

found. Finally, one finds brief remarks with respect to the contemporary application and a selective bibliography of works for further study' (4; advanced and intermediate commentaries, introductory, other studies; the footnotes and bibliography are limited to English-language publications available to introductory theological students). Each chapter ends with review questions. In addition, italicised material, maps, charts and diagrams make the volume user friendly. Altogether, the book can best be described as a detailed survey of the NT, for all its worth and with the limitations of that emphasis.

The introduction contains brief reflections on the canon. The volume does not contain a historical or theological introduction to this part of the New Testament (Acts and the Epistles) or to the relationship of Jesus and the Gospels to Acts, the letters of the New Testament and the Book of Revelation. Neither does the volume offer a concluding chapter, summarising the purposes and theological emphases of these parts of the New Testament or their relationship to the first non-canonical writings of the ancient church.

Part one offers a detailed introduction to the Book of Acts ('The Gospel moves out', 9-82; 'because it appears immediately after the Gospels in canonical sequence and because it forms the narrative context into which many of the epistles may be inserted with greater understanding', 3).

Part two on Paul and his letters begins with a survey of Paul's life and ministry (85-114). The letters appear in chronological order as best as it can be reconstructed: Galatians: The Charter of Christian Liberty (117-37) The Thessalonian Correspondence: A Balanced View of Christ's Return

1. Thessalonians: Christ Is Coming Soon (139-49)
2. Thessalonians: But Not That Soon! (151-62)
- The Corinthian Correspondence: Countering Misguided Views about Christian Maturity
- 1 Corinthians: Internal Immaturity and External Hel- lenizing Threats (163-202)
- 2 Corinthians: Increasing Maturity but Infiltrating Judaizing Threats (203-32)
- Romans: The Most Systematic Exposition of Paul's Gospel (233-69)
- The Prison Epistles: General Introduction (271-73)
- Philemon: A Christian Response to Slavery (275-84)
- Colossians: Christ as Lord of the Cosmos and the Church (285-301)
- Ephesians: Unity in Diversity as a Witness to the 'Powers' (303-23)
- Philippians: Rejoice in All Circumstances (325-41)
- The Pastoral Epistles: General Introduction (343-49)
- Titus: A Manual on Church Order (351-57)
- 1 Timothy: How to Pastor a Church and Turn It Away from Heresy (359-73)
- 2 Timothy: Pass It On (375-83)

Part three covers the other writings of the New Testament (387-560) under the following headings:

- The Epistle of James: 'Faith without Works Is Dead' (387-408)
- The Epistle to the Hebrews: The Superiority of Christ (409-39)
- 1 Peter: Perseverance Despite Persecution (441-60)
- The Epistle of Jude: 'Contend for the Faith' (461-71)
- 2 Peter: 'Where Is the Promise of His Coming?' (473-83)
- The Epistles of John: The Tests of Life
- 1 John: Countering the Secessionists (485-98)
- 2 John: The Secessionists Attack from Outside (499-501)
- 3 John: The Secessionists Take Over Inside? (503-07)
- The Book of Revelation: God's Plans for Cosmic History (509-60)

The volume closes with indexes of subjects, authors and Scripture references (561-77). It well achieves the goals that Blomberg set for himself and his readers:

... to better understand first-century Christianity, the literature it produced that came to be treated as uniquely sacred, and through it a better appreciation of the Lord Jesus Christ, worshipped by this fledgling church, often in hostile circumstances and facing difficulties remarkably similar to those the church faces today throughout the world, despite the changes in cultural and technological forms in which those challenges may be cloaked (6).

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Central Themes in Biblical Theology: Mapping Unity in Diversity

J. S. Hafemann, P. R. House (eds.)

Nottingham: IVP, 2008. 336 pp. £20, pb, ISBN 978-1-84474-166-3.

SUMMARY

The seven essays of this volume are written by leading North American evangelical biblical scholars. They focus on seven themes that span the whole Bible and show its essential theological unity: the covenant relationship, the commands of God, the atonement, the servant of the Lord, the day of the Lord, the people of God and the history of redemption. This volume is a welcome introduction to the contents of biblical theology.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Die sieben Aufsätze dieses Bandes stammen von führenden evangelikalen Theologen Nordamerikas. Sie konzentrieren sich auf sieben Themen, welche die gesamte Bibel umfassen und deren wesentliche theologische Einheit aufzeigen: Bundesbeziehung, Gebote Gottes, Versöhnung, Gottesknecht, Tag des Herrn, Volk Gottes und Heilsgeschichte. Das Buch stellt eine geschätzte Einführung in die gesamtbiblische Theologie dar.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet ouvrage comporte sept essais rédigés par des biblistes évangéliques nord-américains de premier plan. Ils abordent sept thèmes traversant l'ensemble de la Bible et s'efforcent de montrer l'unité théologique essentielle de celle-ci : la relation d'alliance, les commandements de Dieu, l'expiation, le Serviteur du Seigneur, le jour du Seigneur, le peuple de Dieu et l'histoire de la rédemption. On a là une bonne introduction à la théologie de la Bible.

* * * *

The present volume is a follow-up volume on *Biblical Theology: Retrospect and Prospect* (Downers Grove: IVP; Leicester: Apollos, 2002). Its purpose is to explore biblical themes that contribute to the wholeness of the Bible. The volume had its origin in conferences held at Wheaton in 2003 and 2005. The editors note in the brief introduction (15-19): 'We wanted to bring together people who saw the need to trace themes and overarching structural ideas through the whole Bible' (15). The biblical theology under consideration is defined as:

That approach to Scripture which attempts to see the biblical material holistically and to describe this wholeness or synthesis in biblical categories. Biblical theology attempts to embrace the message of the Bible and to arrive at an intelligible coherence of the whole despite the great diversity of the parts.... Biblical theology investigates the themes presented in Scripture and defines their inter-relationship. Biblical theology is an attempt to get to the theological heart of the Bible (16).

Therefore the seven authors of this volume pursue the unifying message of the Bible as it unfolded throughout redemptive history. The editors note that it is common for contemporary scholars to write of the many competing 'voices' and various 'theologies' of the Bible. In contrast to this, 'These essays oppose such trends. They seek to uncover the overarching theology of the Bible as it develops throughout the canon. The themes... are studied with an eye to their integration into the whole fabric of the Bible, their use and reuse by the Bible's writers, and thus to their development across the canon' (17). In addition, doing biblical theology is not merely surveying the contents of the Bible; rather its aim is to establish the conceptual unity of the Scriptures as a whole as they unfold in human events. As such,

biblical theology seeks its content and coherence in the final propositions and basic ordering of the OT and NT read in their entirety, in their final form, and in concert with one another.... biblical theology is the study of God's self-revelation to human beings for the purposes of redemption through the interpretation of the events and experiences written down in the Scriptures (17).

The essays appear with a deliberate progression in mind. First, 'covenant' is established as an integrative concept that spans the Bible, which takes shape as two

interrelated covenants. Based on this foundation, further essays cover God's commands, God's means of atonement, God's sending of servants and his warning about the Day of the Lord as natural outgrowths of the Bible's covenantal structure. The essays on the people of God and the history of redemption summarise God's purpose for relating to human beings in a covenantal way. God is seen as in the process of gathering a holy people, which in effect means that God pursues a redemptive mission in our world (p. 18).

The seven substantial essays are as follows: S. Hafemann, 'The Covenant Relationship' (20-65); T. R. Schreiner, 'The Commands of God' (66-101); F. S. Thielman, 'The Atonement' (102-27); S. G. Dempster, 'The Servant of the Lord' (128-78), P. R. House, 'The Day of the Lord' (179-224); E. A. Martens, 'The People of God' (225-53); R. E. Ciampa, 'The History of Redemption' (254-308). Each essay ends with a detailed conclusion. Indices of Scripture references and of ancient sources round off the well produced volume (309-30). Unfortunately no attempt is made in a further essay to relate the seven themes to each other in more detail. I wonder whether the significance and gift of the land to Israel as part of the covenant, receives enough attention throughout the volume.

While some more recent contributions to NT theology (among them the volumes by Schreiner and Thielman; others are Hahn, Marshall, Matera and Wilckens) have argued persuasively for the substantial theological unity of the NT, these essays go further in showing that there is a considerable theological unity in the whole Bible. Together with the older contributions of Childs and Scobie, these essays on integrative themes are a must for students of biblical theology and provide inspiring insights for biblical studies and systematic theology. This solidly evangelical volume makes a useful textbook for courses in this area. It is well researched and at the same time a pleasure to read. For a recent German contribution see H. Klein, *Zur Gesamtbiblischen Theologie: Zehn Themen*, BThSt 93 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2007).

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