

*tionary of Biblical Theology* (T. Desmond Alexander, Brian J. Rosner, D.A. Carson, Graeme Goldsworthy [Leicester, U.K.: Inter-Varsity Press/Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varsity Press, 2000]), along with a few questions that deal with the chapter. The book is written from an Evangelical perspective yet interacts with a wide range of scholarship.

The book as a whole is an enjoyable read, and yet I have a few points of criticism. First of all, the book attempts to show that the 'theology of the Bible involves the story of Israel', but does this really say anything? The book does not explicitly say that the 'story of Israel' is the dominant theme in Scripture, but that it 'represents a prominent theological theme' (p. 278). This does not strike me as anything worth proving. Who would doubt that the Bible 'involves' the story of Israel?

Secondly, the book does not consistently focus on the 'story of Israel' as such. In various chapters the authors show how different genres of Scripture reflect a deuteronomistic pattern of thought, and thus bears witness to the theme of 'the story of Israel'. So for instance, Marvin Pate concludes his chapter on Paul by saying: 'This chapter has highlighted Paul's retelling of the story of Israel' (p. 229), and yet Pate only shows that Paul exhibits certain deuteronomistic patterns of thought (i.e. obedience brings blessing, sin brings curses). I am not convinced that Paul's deuteronomistic way of thinking (again, something that no one would deny) indicates that the 'story of Israel' was a dominant motif in his letters.

Thirdly, one author in particular was not careful in listing references to various books. In Marvin Pate's chapter on Second Temple Judaism I found numerous citations that upon examination were simply erroneous. For instance, he says in passing: 'It was thought that Israel's suffering, like a woman's birth pangs, would give birth to the Messiah (see Dan 12:1-3; 1 En. 80:4-5; 91:7; Jub 23:14-23; 4 Ezra 7:3)' (p. 108). I fail to see how any of these references support his statement. For instance, 4 Ezra 7:3 says: 'I [Ezra] said, "Speak, my lord." And he said to me, "There is a sea set in a wide expanse so that it is broad and vast"'. This has absolutely nothing to do with the Messiah or with the eschatological birth pangs. None of the other references here refer to a Messiah while only a few refer to 'eschatological birth pangs' as such. Again, in a chart on page 111, Pate attempts to show that 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch exhibit a 'sin-exile-restoration' theme by listing a plethora of references without any citation. Many of these upon examination are erroneous. For instance, he lists 2 Bar. 32.17 as a text that speaks of 'Exile' or 'this age of covenantal curses', but alas, there is no 2 Bar. 32.17 – the chapter ends at 32.9! Again, he lists 2 Bar. 29:1-30:5 under this same category ('Exile') but this passage unambiguously refers to eschatological restoration, not any sort of 'Exile'. Space does not permit us to list other erroneous references. Fortunately, the other authors of this book avoided such mass referencing and thus should not be included in this critique. To my mind, Pate's chapter on Second Temple Judaism loses much

credibility and perhaps should have been subject to more editorial scrutiny.

Despite these critiques, the book as a whole was an enjoyable work and I would recommend it to anyone interested in Biblical Theology as long as they read it with a critical eye.

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## *The Triumph of Grace in Deuteronomy*

Paul A. Barker

Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2004, xxi + 269 pp.,

£19.99, pb, ISBN 1-84227-226-8

### SUMMARY

In this lightly revised doctoral thesis Paul Barker examines the relationship between optimism and pessimism, grace and law, in the book of Deuteronomy. Through a detailed exegesis of Deut 1-3, 8-10 and 29-30 Barker demonstrates that far from regarding the law as easy Deuteronomy anticipates Israel's subsequent failure to obey. Nevertheless, hope is to be found in YHWH's proven fidelity to the Abrahamic covenant. This is a careful and judicious work which makes an important contribution to the appreciation of an aspect of Deuteronomistic theology sometimes misunderstood.

### ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

In dieser leicht überarbeiteten Fassung seiner Doktorarbeit untersucht Paul Barker die Beziehung zwischen Optimismus und Pessimismus, Gnade und Gesetz im Buch Deuteronomium. Mittels einer detaillierten Exegese von Deut 1-3, 8-10 und 29-30 zeigt Barker, dass das Deuteronomium weit davon entfernt ist, das Gesetz als etwas einfaches anzusehen, sondern dass es Israels kommendes Versagen, Gehorsam zu sein, antizipiert. Nichtsdestotrotz ist Hoffnung in Jahwes erwiesener Treue zum Abraham-Bund zu finden. Dies ist eine sorgfältige und urteilsfähige Arbeit, die einen wichtigen Beitrag zur Wertschätzung eines Aspektes deuteronomistischer Theologie leistet, der manchmal missverstanden wird.

### RÉSUMÉ

Cette thèse de doctorat légèrement révisée traite du rapport qu'il y a entre optimisme et pessimisme, ainsi qu'entre la grâce et la loi, dans le livre du Deutéronome. Par une exégèse détaillée de Deutéronome 1-3 ; 8-10 ; 29-30, Barker démontre que, loin de considérer la loi comme facile, le Deutéronome prévoit l'échec d'Israël à y obéir. Néanmoins, on y rencontre une espérance fondée sur les preuves données par Yahvé de sa fidélité à l'alliance abrahamique. Cette étude soignée et judicieuse apporte une contribution importante sur un aspect de la théologie deuteronomique qui a parfois été mal compris.

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The twin poles of law and grace have been one of the most important structures for theological reflection within the Christian tradition. The tension between the



two originates in the biblical texts themselves. In this detailed study Paul Barker addresses the problem as it occurs in the book of Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy is, of course, the last book of the Law and Moses' final, authoritative repetition of the commandments delivered at Sinai. On the very edge of the Promised Land Moses stresses the importance of whole-hearted obedience. If the people do so they will receive abundant blessing in the land. According to Moses 'the words are in your mouths to do them' (Deut. 30.14). On the other hand, the commandments appear extremely demanding – the requirement to constantly repeat the Shema (Deut. 6.4-9) is a case in point – and Israel appears to be doomed to disobey as the list of curses threatens.

According to Barker many scholars have assumed that Deuteronomy has a utopian vision in which, on the basis of Deut 30.14, the commandments are easy to obey. Barker seeks to challenge such an assumption through a detailed analysis of three important texts in the framework of Deuteronomy: the account of the rebellion at Kadesh Barnea and the successful conquest of Transjordan (Deut. 1-3), the Deuteronomistic retelling of the sin of the Golden Calf (Deut. 8-10) and the extensive recapitulation of the covenant (Deut 29-30). In each case Barker seeks to show that optimism and pessimism, grace and law, are interwoven. This is not evidence of an incoherent theology on the part of Deuteronomy but a theological persuasive account of Israel's relationship with her God. Despite the faithfulness of Israel, YHWH's fidelity to the promises made to the patriarchs results in the triumph of grace.

One way of dealing with the tensions in Deuteronomy is to resolve the issue diachronically. The positive prospects for Yahwism during Josiah's reign and the deep despair of the exile have provided convenient loci for such accounts. Such an approach is eschewed by Barker who attempts to resolve the issue synchronically. The result is a careful exegesis of the relevant texts in dialogue with the major interpreters of Deuteronomy. Much emphasis is placed on discerning the structure of the passages, which provides a valuable key for locating what is important to the writer. The subsequent discussions focus on major theological issues especially those related to law and grace. Deut 1-3 and Deut 8-10 receive a similar amount of discussion, but the heart of the book is clearly Deut 29-30 which receives twice as much attention.

The book was originally a doctoral thesis supervised by Gordon Wenham and submitted to the former Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education. Published in Paternoster's *Biblical Monographs* series it retains most of the characteristics of a thesis offering few compromises to the general reader. It is generously footnoted, closely argued, the ancient and modern languages are untranslated and it has an extensive bibliography. It has been provided with author and name indexes. Unfortunately the original thesis was submitted in 1995 and has been only lightly revised. Consequently the book

makes no use of literature appearing in the intervening decade.

This is a careful and judicious work which makes an important contribution to the appreciation of an aspect of Deuteronomistic theology sometimes misunderstood. There is detailed interaction with Deuteronomistic scholarship, yet Barker is not afraid to disagree with commonly held positions. When he does his reasons are clearly and respectfully articulated. As an example of detailed textual work this is very fine. Given the nature of the issues at stake, though, it would have been useful to have had more reflection on the nature of Deuteronomy's rhetoric and how to handle it exegetically. I should also have wished to have seen more consideration of the categories of theological analysis. To what extent do law and grace, optimism and pessimism, accurately capture Deuteronomy's message? Nevertheless, within these categories, Barker articulates the nuances of Deuteronomy's thought better than is often done.

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### *1 Samuel* (FOTL VII)

**Antony F. Campbell, S.J.**

Grand Rapids / Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2003, xvii + 350 pp., \$55.00, pb, ISBN: 0-8028-6079-6

#### SUMMARY

Campbell's *1 Samuel* offers a new style of form criticism that builds on older styles, but which looks at texts as larger wholes. The commentary works with the standard elements of the genre, but provides some interesting variations on it. A helpful introduction highlights both major issues in *1 Samuel* and Campbell's way of reading the text. The commentary's strength is its ability to distil critical discussion and to lead readers back to the text itself, but readers looking for guidance on a particular verse will normally need to look elsewhere.

#### ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Campbells „1. Samuel“ bietet eine neue Art der Formkritik, die auf älteren Arten aufbaut, aber Texte als größere Einheiten anschaut. Der Kommentar arbeitet mit den Standardelementen des Genre, aber bringt einige interessante Variationen. Eine hilfreiche Einleitung betont sowohl wichtige Fragen in Bezug auf 1. Samuel als auch Campbells Art, den Text zu lesen. Die Stärke des Kommentars liegt in seiner Fähigkeit, die kritische Diskussion zu fokussieren und die Leser zum Text selbst zurückzuführen, aber Leser, die Hilfe zu einem bestimmten Vers suchen, werden diese meist anderswo finden müssen.

#### RÉSUMÉ

Cet ouvrage sur 1 Samuel offre un style nouveau de critique des formes, tout en construisant à partir des approches plus anciennes, mais en considérant les textes comme de larges