is Larry Wills’s “The biblical short story,” and Marvin Sweeney’s “The Latter Prophets and prophecy.” Brent Strawn’s “The history of Israelite religion” functions as a prolegomenon, surveying the study of religion and then discussing three issues important for the discipline: sources, locus (“official” versus “popular” religion) and content (“theology” or “practice/ritual”). Especially welcome is David Lyle Jeffrey’s excellent “The Hebrew Bible in art and literature.”

This *Companion* is first-rate, basic yet wide ranging, suitable for pastors, advanced college and seminary students, and even professors.

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The Acts of the Apostles: Interpretation, History and Theology. By Osvaldo Padilla. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2016. Pp. 264. \$26.

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