

BOOK REVIEWS

The Usefulness of Scripture: Essays In Honor Of Robert W. Wall. Edited by Daniel Castelo, Sara M. Koenig, and David R. Nienhuis. University Park, PA: Eisenbrauns, 2018. Pp. xxxviii + 246. ISBN: 978-1-57506-960-9. \$49.50 (USD).

This *Festschrift* volume serves to commemorate both the 40-year teaching career and 70th birthday of Seattle Pacific University professor, Robert W. Wall. The work opens with a collection of warm “accolades,” followed by a short introduction by colleague Davis R. Nienhuis, as well as a 17-page bibliography (containing almost 200 entries) of Wall’s published works. The volume is divided into two sections, entitled respectively “Essays on Theology and Methodology” and “Essays on Biblical Texts and Themes.”

While interestingly eclectic in their content, the essays contained in this volume generally resonate with the theological and canonical themes Wall has spent much of his academic career thoughtfully and creatively advancing. The opening essay by Frank A. Spina is entitled “Israel as a Figure for the Church: The Radical Nature of a Canonical Approach to Christian Scripture,” and seeks to understand both Judaism and Christianity as “twin communities” and figures of canonical Israel (22–23). Andrew Knapp’s contribution entitled “The Role of Historical Criticism in Wesleyan Biblical Hermeneutics” synthesizes a non-confessional historical-critical hermeneutic with a confessional theological hermeneutic that, in application to Ps 29, seeks to close the traditional gap between “Bible” and “Scripture” (25, 45–46). Shannon N. Smythe’s essay “Reconsidering Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Barth and Goldingay in Conversation” outlines the threefold emphasis upon Christology, participation, and witness found in Barth’s Trinitarian theology. It then explores Goldingay’s critique of “Christ-centered and Rule of Faith readings” within that Trinitarian theology (48, 67–68). Daniel Castelo’s “Inspiration and Providence” offers an interpretation of the honoree’s position on the topic, arguing that it serves as a vital though perhaps limited (because of the growing theological illiteracy and cloistering between academy and church) alternative for Protestant evangelicalism (70, 80–81). Anthony B. Robinson writes on the topic of pastoral ecclesiology in his chapter entitled “But as for You: Pastoral Leadership in a Postinstitutional Time.” He affirms that the church can

renew its relevancy when confronted by the “tremor of change and challenge” found within a postmodern and pluralistic culture (82–83, 94).

The second half of the volume begins with Eugene E. Lemcio’s essay “‘Son of Man’ in Psalm 8, Psalm 79, and Daniel 7: An Exercise in a Contrapuntal Biblical Theology of the Septuagint” wherein he explores the broader canonical impact these passages may have had upon the Son of Man sayings in the Gospels, and carefully posits the possibility of a theocentric, Christological biblical theology of the Septuagint (111–12). Sara M. Koenig grapples with the multiple Balaam traditions in “Canonical Complexities of the Biblical Balaams,” and thoughtfully concludes that, in resisting the harmonization of textual complexities, a canonical reading of recurrent narratives can guard against over-simplification and “monologization” in our hermeneutical approaches (114–15, 133–34). In “The Spirit in Israel’s Story: An Antidote to Solipsistic Spirituality,” Jack Levison contends that our Christian theology—and especially our pneumatology—is increasingly endangered by the impact of individualism, and that the remedy for this “myopic” understanding of the Holy Spirit lies in the immersion of ourselves in Israel’s story and understanding of the Spirit’s work in Creation, Exodus, and Restoration (137, 153). Laura C.S. Holmes’ essay entitled “Transformed Discipleship: A Canonical Reading of Martha and Mary” places Luke 10:38–42 alongside John 11–12 and elucidates upon how a canonical approach that reads these two narratives together corrects contemporary misassumptions about the women’s—and especially Martha’s—transformational encounter with Jesus (155, 176–77). John Painter next examines the canonical shaping of the New Testament with specific reference to the Johannine corpus in his chapter entitled “The Place of the Johannine Canon within the New Testament Canon.” He subsequently concludes that the differences between John and the Synoptics may highlight a more “comprehensive” and “truer” interpretive portrait of Jesus within the Fourth Gospel (178, 202). The final contribution to the *Festschrift* is Stephen E. Fowl’s work entitled “Bound and Unbound Desire” wherein he maintains that contrary to Old Testament and Second Temple texts portraying greed as a *precursor* to idolatry, in Eph 5 and Col 3 the Apostle Paul argues that greed *is* idolatry and that cultivating a disposition of thanksgiving serves as the best counter to greed (pp. 203–205, 220–21). The volume concludes with a sizable bibliography, a contributors list, and both author and Scripture indices.

Whether (a) exploring the “kindred” relationship of Scripture between Judaism and Christianity, (b) redeeming historical criticism for theological exegesis, (c) comparing the nuances of Trinitarian theology, (d) reevaluating the nature of biblical authority, (e) reaffirming the relevance of the Christian church, (f) positing a biblical theology of the LXX, (g) dispelling attempts to harmonize analogous texts, (h) addressing the problem of Christian autonomy, (i) employing combined

narratives to correcting singular readings, (j) examining the correspondence between gospels, or (k) affirming qualities like gratitude in order to make one more Christ-like, each author's contribution in this *Festschrift* highlights some aspect of Rob Wall's wide-ranging scholarship. And while celebrative of that prolific scholarship, this volume also—and perhaps more importantly—serves as a witness to Rob's collegial spirit, pastoral heart, genuine Christian spirituality, and deep theological wisdom.

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Scripture and Its Interpretation: A Global, Ecumenical Introduction to the Bible. Edited by Michael J. Gorman. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017. ISBN: 978-0801098390. Xxiv Pp. + 440. \$34.99 (USD).

There are many introductions to the Bible, but few with an explicitly global and ecumenical emphasis that also includes considerable attention to interpretation.¹ In a fresh volume edited by Michael Gorman (St. Mary's Seminary), *Scripture and Its Interpretation* delivers just that special combination.

About two dozen scholars contribute to 24 short and easy-to-read chapters. The first section is on the "Bible" itself, the second on interpretation, and third on contemporary experiences related to the Bible. This triad of aspects gives readers a substantial grasp on how the Bible functions in various situations and cultures. Few essays are technical, and all are written with an undergraduate/graduate introductory audience in mind. It could also function as a textbook for committed students at church.

And as a one-course textbook it would certainly succeed in its purpose. Yes, colored pictures and more pedagogical tools would be convenient. But 24 chapters fit a one-semester class nicely (especially a twice-a-week format), and each chapter does end with "Questions For Reflection and Discussion" and a list of recommended reading on each subject (amounting then to many short bibliographies that are quite handy). Depending on how well the first edition is received, the second might easily incorporate the attractive format of other such books by Baker Academic like Powell's *Introducing the New Testament*.²

The main (and largest) section on different cultural interpretation was particularly enlightening for readers who haven't quite grasped how the Bible can look and function differently for Christians and churches of a different time/culture. There are also chapters that introductions to the Bible often do not dedicate any attention to, such as reception history, theological interpretation, and the Bible's

1 A close approximation is Joel Kaminsky, Joel Lohr, and Mark Reasoner, *The Abingdon Introduction to the Bible: Understanding Jewish and Christian Scriptures* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2014).

2 Mark Powell, *Introducing the New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic), 2018.

relationship to politics. The intersectionality of the book's contents is also broken down by Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant perspectives on the Bible, and also by different phases of church history (premodern, modern, etc.). Again, few dimensions are left unaddressed, and readers are left with a particularly rich understanding about this marvelous anthology of literature called the Bible.

Scripture and Its Interpretation is unique, highly useful, clearly written, up to date, and enlightening. It is written from a broader Christian perspective and tone that virtually any self-identifying Christian can appreciate. It probably fits best as a text for an introductory seminary course on the Bible, perhaps supplemented by some primary-source readings of biblical texts themselves. Much appreciation towards all who brought this wonderful book into existence. Highly recommended.

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Preaching God's Word: A Hands-On Approach to Preparing, Developing, and Delivering the Sermon—second edition. Terry G. Carter, J. Scott Duvall, and J. Daniel Hays. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018. 293pp. ISBN: 978-0-310-53624-6.

Good preaching must be based on a solid, exegetical study of God's Word. In this way, *Preaching God's Word: A Hands-On Approach to Preparing, Developing, and Delivering the Sermon*, now in its second edition, was designed to be a companion text to J. Scott Duvall and J. Daniel Hays' *Grasping God's Word: A Hands-On Approach to Reading, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible—third edition* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012). The authors state:

[I]n *Grasping God's Word* the student learns how to use standard evangelical exegetical approaches to studying the Bible. Throughout *Preaching God's Word* we build on this hermeneutical foundation, making frequent references to *Grasping God's Word* in regard to interpretive issues. But *Preaching God's Word* focuses on communicating God's Word. It reaches students to take the results of their exegesis, develop them into a strong, coherent sermon, and then deliver that sermon in a powerful way that connects with today's audiences. (12)

Prior to delineating any of the specific changes that accompany the second edition of *Preaching God's Word*, it is prudent to first explain the volume's basic structure. The text is arranged into three main parts: (1) Developing and

Preaching a Biblical Sermon, (2) Preaching the New Testament, and (3) Preaching the Old Testament. The first main section involves the “Eleven-Step Sermon Process.” This process is comprised of three main components, each with a varying number of steps: (A) *Exegesis* (step one), (B) *The Bridge to Your Audience* (steps two–seven), and (C) *The Writing and Delivery* (steps 8–11). To be clear, the eleven steps are: (1) Grasping the Meaning of the Text in Their Town, (2) Measure the Width of the Interpretive River, (3) Cross the Principalizing Bridge, (4) Consult the Biblical Map, (5) Grasp the Text in Our Town, (6) Exegete Your Congregation, (7) Determine How Much Background Material to Include, (8) Determine the Sermon Thesis and Main Point, (9) Develop Text-Centered Applications, (10) Find Illustrations, and, (11) Write Out the Sermon and Practice Delivery. The seven chapters that comprise parts two and three of *Preaching God’s Word* cover the various genres of literature that one would encounter in each of the Bible’s two testaments—namely “Letters,” “Gospels and Acts,” and “Revelation” for the New Testament, and “Narrative,” “Law,” “Prophets,” and “Psalms and Wisdom Literature” for the Old Testament. Many chapters also conclude with a helpful “review questions and assignments” section.

Given that it has been 13 years since the first edition of *Preaching God’s Word* has been released, it is, perhaps, quite surprising that the only section that is entirely new to the second edition is “step four” of “part one,” namely: “Consult the Biblical Map: How does our theological principle fit with the rest of the Bible?” (41). According to Carter, Duvall, and Hays, this step is “a good place to consider how your passage relates to the broader biblical and theological contexts. What are the true biblical parallels to your passage?” (63). Aside from this small (but not insignificant) change, most of the other updates seem to be rather superficial. For instance, the authors state in the preface to the second edition that they have changed their exemplars from individuals such as John R. W. Stott, Eugene Lowry, and Tony Campolo to “contemporary preachers who are setting the bar in biblical preaching—preachers like Francis Chan and David Platt” (15). While these updates are both necessary and good, it is reasonable to state that they hardly warrant the need for a second edition of a text. As something of an aside, perhaps, I was unaware of there being any female expositors that are especially noted.

One specific critique that I have of this volume is the lack of visuals concerning the “Interpretive Journey,” i.e., the essence of steps one through five in “Part One” (see above). While *Grasping God’s Word* has some wonderfully rendered graphics that depict each of these five steps in a very clear fashion (including a summative illustration), *Preaching God’s Word* does not include any of the accompanying pictures that help to illuminate the process. Given the tremendous amount of clarity that these illustrations provide concerning these five key steps,

one can only wonder why the authors chose not to avail themselves of something that would have been such a boon to the reader.

It is also regrettable that there is no specific chapter, nor is there an extended discussion, that is specifically devoted to helping one preach the parables of Jesus. Instead, the authors merely state that “since parables play such a major role in Jesus’ teaching, we recommend further study in Craig L. Blomberg, *Preaching the Parables: From Responsible Interpretation to Powerful Proclamation*” (187). Much also to the chagrin of some readers, there is not much in the way of assistance either for the preacher who wishes to focus especially on the “Apocalyptic” texts of the Old Testament.

Another unfortunate irritant is the rather large number of errors with respect to the author index that appear in *Preaching God’s Word*. That is to say, the name index often fails to list a number of individuals whose works appear within the volume (such as Walter Brueggemann, Scott M. Gibson, C. Marvin Pate, Bruce Shelley, and Bruce Witherington III, for example). Alongside this, it also sometimes provides incomplete citations of those authors that it does actually list (for example, both Timothy Keller and Graham Johnston have an incomplete citation index, though I am sure that these examples could easily multiply).

Lastly, although the authors explicitly state that “we have also referenced some of the newest ideas on preaching offered by some of the best thinkers and writers on the subject” (15), there are a surprising amount of monographs and other resources that are dedicated to the discipline of homiletics that are simply glossed over or missed altogether in *Preaching God’s Word*. Alongside this, *Preaching God’s Word* also tends to refer to older editions of certain texts, even though many newer/up-to-date editions have long been available. These issues render null and void (at least in the eyes of this reviewer) the author’s claims to be on the so-called “cutting edge.” One also wonders if an annotated bibliography would perhaps have proven beneficial to the reader.

To conclude, for those looking for a preaching text that instructs and encourages preachers to “stand before the congregation having carefully handled the biblical text and incorporated relevant exegetical information into a sermon” (283), *Preaching God’s Word* does indeed offer a “hands-on, user-friendly approach to deliver sound biblical sermons with their audience in a meaningful way” (back cover). That being said, however, it is hardly as up-to-date as what it claims to be and one would be hard pressed to justify the purchase of the second edition of this volume if one is already in possession of the first issuing of *Preaching God’s Word*. Its primary users will likely be bible college/seminary students, practicing homiletics, and other pastors/ministers.

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Nomadic Text: A Theory of Biblical Reception History. Brennan W. Breed. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2014. ISBN: 9780253012524. Pp. xi + 206. \$60 (USD).

Issues surrounding biblical and interpretation and transmission are well-known, with a variety of solutions and methods of study proposed by scholars. The combination of the study of these disciplines has come to be known as reception history, which, following James Barr, Breed defines as the “history of the effects of writings rather than [their] origins” (3). However, for Breed, this definition does not immediately provide clarity to the discipline, but rather a questionable premise: *can the effects of a writing be separated from its origins, especially in the case of the OT?*

Breed’s discussion of this issue occupies much of the beginning of his book *Nomadic Text*. He begins by speaking briefly about the assumption of a gap between the reception history and biblical criticism, which centers on a proposed distinction between composition and transmission of a text. Since such a distinction often centers around the concept of some sort of an original text, Breed transitions into a discussion of the various ways that an original text is understood and defined by various OT text-critical scholars, including Emanuel Tov and Eugene Ulrich. Breed follows some of the arguments often utilized in defense of an original text, including a methodological problem: most text-critical studies, especially those that demonstrate preference for one textual form over another, assume an original text. Ronald Hendel and Ulrich are more accepting of pluriformity of text types, but Breed suggests that both still demonstrate a reliance on the concept of an original text (Hendel more explicitly than Ulrich).

To demonstrate the issues surrounding the concept of an original text, Breed uses the book of Daniel as a case study. He follows Ulrich and others in analyzing the compositional process of Daniel, noting several stages of development taking place before the stabilization of its text. Breed argues that Daniel problematizes the concept of an original text; however, this is not merely because Daniel was involved in multiple stages of development, but that the book exists in two forms, namely the Old Greek (OG) and Masoretic Text (MT). Comparison of the forms to determine the earlier text is not done easily: the MT and OG are not different because one diverged away from another, but rather because both diverged from an earlier common source. Attempting to eliminate these changes to Daniel would result in removing portions of text that would be reasonably considered part of the composition process by any balanced scholar. This causes Breed to conclude that the text of Daniel is “irreducibly complex,” sufficiently blurring the assumed distinction of composition and development (53). Thus, the foundational assumption

of reception history being the study of a work after the completion of a compositional process becomes unintelligible when compared to Daniel.

Breed is not interested in simply leaving the fields of reception history and biblical criticism in piles of deconstructed rubble. So he offers his own solution to the problem of the apparently nonexistent line between the disciplines. He wishes to construct a model that allows for the pluriformity of the text while simultaneously not reducing the text to a series of only accidentally connected words and phrases, left to be used and interpreted in ways only limited by the imagination of the reader. To this end, Breed discusses nominalism and realism in accordance with the biblical text and attempts to find a middle ground between the two viewpoints. Here Breed is heavily dependent upon Gilles Deleuze, suggesting that the biblical text should be studied not as a static object, but as an “object-projectile,” or an object for which movement should be considered a necessary quality (116–17).

Two concepts prove helpful in the consideration of Breed’s theory: speaking of the text having “capacities,” and the metaphor of the nomad. On the first, Breed suggests that rather than the text having a singular interpretation, it has several functions that it has the ability to perform. This is not to say that the text may be used to whatever end an interpreter may bring it to; rather, that the text is capable of performing more than one function. Second, Breed uses the metaphor of a nomad as a descriptor for the biblical text: scripture is neither like a native, who stays where they have always been, nor is it like a migrant, who has left its home and gone to a foreign place; rather, it is a *nomad*, who does not have any particular home, nor any particular destination. Rather, it may find itself in many different environments, each equally familiar, and begin to adapt to its circumstances.

The implications of Breed’s work for issues like canon and biblical interpretation are significant. Most notably, solid lines between binary categories such as canonical/non-canonical, or in-context/out-of-context would be eliminated, or at least blurred to such an extent that the categories would still need re-evaluation.

Breed’s work has one significant limitation, namely the lack of any sort of criterion that would establish legitimate or illegitimate uses of the biblical text. Even if Breed is theoretically correct, it is unclear what sort of limiting factors would be in place to prevent the reader from descending into the nominalism he rejects, allowing an “anything goes” approach. This issue is reason for significant hesitation in the uncritical application of his theory into the work of biblical studies.

However, even given this limitation, Breed’s work is keenly aware of the complexity surrounding the biblical text, and more than most, has demonstrated an appreciation for that complexity rather than an aversion to it. Breed speaks tentatively throughout the book, exceptionally aware of the precarious balancing act he

is attempting to perform. Further, even if his reconstruction is not a comprehensive solution to the problems he discusses, his analysis of theories of textual criticism and biblical criticism are thorough enough to force even the most ardent supporter of an original text pause and contemplate the meaning of the biblical text.

While a bit technical, *Nomadic Text* is an excellent read for anyone wanting to learn more about the origins of the OT text and about the complexities surrounding it.

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The Crucifixion: Understanding the Death of Jesus Christ. Fleming Rutledge. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015. ISBN: 978-0802875341. Pp. xxvi + 669. \$30.00 (USD).

It is hard to think of something more central and important to the Christian faith than the crucifixion of Jesus. The physical cross itself remains a key symbol of Christianity—whether for good (as hanging in a church that embodies the spirit of Christ) or for ill (as imprinted on a crusader shield). But more than that, the crucifixion changed human history—inspiring millions upon millions of followers throughout the last 2,000 years to live lives they would not have otherwise lived. It forever changed the face of our species and has effects on every continent. Indeed, as complicated as interpretations may get, there is no question that human civilization has never been the same.

One of the most prominent preachers of the contemporary English-speaking world, Fleming Rutledge, assembled a lifetime of scholarship and passionate preaching on this event in *The Crucifixion*.³ It blends a unique mix of theology, biblical studies, and sermon into a systematic whole. Readers will find fresh insights into old debates (such as Anselm on the atonement, Paul and sin, etc.), reflections on contemporary debates (such as justification, substitution, hell, etc.), and vivid incarnations of the incarnate and crucified One—whether on the streets of abolitionist protests, in the killing chambers of twentieth-century Europe, or in the tropics of Rwanda. The cross comes alive in *The Crucifixion*—and with a disciplined, level-headed assessment of the profound reflection. It really is difficult to overstate the value of the book.⁴

Rutledge's intertwining discourse touches upon a noticeably wide array of issues beyond the more obvious contours of history and soteriology. For instance,

3 As noted in the introductory portions of the book, Rutledge also has notable connections to Wyclif College and Canadian evangelicalism.

4 I was, however, annoyed with some of the "it will preach!" endorsements, since it is far beyond a popular collection of sermon illustrations.

she discusses the general concept of “religion” and explains why “We are on safe ground to argue that the crucifixion of Jesus was the most secular, irreligious happening ever to find its way into the arena of faith” (54), the significance of the fact that “no human wish could have come up with a crucified God” (57), and why “all four Evangelists resisted . . . pressures to move in the direction of something more spiritually familiar, and instead made the long, continuous passion narrative the climax of their work” (69). I was particularly struck by her passing description of the resurrection: “The resurrection is not just the reappearance of a dead person. It is the mighty act of God to vindicate the One whose very right to exist was thought to have been negated by the powers that nailed him to a cross” (64).

Rutledge also chronicles the utter horror and shame of Roman-style crucifixion. “Degradation was the whole point,” she writes (78). People have been trying to close their eyes to it ever since.

One of the telling points made by Martin Hengel is that after Constantine, the word *crux* was sanctified. It fell out of use in ordinary discourse; the word *furca*, meaning “gallows,” was substituted. This is revealing, because it shows how the movement is always away from the wretchedness of the cross to something that, however dreadful, is nevertheless not so much associated with the unspeakable as was crucifixion. It also illustrates the way shallow piety attaches itself to the cross and, precisely in the process of reverencing it, robs it of its shame. (82)

Along the way Rutledge also discusses the problem of evil and the whole concept of “justice,” intra-Trinity relationships with relation to the cross, the meaning of sin, and on it goes. Practically the whole gamut of systematic theology—and quite a bit of social ethics and philosophy—is brought around the crucifixion. And readers can easily see why: it truly is the centerpiece of Christianity.

To give an example of one of these special topics, consider how she concisely addresses the concept of justice and “satisfaction” in the following paragraph:

Leviticus 5:14 maintains that one who sins must bring a guilt offering to the Lord “valued . . . in shekels of silver.” Note the emphasis on assigning *value* to the offering. The suggestion is that there should be some correlation of the value of the offering with the gravity of the offense. If the supposed sacrifice is just something we are getting rid of, like those old clothes in the back of our closet that we haven’t worn for years, then restitution is not made. Anselm’s word “satisfaction” seems right here, with its suggestion of comparable cost. We are familiar with this notion; we are

infuriated when people who have committed great crimes get off with light sentences. The trouble is that there is no adequate punishment for a truly great crime. How could there be any offering valuable enough to compensate for the victims of just one bombing, let alone genocides of millions? (245)

Elsewhere she concludes (after much examination) that “there are free fundamental premises in the biblical picture of Sin,” namely:

1. The Fall—the story of Adam and Eve that tells, in mythological terms, of a primeval cataclysm that involves all human beings in a vast rebellion against our once and future destiny in God.
2. The subsequent solidarity of all humanity in bondage to the power of Sin.
3. A cosmic struggle between the forces of Sin, evil, and Death (“the world, the flesh, and the devil,” as the baptismal service used to say) and the unconquerable purpose of God. (185)

Regarding (2), she highlights that “*Human solidarity in bondage to the power of Sin* is one of the most important concepts for Christians to grasp” (179; emphasis original). I found this intriguing because discussion about “sin” is generally known for being divisive in public discourse; it’s a line that divides the believing community and those outside of it. Rutledge sees it differently. “Sin is an *alien power* that must be driven from the field. All human beings are enslaved by this power” (181). In other words, *all people are fellow victims, slaves, and combatants of this foreign, deadly influence that holds us in its grip.*

Sin is not so much a collection of individual misdeeds as it is an active, malevolent agency bent upon despoiling, imprisonment, and death—the utter undoing of God’s purposes. Misdeeds are signs of that agency at work; they are not the thing itself. It is “the thing itself” that is our cosmic Enemy. (175)

This perspective—which she derives largely from the Apostle Paul—takes us back to *solidarity*. Sin is something that should *unite* the human race, not divide it.

Inevitably, much opinion flows through the arguments, conclusions, and powerful sermon-like interludes. When Rutledge writes that “the cross itself is not a metaphor,” but “a historical event,” it is not clear why the two are viewed as mutually exclusive (212). She also quibbles here and there with various issues and scholars, whether René Girard on how scapegoating really isn’t found in the NT (248–49) or how N. T. Wright “de-radicalizes Paul” (367) on certain issues relating to the cosmic effects of sin and downplaying apocalypticism in Second

Temple Judaism.⁵ But it is clear that her all of opinions are learned and carefully chosen, and there is never a hint of disrespect in the book's prose. The sheer range of scholarship and sources that Rutledge brings to the table is remarkable.

In a sea of powerful metaphors both in and outside of the Bible, Rutledge cast new light and old on the crucifixion of Jesus. God really *acted*, changed history, and did something distinctive and unforgettable in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. *The Crucifixion* is undoubtedly the most important work since Moltmann's *The Crucified God* and destined become a standard work on the subject. Perfect for a "Christ and Salvation" systematic theology course, hopefully seminaries will also begin utilizing it for class. And at nearly 700 pages, it's not a short read, but it is anything but a boring one. I could not recommend *The Crucifixion* more highly to any Christian and curious person wanting to know what on earth the cross is all about.

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5 "One of the strongest arguments in favor of the apocalyptic perspective in the New Testament is that it gives the devil his due. Radical evil—ranging from macro to micro, from the massacre of millions to the torture-murderer of a child—is not denied or glossed over" (388).