

## Book Reviews

**BRAUCH, Manfred T., *Abusing Scripture: The Consequences of Misreading the Bible*, Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009, 293 pp., \$18.00 paperback, ISBN 978-0830825790.**

Manfred T. Brauch, retired professor of Biblical Theology and past President of Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary, is deeply concerned about “the integrity and viability of our Christian witness in today’s world, a witness that is frequently undermined and distorted by the abuse of Scripture” (p. 15). The noble cause displayed in the title and the stated goals of the book are sure to attract serious students of the Bible and concerned Christians. He helps identify for readers the various ways Scripture is abused or misapplied, even by those who profess a belief in the inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible. He acknowledges that his identifications are unintentional abuses which “are often the result of letting our backgrounds, preconceptions, or biases influence and control the way we read and apply Scripture” (p. 16). In order to overcome these abuses of Scripture, Brauch calls Bible interpreters to be “self-critical, honest, and clear” (p.20). He asserts that the weakened witness, diminished impact, and caricatures from society Evangelicals now experience all stem from abusing Scripture.

Although the book is not devoted specifically to hermeneutics as the author claims, readers can find some helpful principles, methodology, and criteria for biblical author and context oriented hermeneutics. Brauch admirably calls evangelicals to give attention to the whole gospel and make constructive overtures to culture. He reproves certain Christian interpretive traditions that led to women’s inferior status, restricted roles, and demeaning subjugation (p. 253). But, readers may wonder if it is not possible that the very authorial intent he seeks intended different roles for men and women without intending demeaning subjugation. He provides helpful hermeneutical principles for why modern Christians do not need foot-washing, sacrifices, and the Sabbath Day. But, readers will likely find it puzzling that he selectively applies his principles to American tax policy, military policy, environmental issues, treatment of women and minorities and not to other thorny and disputable issues for modern Christians such as tithing, dancing, and alcohol. These are other issues occurring in the Bible which also have the unpleasant consequences of causing division and caricatures in our culture.

Brauch advocates the ‘incarnational’ nature of Scripture, brought *en vogue* by Peter Enns, which asserts the Bible’s divine and human

elements in a nuance they claim is analogous to the person of Jesus Christ, thereby accounting for the Bible's "limited interpretations" (p. 31, 93). Indeed, Scripture is the Word of God through human writers. But, the view of the Bible's nature espoused by Brauch and Enns seems neither totally analogous with the classically orthodox views of the person of Jesus Christ who is impeccably God in the flesh, nor consistent with many evangelical views of Scripture.

At times, Brauch's suggested hermeneutical principles seem inconsistent and strained. Out of one side of his mouth he calls for interpreters to consider all that the Bible says on a subject and out the other side he does not exercise what he advocates—for example, his diatribes against "the spread of weaponry" and "tax policies." On pages 84 and 255, Brauch seeks to address prophetically his perceived social ills of tax policies and corporate greed. If Brauch really is exercising Christian concern for the poor and not just Marxist class envy, does he want the poor to be better off than they are or as well off as the rich? Brauch's call for "overcoming evil with good" as a remedy for recent "warmongering" supported by some Evangelicals is admirable, but certainly all Bible readers can agree that Jesus did this and He was still hated by many. Did Jesus' witness lack the integrity or viability which Brauch desires?

His quasi-Hegelian hermeneutical method of "original vision"—"prophetic opposition"—"incarnation"—"full realization of original vision" (p. 249) is creatively insightful at points and less than helpful at points if the goal of the book is to encourage the right handling of Scripture. Readers could better benefit by Brauch avoiding the "exegetical gymnastics" he deplores and exercising the "honesty" he encourages and just plainly tell us his agenda. He has certain social and political views that part company with many conservative evangelicals, who embarrass him (like Falwell and Dobson as he claims), and he is looking for proof-texts to substantiate those views. His criteria and credentials for functioning as the arbiter concerning "original vision" (p.246), "limited interpretations" in the Bible (p.247), and "full realizations of the original vision" in the final form of biblical texts are sorely lacking. Seminary presidency aside, who is Brauch to determine when or if the Bible ever "stopped significantly short" in its full realization of the original vision? Scripture seems fully capable of displaying original vision and the full realization it intended. Brauch comes dangerously close to taking progressive revelation too far and advocating hermeneutics that do not take seriously *Sola Scriptura* or the Sufficiency of Scripture. Perhaps we can address abuse in the name of Christianity without such unhelpful statements concerning the nature of Scripture.

Though the book is not about biblical interpretation as such, his goal is twofold: “(1) to demonstrate . . . how Scripture *is in fact* all too frequently and pervasively misinterpreted, mishandled, misunderstood and misapplied in and by the Christian community, both individually and collectively; (2) to demonstrate repeatedly, via multiple examples, that the abuse of Scripture has consequences” (p. 251). In disputes among Christians, both sides have Bible quoting advocates—and they stand by their verses. Integrity, maturity, and care surely calls for both sides, not just the side that may be politically incorrect or not as cool, to be “self-critical,” acknowledging “lens” and “filters” concerning the handling of Scripture. What if Brauch discovers one day that his interpretations put forth in this book were wide of the mark? Did he abuse anyone? Nevertheless, he makes some valid points in pursuit of these goals and Evangelicals should take heed.

Brauch’s goals for Christian united witness and the world knowing the transforming love of God are laudable (and sound much like Barack Obama’s 2008 Democratic Convention Acceptance speech), but his answers fall short for why Christians must placate questionable environmental science that has an *a priori* agenda and disregard a likely biblical intention in terms of just war and gender roles in church leadership. Though there is no excuse for abusing Scripture and the resultant abuse of people (and perhaps the environment), opposition to Christian witness and caricatures can still come from sources similar to those who once opposed Jesus—Bible interpreter *par excellence*. Those seeking a purely hermeneutics book can find some help here but are better served looking elsewhere, such as D. A. Carson’s *Exegetical Fallacies*. And those seeking a biblical resource to remedy the abuse of humans, without further abusing Scripture, can find help here but may be better served appealing to the doctrines of Soul Competency and *Imago Dei*, and Jesus’ clear command to love.

Michael Roy  
Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

**MURAOKA, Takamitsu. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint*. Louvain, Paris, Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2009, xl + 757 pp., Euro 95.00 / US\$ 138.00 hardcover, ISBN 978-90-429-2248-8.**

T. Muraoka’s Greek – English Lexicon of the Septuaginta is the kind of scholarly event that happens once in a generation. The achievement crowns the illustrious carrier of Takamitsu Muraoka, Professor emeritus at the Leiden University, known to the Septuagintalists for his

multifaceted contribution to the study of the Greek Old Testament, especially in the area of lexicography. For the English speaking readership, the anticipation of the completion of the lexicon could not have been more acute. The path to this event was prepared by two earlier editions of the lexicon, each one limited in scope, the first one covering the Minor Prophets (Louvain: Peeters, 1993) and the second the Pentateuch (Louvain: Peeters, 2002). The *Greek English Lexicon of the Septuagint* of J. Lust, E. Eynikel, and K. Hauspie (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft 1992/1996) also deserves mention in this respect. Yet, even this reference title, the only Greek-English lexicon of the entire Septuagint available, was itself a work “limited in scope” and “more directly useful for students in these fields” (*GELS*, p. vii). With Muraoka’s Lexicon, however, the time is come! Every researcher in Septuagint and cognate studies, scholars and students alike, will now have at their disposal not a mere glossary of Greek to English lexical equivalents, but a fully fledged lexicon, the kind of lexicography canon that will set the standard in the field for decades to come.

The introduction (pp. vi-xvii) deals briefly with several features of the lexicon that deserve clarification. The reader is given a concise statement describing Muraoka’s position on a variety of issues, such as the scope of the lexical database, his approach to lexicography and the nature of the Greek displayed in the LXX, the textual basis for the lexicon and the role of textual criticism in the way the textual variants are handled, and the working methodology. The lexicon covers the entire Septuagint, the canonical books, as well as the deuterocanonical books or the Apocrypha. The books that have survived in more than one established Greek textual tradition, such as the Book of Daniel (represented by the Old Greek and the Theodotian text), or the two versions of the Book of Judges (preserved with significant differences in the two main codices) alongside the Antiochene text of the Judges are also served by the lexicon.

Perhaps one of the most important decisions guiding the project was Muraoka’s distinct take on Greek lexicography, an issue frequently debated in Septuagintalists’ circles. The reader is informed that unlike the Semitic equivalences approach promoted in their Lexicon by Lust *et al.*, or the interlinear model advocated earlier by A. Pietersma, Muraoka stresses the need to read and understand the lexical stock of the Septuagint on its own. The words must be treated now as they were then, by the mind of a reader living roughly in the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries BC, who tried to make sense of a Greek text without having knowledge of or access to the Semitic languages that the Septuagint translated. This position is the logical outcome of another principle followed by Muraoka, who considers the language of the Septuagint “to be genuine

representative of the contemporary Greek, that is to say, the Greek of the Hellenistic and Early Roman periods, though necessarily influenced by the grammar and usage of Aramaic and Hebrew from which the bulk of the Septuagint was translated” (p. ix).

The textual basis for the lexicon was adopted in line with the Lagardian hypothesis, the largely accepted theory regarding the origin of its text, according to which the Septuagint evolved from an original phase of textual uniformity to later stages of textual pluriformity. Consequently, such a position led to choosing the standard critical editions of the Göttingen Septuagint as the textual support for the Lexicon. For the texts that are not yet represented in the Göttingen LXX, Rahlfs edition supplements the text.

A longer section in the introduction details the method employed, the foundation of which was laid as early as the first book investigated for the Lexicon of the Twelve Prophets. Even though the LXX concordance of Hatch and Redpath (Baker, 1998) has been extensively and gratefully used (p. x), by itself this classical work is insufficient for serious lexicographical investigations. The operating concept adopted by Muraoka is that of building the semantic ‘profile’ of words, since a word is “hardly ever used in isolation or on its own, but normally occurs in conjunction with another word or words” (p. xi). Consequently, the ultimate distinctive feature of this lexicon is that it supplies the definition of words, implying that the words are never to be regarded as mere translation equivalents. While a translation equivalent approach is to be preferred for largely pragmatic and traditional reasons, the adopted position of Muraoka is based on the method that seeks to give precise consideration to what a given lexeme means (p. xii).

Muraoka’s choices on these matters have inevitably left a non-negligible segment of the Septuagint words untreated. Specifically, the Hebrew calques – covered to a certain extent by *GELS* – do not make it into the lexicon. Similarly, in distancing from the approaches which trace or display the Semitic equivalents of the Greek words, Muraoka’s lexicon does not inform the reader when a particular Greek word translates a Hebrew proper name. In Ps 94 LXX [Ps 95 MT], the LXX translator rendered the two topographic proper names *Meribah* and *Massah* as *parapikrasmos* (provocation, rebellion) and *peirasmos* (temptation), thus precluding the LXX reader to link Ps 94 LXX with the specific events recorded in Ex 17. Following the two entries in the lexicon will not offer more help in this regard either.

The template chosen to display the data is both logical and functional, each entry consisting of three main sections. Section A, which comes right after the bold-faced headword, supplies important morphological information, listing forms of the tenses and moods other

than the present and imperfect forms. Nouns and adjectives use the standard lexical form. Various symbols are used to indicate additional information pertaining to each entry, including statistical details about the word usage and coverage given by the lexicon. Section B defines the sense of the headword and describes its usage. Distinctly useful, the lexicon provides the meaning determined by various syntactic relationships taken by a given lexeme. Section C provides, case by case, the words semantically associated with the headword such as synonyms, antonyms, or idiomatic expressions, as well as the significant references in the secondary literature.

All this wealth of information is given in a most pleasant and easy to use layout. While this element can be more easily accomplished in the age of computers, it should not be taken for granted. The enthusiasm for this volume will most likely be dampened by its price tag. Steep as it is, however, in the area of outstanding research tools pecuniary compromises ought not to be made, the readers being confident that in this lexicon they have an indispensable tool for the study not only of the Septuagint but also of the New Testament, Hellenistic Judaism, and the Greek language. I believe that Muraoka's lexicon deserves its place alongside the Bauer-Danker-Arndt-Gingrich and Koehler-Baumgartner. Hopefully an electronic format will soon become available so that the standard Bible software will be able to offer it as downloadable module.

Muraoka's Lexicon is yet another clear sign that the Septuagint studies have come a long way in becoming a *bona-fide* theological field in their own right. While both OT and NT scholars will continue to intersect with the Septuagint studies, either for unlocking text critical issues of the Hebrew text or for establishing the textual base for scriptural quotations in the New Testament, the Septuagint's role as a theological power-house can no longer be ignored or relegated to a secondary tier. Fortunately, both the recent scholarly efforts on a variety of fronts, as well as the multiplication of outstanding research tools, such as the present Lexicon, will continue to aid the renaissance of the LXX studies. One can only hope that in the not too distant future a new Greek Grammar of the Septuagint, to match the excellence of this Lexicon, will be added to the mix.

Radu Gheorghita  
Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

**PETERSON, David G. *The Acts of the Apostles*. Pillar New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009, lv + 790 pp., \$65.00, hardcover, ISBN 978-0802837318.**

In recent years, several major commentaries on Acts have been published, including those by Gaventa (2003); Dormeyer and Galindo (2003); Pelikan (2005); Bock (2007); and Longenecker (2007). Joining the list is Peterson's *The Acts of the Apostles*. Peterson is Senior Research Fellow and Lecturer in New Testament at Moore College in Sydney, Australia. He previously served as Principal of Oak Hill Theological College in London (1996-2007) where along with fulfilling his administrative duties he taught New Testament. Prior to writing *The Acts of the Apostles*, he published a number of substantive writings on the theology of Acts.

The writing under review is part of the Pillar New Testament Commentary series, edited by D. A. Carson. Authors in this series employ the TNIV as the basis of their individual studies. They aim to produce quality commentaries that will assist serious evangelical pastors and teachers in their study of Scripture. With his commentary on Acts, Peterson seeks to be as comprehensive as possible, investigating all major textual, historical, and social matters. Nevertheless, he is particularly concerned with hermeneutics, biblical theology, and correct application. His strong emphasis on the theology of Acts is especially evident, both in the introduction and in the commentary proper.

Peterson affirms the traditional view of authorship. Furthermore, based on Luke's apparent ignorance of Paul's letters, his portrayal of Judaism as a legal religion, and his omission of any reference to the Neronian persecution of believers, Peterson suggests that Luke probably composed his work some time between AD 62-64.

Concerning genre, Peterson designates the Gospel of Luke and Acts as a unified two-volume work. He finds evidence for their unity on three levels: narrative, theological, and thematic. Furthermore, following Witherington, he sees Acts as similar to Hellenistic historiography, though he does not regard the Gospel of Luke as an historical monograph. Peterson also recognizes the vital link between narrative and speech, for he designates Acts as "a narrative dominated by speeches" (p. 27). From his perspective, Acts' speeches express key theological themes and assist in moving the narrative forward. The reviewer found Peterson's analysis of the speeches (e.g., pp. 27-29, 244-267, 657-677) particularly enlightening.

In his approach to Acts as a literary product, Peterson follows closely Tannehill and his employment of narrative criticism. Like Tannehill, Peterson sees the work as a literary whole and identifies the essential

elements within the narrative that assist the reader in better understanding Luke's unique theological presentation. He expands Tannehill's use of literary devices to include the following features: editorial summaries; inclusion; key terms; employment of Scripture; speeches; narrative repetition; parallel accounts; contrasting accounts; and important geographical, cultural, and social indicators (pp. 42-27). Though Peterson's presentation of these features is brief, he astutely identifies the crucial literary devices that assist one in better understanding Luke's writing.

Another noteworthy feature of the commentary is the author's discussion of Luke's theology. Keeping in mind Acts' role as part two of a two-volume work, Peterson examines key themes in both Acts and the Gospel of Luke. He traces carefully Luke's unique expression of a given theme, making note of similarities and developments (pp. 53-97). Granted, by his own admission at times he could be more comprehensive by interacting with other sources and examining additional themes (p. 54). Nevertheless, overall he does a fine job of identifying the crucial themes located in the Gospel of Luke and Acts (God and his plan, Jesus as Messiah and Lord, the Holy Spirit, salvation, the gospel, the atoning work of Jesus, witness and mission, miracles, magic and the demonic, and the Church).

Peterson has written a fine commentary and should be commended for the following reasons. First, he approaches the text from the biblical author's viewpoint, a salvation historical perspective. In other words, Peterson highlights Luke's concern to present the story of God's divine work in causing the gospel to progress from Jerusalem to Rome for the purpose of bringing salvation to all peoples. As Peterson repeatedly acknowledges both explicitly and implicitly (e.g., pp. 14, 26-27, 54-57, 70, 247-267, 696), this initiative began with God's covenant with Abram (e.g., Gen 12; 15) and continued to Luke's own day.

A second praiseworthy attribute of *The Acts of the Apostles* is its accessibility.

Technical discussions are kept to a minimum, and even in those rare instances when Peterson does engage in a lofty discussion of a challenging textual matter, he pitches his song at a level that allows most to sing with him, or at least to follow the melody.

A third commendable feature is the high level of respect Peterson displays for Acts' historical reliability. For instance, in regard to Stephen's speech in Acts 7 Peterson suggests that in light of Saul's presence at Stephen's martyrdom (Acts 7:58) and his later close tie to Luke, he (Saul) could have served as a reliable source for Luke (p. 247). This regard for Luke's role as an accurate historian may be found throughout the commentary (e.g., pp. 300, 430, 661).

## Book Reviews

A fourth and final positive aspect of this commentary is its many helpful discussions of how to apply challenging narrative texts (e.g., Paul's conversion, Acts 9; decision of the Jerusalem Council, Acts 15). Among conservative evangelicals, this genre is one of the most misunderstood (and misapplied). Peterson's insights provide wise guidance for those seeking to apply the text responsibly.

Though a few minor changes could improve the work, such as the inclusion of visual aids (e.g., charts, maps), this reviewer highly recommends Peterson's commentary. It will prove itself a valuable resource for all serious students of Scripture.

Michael L. Bryant  
Charleston Southern University

**WALKER, Peter. *In the Steps of Paul: An Illustrated Guide to the Apostle's Life and Journeys*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008, 224 pp., \$19.99 hardback, ISBN 978-0310290650.**

Peter Walker studied the classics and early church history at Cambridge University, where he completed his doctorate. Walker's doctoral thesis was on developing interest in the Holy Land during the early Constantine period. He has also done post-doctoral research in Jerusalem in the New Testament. He has a double doctorate and currently serves as a lecturer at Wycliffe Hall, within the University of Oxford in Oxford, England. Walker lectures in the areas of New Testament studies and Biblical Theology with special interest in the historical Jesus Christ as well as issues dealing with Jerusalem and the Middle East. Walker is a highly qualified Israel tour guide and leads student group tours to Israel regularly. Walker's knowledge of Jerusalem and the Middle East at the time of the New Testament and today clearly demonstrate his qualifications. Peter Walker's other books include: *Holy City, Holy Places?*, *Jesus and His World*, and *In the Steps of Jesus*.

*In the Steps of Paul* is a review of the life of Paul from the time of his conversion on the road to Damascus to the end of his life on earth. Walker traces Paul's steps from Jerusalem to Rome as Paul preaches the cross of Christ and plants churches all over the known world. The book starts off with a basic introduction of Paul, Luke, and the Roman world, including maps of Paul's missionary journeys and key dates associated with the Roman Empire, the writing of Luke and the writings of Paul. The fourteen successive chapters take the reader systematically through Paul's travels, covering each major city in chronological order. The cities included in this study are Damascus, Tarsus, Antioch, Cyprus,

Pamphylia, Galatia, Macedonia, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, Miletus, Jerusalem, Caesarea, Malta, and Rome. Each chapter contains a rehearsal of the biblical information about the city in question as well as key dates, city maps, case studies on important topics about Paul's life, pictures, and sketches related to each city, as it existed in the first century. The second half of each chapter then turns to modern times giving relevant information about each of the key cities in Paul's missionary journeys. The details regarding these cities clearly come from Peter Walker's personal knowledge of the cities and include clear concise descriptions and vibrant color pictures of each city. The descriptions of the modern cities give the reader a solid picture of what they would see if they were to visit each of the cities that Paul visited during his travels.

Peter Walker has produced a gem in his book *In the Steps of Paul: An Illustrated Guide to the Apostle's Life and Journeys*. Each chapter is clear and concise, giving a description that allows readers to picture the events of Paul's travels in a new way. The author takes a passage from the Bible, such as the story of Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus (pp. 18-19), and paints a picture with words that puts the reader on the road to Damascus with Paul and in Antioch praying for Paul and Barnabas (p. 46). This book provides its readers with a solid understanding of Paul's life and travels as well as the cities along his journeys all in one place and in chronological order. This is something that can be difficult to disseminate from Acts and the Pauline Epistles, but Walker takes all of the biblical information about Paul and puts it into a chronological yet comprehensive format. Adding the discussions about the modern day cities helps to further describe the importance these cities during the biblical times as well as giving the reader an understanding of what to expect if they were to visit the Holy Land. *In the Steps of Paul* is an easy read and is recommended to anyone who wants to get a better understanding of Paul. It is a critical read before making a first trip to the Holy Land, and could be used as a guidebook for those interested in tracing the footsteps of Paul.

Shane Parker  
First Baptist Church, Albia, Iowa

**WASSERSTEIN, Abraham, and David J. Wasserstein. *The Legend of the Septuagint: From Classical Antiquity to Today*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006, xviii + 334 pp., £40.00 / US \$75.00 hardcover, ISBN 9780521854955.**

The volume in consideration stands out as a model of precise,

nuanced, and comprehensive research, the kind of enterprise the theological-historical research ought to be. It is quite rare that one finds a book that undertakes an exhaustive, systematic treatment of a given topic, but this is precisely what the Wasserstein duo has achieved, or so it seems to this reviewer, contrary to the self-claim of the authors (p. xi). The project was commenced by Prof. Abraham Wasserstein of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and completed after his death by David, his son, who teaches at Vanderbilt University. The monograph traces the reception, interpretation and amplification of the pseudepigraphic writing “the Letter of Aristeas,” the ancient text that purports to provide the historical account of the translation of the Hebrew Torah into Greek, the most important translation project undertaken in antiquity. The very title unveils one of the fundamental stances of the study, which, almost axiomatically, finds very little, if any, substantial historical value in the Aristeas account of the work of “the Seventy.” “This book is an essay in tracing the life of the *legend* that grew up around the origin of the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible . . . [w]hat is presented here is an analysis of the *legend* of the original translation of the Pentateuch” (p. ix; italics mine).

Setting the scene for their investigation is the introduction, in which the authors cover the key aspects revolving around the “literary enterprise of immeasurable consequence in the history of western mankind” (p. 1). The praxis of translation in the ancient world as well as the social and religious life of the Jews in Egypt, both in the pre-Hellenistic and the Hellenistic periods, give sufficient support for the claim that the Greek version of the Torah was precipitated by the liturgical needs of the extended Jewish community, and in turn facilitated the proselytization in the Hellenistic and Graeco-Roman periods. The Christian Church, as one of the heirs of the translation project, receives credit for the survival of the Septuagint: “the Septuagint, as we have it, is a version that is contained in manuscripts written, without a single exception, by Christian scribes” (p. 17).

Chapter one offers a brief survey of the document itself, composed “ca. 200 BCE though, on various grounds, a later date is preferred by some modern scholars” (p. 20). The Wassersteins contend that since the author himself used the term “narration” (*diegesis*) to describe his work, any future reader of the document will have to conclude that “the epistolary form is no more than a literary device” (p. 21). The work itself is “only a fiction conforming to the widespread genre of the literary letter that we find in the classical, Hellenistic and Graeco-Roman periods” (p. 21). Their verdict then is that “the Aristeas letter is a pseudepigraphon . . . [and] the author was not the man he pretended to be” (p. 22).

Chapters two and three are perhaps the sections that will be of prime

importance and usefulness for biblical studies. It is here that the authors present and evaluate the surviving testimonies pertaining to the way in which the ancient authorities read *The Letter of Aristeas* as a historical account of the translation. Both the Hellenistic Jewish tradition (chapter 2) and the Rabbinic literature (chapter 3) are extensively investigated. As far as the Hellenistic Jewish tradition is concerned, the story is retold in the writings of Aristobulus, Philo and Josephus, each passage scrutinized carefully to identify their distinctive construal of the translation account. Variations between their writings and *Aristeas* are carefully examined and presented. “The Rabbis and the Greek Bible” diachronically documents the rabbinic rapport with the Septuagint, which began with an initial acceptance of the translation, only to be replaced subsequently by a categorical distancing from it. The classical passages in BT *Megilla* 9, PT *Megilla* 71, *Mekhilta* BO 14, *Massekhet Sepher Torah*, *Massekhet Sopherim*, *Midrash Tanhuma*, *Abot de-Rabbi Nathan*, *Midrash Leqah Tov*, and *Midrash Ha-Gadol* are provided with Hebrew texts and their translation. The purpose is not simply to trace down the Rabbis’ take on *Aristeas* but also to underscore the criticism they voiced against the intentional changes in the translation.

Chapter four is a brief exploration of the Ptolemaic changes, the label traditionally ascribed to the changes made by the translators as they worked on the Pentateuch. Similar to the *Aristeas* itself, the authors assert, the list of alleged changes is “no more than a literary exercise . . . it was created . . . as part of the story of the miracle which was invented in the period between, roughly, 80 and 117 CE . . . with little real reference to the actual existing LXX” (p. 91).

The definitive proof of the extensive research conducted for this monograph becomes perceptible in chapter five, “The Church Fathers and the Translation of the Septuagint,” a *tour de force* through five centuries of patristic literature. Starting with the works of Origen and Jerome, the Wassersteins survey the most important writers who mentioned or wrote about the translation, including Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Ps-Justin, Eusebius, Cyril of Jerusalem, Philastrius, bishop of Brescia, Epiphanius, John Chrysostom, Augustine, and Cyril of Alexandria. Several less known representatives are also included. The English translation of the relevant passages is provided in what amounts to be one of the most useful compendia of the Church Fathers’ writings on the LXX.

Up to this point, the regular reader could have probably kept up with the information provided. It is the content of the following five chapters, the information which traces the story in the Christians in the Orient (ch. 6), the Muslim and the Septuagint (ch. 7), Yossipon (ch. 8) and Karaites, Samaritans and Rabbinite Jews in the Middle Ages (ch. 9), and the

## Book Reviews

Renaissance and the Modern World (ch. 10), that is absolutely breathtaking. One can only stand in admiration of the amount of research that led to tracing down and finding writers interested – even fascinated – with *Aristeas*, in these important, yet so little-known peoples and circles. I believe that the conclusion of their investigation best summarizes the matter: “[T]he story has fired the imagination and aroused curiosity among Jews and Christian, Muslims and even pagans. We find it in the Iberian Peninsula and in Caucasian Iberia, on the shores of the Atlantic and in the wastes of Central Asia; we have seen it not just in its original Greek but also in Latin, and in Persian, in Armenian and in Ethiopic, in Hebrew and Arabic, and in Georgian to say nothing of English and Portuguese and other languages of modern western Europe. It fuelled religious controversy and fed religious faith from the second century BCE until the Renaissance and after, and even now its last echoes have not died away” (p. 270).

No reader could doubt the fervent interest of the Wassersteins for unearthing the historical reception of *Aristeas*. Without their passion for the subject, the quality of this book as well as the information therein would be substantially less. It is very sad indeed that, given its subject matter, this book will be an unlikely candidate for a place on the textbooks’ lists of undergraduate or graduate courses in biblical studies. The doctoral students, however, would do well to secure a copy for themselves, not only for its content, but also for the model of historical investigation it sets. Similarly, the seasoned biblical scholars, as well as the libraries of theological institutions will be richer by enlarging their collection to include the Wasserstein’s study, an epitome of investigative scholarship at its best.

Radu Gheorghita

Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

**WRIGHT, Christopher J. H. *Knowing the Holy Spirit Through the Old Testament*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006, 159 pp., \$15.00 paperback, ISBN: 978-0-8308-2591-2.**

Christopher J. H. Wright is the director of international ministries for the Langham Partnership International. He formerly taught Old Testament at All Nations College in Ware, England and has authored several works, including *The God I Don't Understand* (Zondervan, 2009), *Knowing God the Father Through the Old Testament* (IVP Academic, 2007) and *Knowing Jesus Through the Old Testament* (IVP Academic, 1995).

The reviewer has had the opportunity to read several of Christopher Wright's works and found Wright's observations to be easily accessible to the layman and scholar, while still having a depth of insight that is often startling. I am delighted to say that *Knowing the Holy Spirit Through the Old Testament* is no exception.

The book is divided into five main sections that are organized according to the general areas associated with the work of the Holy Spirit: creating, empowering, prophesying, anointing, and coming. Within each section or chapter there are several sub-headings that loosely follow a chronological and canonical arrangement. Some of the chapters follow this structure more closely than others; where there is divergence from this order, however, it does not detract from the flow of the text.

Wright begins his book with the chapter on the creative nature of the Holy Spirit by noting that all too often Christians relegate the Spirit to the New Testament. However, as Wright points out, the Spirit makes its entrance in the second verse of the Bible. The Spirit is an integral part of the process of creation from the very beginning. Wright notes that this establishes our expectation for what the Spirit will do in the future by anchoring this expectation in what the Spirit has done in the past. Wright skillfully weaves various passages together from throughout the Old Testament to demonstrate that the role of the Holy Spirit in the creation of all life naturally leads to his role as the guarantor and sustainer of all life. As an interesting tangent, Wright notes that the personal rationale of the Holy Spirit makes such ideological systems as science and ecology even possible. Finally, Wright notes the natural transition from the Spirit's role in creation to his role in the new creation as described in the New Testament.

In the second chapter Wright focuses on the empowering work of the Holy Spirit in individuals to accomplish God's work. He notes the irony of the fact that the empowering of the Spirit in a person's life is not synonymous with being sinless. Utilizing Samson as an example, Wright demonstrates that quite the opposite is often true. Samson was empowered by the Spirit with great strength and yet he used that strength in ways that did not meet with God's approval. Wright notes that those who used the power of the Holy Spirit most effectively were those that had no faith in their own talents. Moses is the example *par excellence* in this case. Referring to Moses, Wright says, "So often we read the words, 'Moses fell on his face before the LORD' (Num. 14:5; 16:4, 22; 20:6). That is not the posture of the self-sufficient, though it suits the lowliest man on earth very nicely" (p. 48). He points to the fact that Moses was completely dependent on God's Spirit and that he accepted the work of God's Spirit in others. These two qualities made Moses the great leader he was. Thus, God's empowering Spirit in Moses' life led to a sort of

paradox. The greatest indicator of the presence of the Spirit in Moses life was the absence of those qualities of pride, jealousy of prerogatives, ambition, and self-sufficiency often linked with great and powerful people.

In the third section, Wright turns to the prophetic gifts of the Spirit. As with the empowering role of the Spirit, Wright notes that prophetic gifting does not necessarily overwhelm the prophet so that he is no longer his own. Yet true prophecy, according to 2 Peter 1:20-21, is authored and guaranteed by the Holy Spirit. By contrast, the false prophet is characterized by a lack in three areas: moral integrity, public moral courage, and a prophetic mandate from God. Those Old Testament prophets that were motivated by the Holy Spirit had a compulsion to speak the truth, and the courage to stand for justice. As a result of the work of the Spirit in their lives, the prophets sought to bring people into proper relationship with God. Predicting the future was strictly secondary to this main task.

Wright's fourth chapter concerns the anointing work of the Spirit, with the major emphasis being on the anointing of the kings. Similar to the empowering work of the Spirit, Wright indicates that the anointing of the Spirit can be given to those who are not worthy of it. As was the case with Saul, the anointing of the Spirit did not guarantee a king's success (p. 91). It was the king who was "a man after God's own heart" who utilized the anointing of the Spirit to great effect. Wright links this anointing back to what it means to be in the image of God and therefore to the Spirit's role in creation.

Yet Wright does not limit the anointing work of the Spirit to kings. He also notes the Spirit's involvement in anointing the servant of God. This is especially evident in the Servant Songs of Isaiah. Through the work of the Spirit, the servant was to bring justice, compassion, enlightenment, and liberation to the people of God. All of these elements are part of the greater mission of the servant, namely to restore the people to God. This restoration then applies to the nations as well. All of these elements, in Wright's estimation, are part and parcel of the Spirit's anointing work, which would have its fullest fulfillment in the person and ministry of Jesus Christ. After Christ's ascension this same anointing work of the Spirit becomes that of the church which is the servant of Christ.

The final section of Wright's book delineates the nature of the coming Spirit. Wright explores this facet of the Holy Spirit's mission by explaining the role of the Spirit in Ezekiel chapters 36 and 37 and Joel 2. Both prophets demonstrate how the Spirit will be involved in the re-creation of the world and of God's people with language that is reminiscent of the original act of creation in Genesis. Wright's analysis

of both passages is masterful, but this reviewer found his insights on Ezekiel particularly cogent and helpful. Wright connects the spiritual resurrection of the all-but-dead Israel in Ezekiel 37 with the resurrection of Jesus in John 20:22 (p. 134). The association with the life giving breath/wind/spirit in the two texts is striking. Furthermore, Wright notes that in both passages, resurrection for Israel meant the possibility of resurrection for all. Following the discussion on Ezekiel, Wright compares the democratization of the Spirit predicted in Joel 2 with the coming of the Spirit in the book of Acts.

*Knowing the Holy Spirit Through the Old Testament* is a solid work. Wright's style is conversational and largely devoid of technical theological jargon that would hinder many. This makes the book easy and fun to read. His insights remain powerful and stir in the reader a desire to know more about the meta-narrative of Scripture. The only weakness of the work, which is a very minor one, is a tendency to see intertextual allusion under every proverbial rock. However, all of the intertextual connections that he draws are supported with solid reasoning and evidence. At points he may seem to be stretching things to the breaking point, but he never pushes them so far that they do actually break. Despite its diminutive size, the book is a major work for any Christian seeking to understand how the Old Testament relates to the New Testament. As such, it is warmly recommended.

N. Blake Hearson  
Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminar

## BOOKS RECEIVED

Dawson, Scott. *Evangelism Today: Effectively Sharing the Gospel in a Rapidly Changing World*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2009.

Edwards, J. Kent. *Deep Preaching: Creating Sermons That Go Beyond the Superficial*. Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2009.

Hauser, Alan J., and Duane F. Watson, eds. *A History of Biblical Interpretation, Volume 2: The Medieval Through the Reformation Periods*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009.

Kostenberger, Andreas J., L. Scott Kellum, and Charles L. Quarles. *The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown: An Introduction to the New Testament*. Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2009.

Meslier, Jean. *Testament: Memoir of the Thoughts and Sentiments of Jean Meslier*. Translated by Michael Shreve. Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2009.

Reid, Alvin. *Evangelism Handbook*. Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2009.

Wiarda, Timothy. *Interpreting Gospel Narratives: Scenes, People, and Theology*. Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2010.



# *Midwestern Journal of Theology*

## Subscription Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Payment enclosed: \_\_\_\_ One year: \$20 \_\_\_\_ Two years: \$35 \_\_\_\_ Three years: \$50

\_\_\_\_ Please add me to your general mailing list.

Please send my friend a subscription (payment enclosed):

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Country: \_\_\_\_\_

---

Clip and mail to: Editor, *Midwestern Journal of Theology*,  
MBTS, 5001 N. Oak Trafficway, Kansas City, MO, 64118

The faculty of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary  
invites you to subscribe to the  
Midwestern Journal of Theology,  
a scholarly journal written to assist Christians and churches  
in making disciples throughout the world.

Published biannually, each issue includes exegetical and theological articles, inspirational sermons, and reviews of recent important books.

Please visit the MBTS website at [www.mbts.edu](http://www.mbts.edu).

