

likely want to cover more ground early on in order to make time for more difficult lessons later in the semester.

Verbs are introduced two-fifths of the way through. The problem is that the later the translation and creation of full sentences is delayed, the longer the student lacks the full advantage of inductive learning. The ideal grammar has the advantages of both deductive and inductive teaching methods: clear categories and structure so the student has a place to put the data mentally, and realistic translation situations as soon as possible, since retention and comprehension are best facilitated through application. This being said, the delay of the introduction of verbs in Hackett's grammar is less serious than it initially appears for two reasons. First, as mentioned, teachers will likely choose to cover the first several lessons more rapidly than later lessons. Second, the Hebrew noun system is relatively simple, and full sentences are possible using only nouns. Due to this, Hackett's grammar manages to teach the material as intuitively as possible for a deductive grammar while avoiding the pitfalls of an inductive grammar like that of Kittel, Hoffer and Wright, which fails to provide a mental structure (i.e. paradigms) until relatively late in the book.

Hackett avoids overwhelming the student with technicalities but does not shy away from teaching traditionally advanced concepts when they aid comprehension. When a rule has exceptions, Hackett notes this in the text teaching the rule and then relates the exception(s) in a footnote. This arrangement is advantageous in that the text is not bogged down with minutiae, but the student also is not left in the dark concerning something for which standard Hebrew pedagogy has no systematic means of teaching outside of an introductory grammar. Students of Hackett's grammar will be well prepared for more advanced discussion afterward, and will not be left constantly wondering whether a rule applies in a particular case. Knowing the exception ahead of time allows the rule to function as a genuine rule.

Hackett often chooses morphologically descriptive terms, like 'prefix conjugation' instead of syntactic terms like 'imperfect'. At times, her terminology is unique. For example, her name for the *wayyiqtol* form, often called converted imperfect or imperfect consecutive (both of which Hebraists consider inaccurate, but which stubbornly persist in introductory grammars anyway), is 'consecutive preterite': 'consecutive' because of the presence of a prefixed *waw* (with an aside to the student about the history of the form) and 'preterite' for the form's aspect/tense. Hackett confesses this uniqueness to the student and explains its reason. One can only hope that other Hebrew instructors will follow her lead.

Another area where Hackett is unique with a good reason is in the presentation of verbal paradigms. The standard way of presenting the Hebrew verb is in the order third, second, and first person forms, singular then plural. Instead, Hackett presents verbs in the order first, second, third person to more closely approximate the way other languages are learned. Furthermore, all charts

are presented in a right-to-left direction to coincide with the direction of Hebrew reading. The only disadvantage to this organisation is its lack of cross-compatibility with other grammatical tools, which universally present third person first. However, its benefit for students learning Hebrew may outweigh any drawbacks.

The grammar contains eight appendices, including the standard paradigm lists and glossaries, as well as the text of Genesis 22:1-19 (used at several points in the grammar) and a set of guidelines to aid in the identification of weak roots. Also included is a CD-ROM that contains, among other things, the answers to the exercises, vocabulary lists and audio pronunciation of Hebrew words.

It is clear that this grammar was written by someone who is well acquainted with the specific problems of teaching and learning Biblical Hebrew. From its organisation to its up-to-date and even original terminology, Hackett's *A Basic Introduction to Biblical Hebrew* is a very welcome addition to the market of introductory Hebrew grammars.

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Judges **Word Biblical Commentary 8** **Trent C. Butler**

Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2009; xcii + 538,
£29.99, hb.; ISBN 978-08499-0207-9

SUMMARY

Judges by Trent Butler is an outstanding addition both to the Word Biblical Commentary series and to scholarly literature on the book of Judges, being both very readable and rigorously scholarly. Butler's approach is conservative and up-to-date, arguing for an early composition date and treating Judges as a literary unit. The volume contains an extensive and helpful bibliography and appendix of tables. The occasional division of the text into units of three or more chapters makes parts of this volume cumbersome, and there are a number of typographical errors, but *Judges* remains exceedingly useful and scholarly.

RÉSUMÉ

Ce commentaire sur le livre des Juges vient ajouter un volume remarquable à la série du *Word Biblical Commentary*, ainsi qu'aux études académiques sur ce livre biblique. Il est à la fois très lisible et d'une grande rigueur scientifique. L'approche est conservatrice. L'information est bien à jour. L'auteur considère que la date de composition du livre est ancienne et l'aborde comme une unité littéraire. L'ouvrage comporte une bibliographie substantielle et des tables en appendice. Le texte est parfois divisé en sections de trois chapitres, voire davantage, ce qui peut rendre l'utilisation de ce commentaire malaisée, mais cela

ne lui ôte pas son caractère hautement profitable et sa qualité scientifique.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Der Kommentar zum Buch der Richter von Trent Butler stellt einen herausragenden Beitrag zur „Word Biblical Commentary“ Serie und zur wissenschaftlichen Literatur über das Richterbuch dar, der sich nicht nur leicht lesen lässt, sondern auch streng wissenschaftlich geschrieben ist. Butlers Ansatz tritt für ein frühes Abfassungsdatum ein und behandelt das Richterbuch als eine literarische Einheit und ist somit konservativ und auf dem neuesten Stand. Der Band beinhaltet eine umfassende und nützliche Bibliographie sowie einen Appendix mit Schautafeln. Die sporadische Aufteilung des Textes in Einheiten von drei oder mehr Kapiteln macht das Werk teilweise schwerfällig; außerdem gibt es etliche Tippfehler. Nichtsdestoweniger bleibt der Richterkommentar außerordentlich hilfreich und wissenschaftlich.

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Judges by Trent Butler is an outstanding addition both to the Word Biblical Commentary series and to scholarly literature on the book of Judges. The purpose of the WBC series is to publish exegetical commentaries that remain accessible and useful to those without a strong background in biblical languages. Butler's volume excels in both categories. It is consistently very readable while being insightful at the highest level and demonstrating a mastery of a remarkable range of scholarly literature. The bibliography is especially impressive and useful, being functionally a one-stop shop for what seems like almost every article, monograph or commentary published on Judges in the last 100 years.

Butler's method is measured, up-to-date and conservative. He avoids idiosyncratic interpretations and text reconstructions, typically giving the Masoretic text the benefit of the doubt. While acknowledging the likelihood of compositional layers, Butler largely deals with Judges as a literary unity. His dating of the book's final form is early by contemporary standards, somewhere in the reign of Rehoboam, which in his view accounts for the strong anti-Ephraim polemic and the less pronounced anti-Benjamin one. It would also appear to account for the book's mixed attitude toward kingship in Israel. One of Butler's most interesting contributions to the discussion of the structure of Judges is his assertion that Judges is strategically deconstructing everything that the book of Joshua constructs, thus arguing for intentional intertextuality. (Butler also wrote the WBC volume 7 on the book of Joshua.) The appendix contains 52 pages of tables containing a wide variety of helpful data conveniently arranged, many dealing with plot analyses according to the categories of both narratology and form-criticism.

The organisation of WBC is typically very helpful, each passage being divided into a translation by the author with textual notes, a section on Form/Structure/

Setting, a section labelled Comment (organised verse-by-verse or phrase-by-phrase) and a section labelled Explanation (to bring it all together). In most (but not all) WBC volumes I have encountered, the size of the passage of Biblical text for each section relates to the size of text one would single out for a sermon or basic exegetical paper, usually one chapter or less. Butler's volume is inconsistent in this respect. Particularly in the case of the Gideon and Samson stories, multiple chapters are grouped together (6-8 and 13-16). While the desire to look at these passages as a complete unit is laudable and even necessary, it does have the unfortunate side-effect of rendering these sections somewhat cumbersome to use. For example, if one were to want to see what Butler had to say on 6:11-24 (the appearance of the angel of the LORD to Gideon), a typical length of text for most standard usages, one has to flip among pages 181, 186, 192-196, 199-204 and 224-225 (not to mention any relevant information in the introduction), and it is possible that some comment Butler makes in the gaps might have significance as well. This is a lot of work for the person who is not aiming at mastery of the whole Gideon story, or who has a very specific enquiry of the text. Much better would have been for Butler to do with chapters 6-8 what he did with chapters 4-5: treat them separately and include an excursus at the end of the section that deals with overall issues. The grouping of 13-16 is even less justifiable, in my opinion, because of the even longer text and the less certain macro-structure. Another, less significant complaint is the surprising number of typographical errors. For example, in the printing of Hebrew words very often the vowel pointing was wrong, and either text note 6a is missing from page 185 or the superscript 'a' is a misprint.

Despite these cosmetic problems, because of its rigorous scholarship and consistent readability, *Judges* by Trent Butler should become and will remain a benchmark among commentaries on *Judges* which will more than adequately serve the needs of a variety of users.

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Pannenberg on the Triune God

Iain Taylor

London/New York: T&T Clark, 2007, 225pp, £61.75, hb, ISBN 0-567-03150-0

RÉSUMÉ

Ce livre écrit avec lucidité et fruit d'une recherche soignée apporte une contribution importante au plan académique à l'étude de la théologie de Wolfhart Pannenberg. Suivant l'ordre des sujets de la *Théologie Systématique* de ce penseur, Iain Taylor livre une présentation détaillée de la théologie trinitaire mûrie de Pannenberg avec une évaluation critique. Il considère que la doctrine de Dieu est la clé de voûte de la *Théologie Systématique*. Il réfute utilement