

tung und sozialgeschichtlichen Aussagekraft einer (!) ihrer Bewohnerinnen führt in der Tat kein methodisch kontrollierbarer Weg. Niemand kann entscheiden, ob Maria eine ‚typische‘ Bewohnerin Magdalas war, und nirgends wird erkennbar, daß das NT sie als solche sieht. Im Gegenteil: das NT sperrt sich geradezu gegen seine solche ‚Auswertung‘, es ist nur an Maria selbst und nicht an ihrem Herkunftsort interessiert“ (73).

However, despite these cautions, it can at least be said that the reference in Luke 8.2 to Mary, called Magdalene (ἡ καλουμένη Μαγδαληνη), as one of the healed women in the entourage of Jesus who “provided for them out of their resources” (V 3, NRSV), does fit well with Zangenberg’s sketch of the relative wealth of Magdala. In view of his reconstruction Mary from Magdala was not an ignorant “country bumpkin”: “... nicht etwa aus einem kleinen Fischerdorf stammte, sondern aus einer florierenden jüdischen Stadt am See Gennesaret, in der teilweise hellenistische Einflüsse im alltäglichen Leben der Bevölkerung eine Rolle spielten” (72). It is not unlikely that Mary Magdalene’s contribution to the common fund somehow came from fishery-related income of her family (this assumption is supported by the observation that the female disciple mentioned immediately after Mary was at least through her husband a woman of social standing and presumably wealth. That Mary Magdalene was previously liberated from seven demons, might likewise furnish an interesting perspective on the city (cf. Luke 8.26-30!)).

Zangenberg’s sketch of the fishery, its significance and social parameters also casts an interesting light on the (probably) seven fishermen disciples of Jesus (cf. the above-mentioned studies of Thiede and Nun and my forthcoming review of the latter in *FilNT*)

J. Zangenberg’s careful and helpful discussion in this small volume should reach its purpose of “die Diskussion zu dieser interessanten Fundstelle wieder anregen und darüber hinaus einen kleinen Beitrag zur Erforschung des kulturellen Profils Galiläas in neutestamentlicher Zeit leisten” (p. 7) and raises anticipation for his forthcoming study *Sepphoris in neutestamentlicher Zeit: Überlegungen zum galiläischen Wirkungsfeld Jesu*. Further studies of such interest and quality will turn this nascent series into an interesting venture.

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The God You Have: Politics, Religion, and the First Commandment

Patrick D. Miller

Facets Series, Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004, x + 81 pp., p/b, £3.99, ISBN 0-8006-3662-7

SUMMARY

Patrick Miller’s excellent little book discusses the implications of the first commandment for our understanding of

the relationship between politics and religion. He examines the axiomatic importance of this call to undivided devotion to the Lord and then goes on to examine two of the main challenges to such commitment—the economic god and the god of political order. Miller then goes on to discuss the positive implications of the first commandment, looking in particular at Deuteronomy’s expansion of this law which focuses on love for and fear of the Lord.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Patrick Millers hervorragendes Buch diskutiert die Implikationen des ersten Gebots für unser Verständnis der Beziehung zwischen Politik und Religion. Er untersucht die axiomatiche Wichtigkeit dieses Rufs zur ungeteilten Devotion des Herrn und untersucht darauf aufbauend zwei der Hauptherausforderungen solch einer Hingabe – der ökonomische „Gott“ und der „Gott“ der politischen Ordnung. Danach diskutiert Miller die positiven Implikationen des ersten Gebots, indem er sich besonders die Ausdehnung dieses Gebots in Deuteronomium ansieht, die sich auf die Liebe zu Gott und die Furcht Gottes fokussiert.

RÉSUMÉ

Patrick Miller nous livre un excellent petit ouvrage dans lequel il traite des implications du premier commandement quant au rapport entre la politique et la religion. Il commente cet appel à une dévotion sans partage au Seigneur. Puis il considère deux idoles concurrentes qui réclament l’allégeance humaine : le dieu économie et le dieu ordre politique. Miller aborde ensuite les implications positives du premier commandement, en s’intéressant particulièrement au développement de cette loi dans le Deutéronome, en termes d’amour et de crainte du Seigneur.

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The size of this book by Patrick Miller (Charles T. Haley Professor of Old Testament Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary, New Jersey) belies its significance. *The God You Have* is only eighty-one pages in length, it is a very quick and accessible read, yet this is a work of almost prophetic significance for today’s Church in the Western world. Simply put, this is an excellent book of great contemporary relevance, and one which deserves the widest possible readership.

The God You Have is part of the Facets Series published by Fortress Press. These are books designed to address important theological issues with brevity, clarity and vitality. Some of the works in this series provide helpful summaries of key academic texts—for example, Childs’ *Biblical Theology: A Proposal* is a summary of his *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments* and Bruggemann’s *Spirituality of the Psalms* is an abridged version of his earlier work *The Message of the Psalms*. These I have found to be a helpful means of introducing key texts and concepts to theology students in the early stages of their undergraduate studies. Others, like Miller’s offering, are written to address a single issue with a degree of authority and accessibility.

The God You Have, as the subtitle suggests, is a clear,

thorough and cohesive exposition of the implications of the first commandment for the development of a proper understanding of political theology (pp. 1–2). Miller argues that this commandment makes such an all-encompassing claim on our devotion, that every other area of life finds its proper meaning only in the light of that primary and exclusive commitment to the Lord our God. He begins by developing the thought that the first commandment [‘I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me.’ (Ex 20:2–3)] is an axiomatic truth. ‘From whatever direction one comes, the First Commandment is axiomatic. It is the basis and starting point for all other inferences in both theology and politics’ (p. 3). He develops this basic idea in the second chapter by asking the question ‘What do you do with the God you have?’ If the prohibition of the first commandment refers to ‘having’ no other gods before/beside/besides/over against Yhwh, the positive implication is that the believing community ‘has’ [relationship with] the Creator God. Miller here draws out the significance of the prologue to the Ten Commandments which highlights that relationship with YHWH is grounded in the divine act of release and the call that goes with it. Our response to that call goes beyond the realms of simple ‘loyalty’—the first commandment brooks no notion of ‘God and ...’ (pp. 15–16).

Throughout the following chapters Miller develops the idea of the axiomatic claim of the first commandment with regard to ‘the economic god’ (Chapter 5) and ‘the political order as god’ (Chapter 6). These themes are not plucked from the air, rather they are developed from a careful study of the way in which the idea of idolatry develops in biblical narrative. Miller draws a parallel between the Baals of the OT and Jesus’ use of Mammon in the Gospels and highlights that this was a form of idolatry often connected with the economic sphere, with wealth and consumption (pp. 26–28). Drawing upon the OT account of Amos before King Jeroboam, Miller then focuses on the dangers that occur where the political order becomes coterminous with the church (pp. 35–38). The fifth commandment requires believers to *honour* those in political authority, but the first commandment makes it clear that *obedience* grounded in absolute devotion belongs only the Lord.

In the penultimate chapter of this brief book, Miller examines the positive implications of the first commandment in terms the Shema’s (Deut 6:4–5) call to love God with all of ‘heart and soul and might’. Such devotion puts all else in proper context—‘They *have no place*, according to the prohibition, so you cannot have any other gods; they *lose their place* as you find yourself absorbed in the love of God’ (p. 47). He also examines how Deuteronomy further develops the first commandment in the idea of ‘fearing God’, living life in deep reverence and awe of the Creator God who is the Covenant God. The final chapter, draws further implications from

the first commandment based in discussion of its context within the first table of commandments.

Quite simply, this is an excellent little book. It is accessible in terms of its tone and its price and I thoroughly recommend it. Miller grounds his contemplation very strongly in the biblical text and so avoids any excessive cultural application. Although, clearly, Miller is based in an American setting the discussion found in this book applies pointedly to the Church in Europe. The clarion call to focus our life of faith around the absolute, theocentric devotion of first commandment is a challenge that today’s Christian community must constantly embrace afresh.

*Dominion and Dynasty:
A theology of the Hebrew Bible
(New Studies in Biblical Theology 15)*

Stephen G. Dempster

Leicester: Apollos; Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity
Press, 2003, pp. 267, £12.99, pb,
ISBN 0-85111-783-X

SUMMARY

This is a refreshing attempt to read the Hebrew Bible as one unified Text, rather than a ‘ragbag’ of diverse texts, as is so often the case with Old Testament/Hebrew Bible theologies. Dempster follows the basic storyline of the Hebrew Bible (for which, he states, ‘there is strong evidence that this was the Bible of Jesus Christ’), finding there the key themes of ‘dominion’ and ‘dynasty’ (or ‘geography’ and ‘genealogy’). The book starts with a strong methodological chapter that lays the foundation upon which the following chapters build as they work through the Hebrew Bible section by section. A concluding chapter looks forward to the New Testament. I laud Dempster’s effort to turn the reader’s attention to the ‘big picture’, though I fear that in the process he tends to flatten the diversity and colour of the Hebrew Bible.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dies ist ein erfrischender Versuch, die hebräische Bibel als einheitlichen Text zu lesen, nicht als Sammelsurium verschiedener Texte, wie es bei Theologien des Alten Testaments / der hebräischen Bibel so oft der Fall ist. Dempster folgt der grundlegenden Entfaltung der Geschichte der hebräischen Bibel (die, so sagt er, „gut begründet als Bibel Jesu Christi gelten kann“) und findet die Schlüsselthemen „Herrschaft“ und „Dynastie“ (oder „Geographie“ und „Genealogie“). Das Buch beginnt mit einem starken methodologischen Kapitel, das die Grundlage bildet, auf der die folgenden Kapitel, die sich Abschnitt für Abschnitt durch die hebräische Bibel arbeiten, ruhen. Ein abschließendes Kapitel bringt einen Ausblick auf das Neue Testament. Ich lobe Dempsters Bemühen, die Aufmerksamkeit des Lesers auf die großen Zusammenhänge zu lenken, aber ich befürchte, dass er dabei dazu tendiert, die Verschiedenheit

und Farbe der hebräischen Bibel einzuebnen.

RÉSUMÉ

Voici une tentative bienvenue de lire la Bible hébraïque comme un texte unifié, plutôt que comme un « micmac » de textes divers, comme c'est souvent le cas dans les ouvrages de théologie de l'Ancien Testament. Dempster s'attache à suivre la ligne narrative de base de la Bible hébraïque (à propos de laquelle il déclare : « Il y a de solides raisons de considérer que c'était la Bible de Jésus-Christ »). Il y trouve deux thèmes clé : celui du territoire (ou « thème géographique ») et celui de la dynastie (« thème généalogique »). Le livre débute par un chapitre traitant de méthodologie avec compétence, où l'auteur pose les bases sur lesquelles il va ensuite construire au fil de l'étude des différentes sections de l'Ancien Testament. On doit louer l'effort de Dempster pour attirer l'attention du lecteur sur la vue d'ensemble, mais nous craignons que, au cours de cette entreprise, il ait une tendance à aplatir la diversité et à atténuer les différentes couleurs de la Bible hébraïque.

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In a climate where many scholars question whether writing a theology of the Old Testament, or the Hebrew Bible, is possible (e.g., Gerstenberger's recent *Theologies in the Old Testament*), Dempster's book is a refreshing attempt to read the Hebrew Bible as one unified Text, rather than a 'ragbag' of diverse texts. While he shares Sailhamer's commitment to a canonical approach to Scripture, the subtitle already sets Dempster's book apart from Sailhamer's *Introduction to Old Testament Theology: A Canonical Approach*, because he specifically writes about the Hebrew Bible, for which, he states, 'there is strong evidence that this was the Bible of Jesus Christ.' He follows the text of the Hebrew Bible (or Tanakh, as he usually refers to it), finding there an overall Story (and in this he keeps company with, e.g., John Goldingay in the first volume of his *Old Testament Theology*, subtitled, *Israel's Gospel*) which is split in two by poetic commentary 'that functions to provide a pause in the storyline to reflect on the tragedy of the exile, its causes and significance'. Dempster argues that the story runs from Genesis to 2 Kings (i.e., Torah and Former Prophets); then commentary on this story is offered in the Latter Prophets and Ruth (described as a 'narrative flashback'), the Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs and Lamentations; before the story is resumed in Daniel and continues in Esther, Ezra-Nehemiah and Chronicles. Most of the book is devoted to what is effectively a retelling of this story and a reiterating of the commentary (that can be a bit tedious if the story is already well-known) which teases out the key theological themes that hold it together. The chief of these are the twin themes of 'dominion' and 'dynasty', which appear most often in the book as 'geography' and 'genealogy'. The importance of 'the land', and especially Jerusalem and the mountain on which it is set, is emphasised along with the great significance of the Davidic monar-

chy: indeed, *the* key theme could be summarised in the expression, 'the house of David', if it is understood in the dual sense of the physical place where David lived (Jerusalem and all that it stands for) and David's lineage (and all that it stands for). Dempster explains that:

The engine that drives these themes forward is that of the relationship between the creator and his human creatures on the earth. He creates them like himself for a relationship with them, and their main task is to exercise lordship over the earth; that is, to represent God's rule over the world. The relationship fails at the beginning, and, instead of subduing the world, they are subdued by it. The rest of the story recounts the restoration of the relationship through the twin themes of geography (dominion) and genealogy (dynasty). The ending of the Tanakh, with the focus on David and the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem, points to the future restoration of this relationship and thus to a restoration of lost glory.

This illustrates Dempster's focus on 'the narrative "bookends" of Genesis and Chronicles 'which function to introduce and conclude the canon' and 'keep the main storyline in view'.

The book starts with a methodological chapter which justifies 'A literary approach to Old Testament [though this should be Hebrew Bible] theology'. This chapter provides a solid foundation for the following chapters which work through the Hebrew Bible section by section: Genesis; Exodus to Deuteronomy; Joshua to Kings; Jeremiah to the Twelve; Ruth to Lamentations; and finally Daniel to Chronicles. The book concludes with a short chapter which takes some of Dempster's conclusions into the New Testament. For me the introductory chapter is the most engaging part of the book: Dempster interacts creatively with a wide range of scholarship as he argues his case for a 'wide-angle' view of the Story rather than the 'telescopic' view most usually adopted which focuses in on a narrow part of the Text and never captures the big picture. In this I believe he provides a necessary redress to fragmentary approaches to Old Testament/Hebrew Bible theology. However, I fear that something of the tremendous diversity and colour of the Old Testament, in terms of, for example, its genres, literary styles, perspectives on life, and, yes, theological outlook, is lost in the process. Thus while I laud Dempster's effort to encourage readers to engage with the overall Story that runs through the Hebrew Bible, I would not want this to be the only Old Testament/Hebrew Bible theology someone read. A balance needs to be maintained between detailed study of the theology of any given book, or even of sections within that book and the overall story to which Dempster draws attention. A more nuanced (and undoubtedly much longer!) 'theology' might then arise which took account of unity and diversity.

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