

teaching was little more than an aphoristic collection of pearls on a string. He admits to his own past hypnotism over the form critical isolation of logia and pericopes (161, cf. 306, 348), and while he accepts some advances of form-critical isolation, he nevertheless provides a critique of key form-critical assumptions by way of comparing Jesus' discourses with other relevant texts in antiquity. A lengthy treatment of Q 6:27-42, for example, suggests that that text is to be understood not as 'an anthology of originally independent logia', but as a 'consistent whole' (351). This is not to suggest that the alleged text is 'a word-perfect transcript of somebody's oral performance', but that it is 'a version or adaptation of a more or less stable composition' (377).

In his treatment of the 'Passion of Jesus', Allison notes John Dominic Crossan's unwillingness to afford the earliest Christians any substantial amount of accessible history (Crossan, *Who Killed Jesus?* San Francisco, 1996). To what extent do the synoptic portrayals of the passion actually reflect the historical event? Allison turns to the Pauline 'memory' of the passion event, asking what we might be able to say of it if we had only Pauline material ('The Death of Jesus Based on Paul Alone', 392-403). He cites extensive evidence to the effect that 'Paul, writing a decade or more before Mark, knew an early passion narrative, a relative or ancestor of what we find in Mark 14-16' (404; cf. 421). Using the methodological contention that memory preserves according to 'impressions', Allison gives further contour: 'Jesus' decision to die, whenever made and whatever the motivation and whatever his precise interpretation, left a vivid impression' (433).

Finally, we find a reflection on 'how much history' we may account for, given Allison's methodological and exegetical work. Unsurprisingly, he confesses to be rather disillusioned with the attempt to get back to original events and sayings, 'a bit like trying to separate streams after they have flowed into a river' (436). Nevertheless, he does not capitulate to a simple dichotomy of 'fact versus fiction'. Non-historical features were present in antiquity (in Graeco-Roman, early Christian and rabbinic literature), though Allison finds few, if any, real parallels in the Synoptics.

In summary, Allison has supplied the reader with a breathtakingly well-researched project. There is a clear move away from 'historicism', yet always toward history (462). Combined with clarity of writing punctuated with frequent wit ('Consistency is the hobgoblin of non-apocalyptic minds', 96; 'We should hold a funeral for the view that Jesus entertained no exalted thoughts about himself', 304), the extensive research lends a credibility and intelligibility that will undoubtedly bring the project to the forefront of historical and hermeneutical scholarship on the Gospels.

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The Acts of the Risen Lord Jesus. Luke's account of God's unfolding plan

New Studies in Biblical Theology 27 (ed. D.A. Carson)

Alan J. Thompson

Nottingham: Apollos / Downers Grove: IVP, 2011
pb, 232pp, £12.99, ISBN 978-1-84474-535-7

SUMMARY

Thompson presents a non-technical, theological introduction to the Acts of the Apostles. Discussions with other theologians are kept in the footnotes and the Greek is transcribed. The author shows how Luke presents an inaugurated eschatology and how the Kingdom of God, the resurrection of Jesus, the position of Israel and the work of the Spirit are key themes in the story. This is a solid study which lacks connections with the practice of the church.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Thompson legt eine nicht technische, theologische Einführung in die Apostelgeschichte vor. Die Auseinandersetzung mit anderen Theologen findet in den Fußnoten statt, und das Griechische ist transkribiert. Der Autor zeigt, wie Lukas eine bereits vorhandene Eschatologie präsentiert und wie als Schlüsselthemen in der Erzählung das Königreich Gottes, die Auferstehung von Jesus und die Position Israels auftreten. Hier handelt es sich um eine aner kennenswerte Studie, der es aber an Bezug zur Praxis in Kirche und Gemeinde mangelt.

RÉSUMÉ

Voici une introduction à la théologie du livre des Actes qui ne se veut pas technique. Les discussions de points de vue d'autres théologiens n'apparaissent que dans les notes de bas de page et les mots grecs sont transcrits. L'auteur montre que Luc développe une eschatologie inaugurée. Le Royaume de Dieu, la résurrection de Jésus, le sort d'Israël et l'œuvre de l'Esprit sont des thèmes clé du récit. L'étude est solide mais ne propose pas d'applications pour la pratique de l'Église.

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Although the author is from New Zealand, studied in the USA and teaches in Australia, this study was largely written in Tyndale House, Cambridge. In the first chapter Thompson shows that Father, Son and Holy Spirit are all three actively involved in the activities of the earliest churches. What happens in Jerusalem is based on God's sovereign plan. Chapter two highlights the importance of the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of Jesus Son of David, for Acts. The kingdom has come, albeit not yet fully, and its arrival fulfils the hope of Israel. Thompson here also highlights the role of the speeches. Chapter three argues that the inclusion of the gentiles with Israel into one people of God is evidence for the success of God's plan. Here the author argues that in Acts 1:6-8 Jesus *does* answer the disciples' question. Chapter four highlights the work of the Holy Spirit

in all believers as another fulfilment of God's promises. Interestingly, Thompson thinks that references to the 'fullness' of the Spirit always occur in ethical contexts. In chapter five he argues that the beginning of Acts shows the redundancy of the temple and that Stephen's speech is the climax of this part of the book, opening the way for the proclamation among the Samaritans and the gentiles. He also shows how the apostles are the leaders of the new community. In the sixth chapter he develops this into the view that the authority of the Law has passed to the apostles; they are now the ones who guide God's people and the decision of the Council in Acts 15 is based on their authority.

Throughout the author largely stays away from issues of introduction such as authorship and the enigmatic end of Acts. His dialogue with other scholars is mostly limited to the footnotes and is – regrettably – almost exclusively with English language works. Chapters five and six do, however, begin with brief surveys of what others have said. Thompson shows that there is no real difference between Paul as presented in Acts and Paul as we see him in his letters. Much attention is given to Luke's use of the Old Testament and to the unity of Luke and Acts. However, nearly all passages discussed are in Acts 1-15 so the reader only gets to know the first half of Acts. Another downside of Thompson's approach is the lack of application. Especially the final chapter, which argues that the apostles are the 'legislators' for the new people of God, raises questions: Should the church still have apostles? Or would Thompson argue that their authority was incorporated in the scriptures of the new covenant? Are we still bound by the apostolic decree?

This book stands out by its emphasis on the realised inauguration of the Kingdom; yet it is decidedly not charismatic or Pentecostal. It will stimulate those who teach and preach Acts.

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***Romans: The Divine Marriage. A Biblical
Theological Commentary***

Tom Holland

Eugene, Oregon: Pickwick, 2011, 543 pp., pb., \$56,
ISBN 978-1-60899-809-8

RÉSUMÉ

Ce commentaire de Tom Holland s'inscrit dans la ligne de son ouvrage antérieur en adoptant une lecture du corpus paulinien selon une perspective communautaire. Holland comprend l'Évangile comme l'annonce d'un nouvel exode et élabore davantage cette approche dans ce commentaire. Il y offre une analyse de l'épître verset par verset et traite en outre de la nouvelle perspective sur la théologie paulinienne en considérant la position de N.T. Wright et celle des réformateurs sur le sujet de la justification. Le choix de l'image du mariage pour représenter l'Évangile

est central dans son approche. On doit cependant considérer que des images comme celles du corps, de la famille ou de la parenté paraissent bien davantage celles que Paul a choisi lui-même pour exposer sa pensée. Néanmoins, ce commentaire a le mérite de présenter à un large public évangélique une approche de l'Évangile fondée sur la notion d'alliance.

SUMMARY

Tom Holland's commentary on Paul's Epistle to the Romans follows his earlier work in applying a corporate reading of the Pauline corpus. Holland understands the gospel as a 'New Exodus', a perspective further developed in this commentary. In addition to providing a verse by verse commentary, Holland deals with the New Perspective on Paul by engaging with N.T. Wright and the Reformers in relation to justification. Central to this book is its choice of marriage as an image representing the gospel. However, images such as 'body', 'family' or 'kinship' perhaps seem more obviously Pauline choices with which to convey this concept. Nonetheless, this is a worthwhile book that introduces a covenantal approach to the gospel to a wider evangelical audience.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Tom Hollands Kommentar über den Römerbrief folgt seinem vorangehenden Werk darin, dass er eine gemeinsame Lesart für den paulinischen Korpus anwendet. Holland versteht das Evangelium als einen „Neuen Exodus“, einen Aspekt, den er in diesem Kommentar weiterentwickelt. Der Autor bietet nicht nur eine Vers-für-Vers-Kommentierung, sondern befasst sich auch mit der Neuen Perspektive zu Paulus, indem er sich mit N.T. Wright und den Reformern auseinandersetzt, wenn es um Rechtfertigung geht. Das zentrale Anliegen dieses Buches ist das Bild der Ehe als eine Metapher für das Evangelium. Jedoch scheinen Metaphern wie Leib, Familie, Verwandtschaft die naheliegende Wahl von Paulus zu sein, um diese Vorstellung zu vermitteln. Nichtsdestoweniger ist dies ein wertvolles Buch, das eine größere evangelikale Leserschaft mit einem Zugang zum Evangelium vertraut macht, der vom Bundesdenken herkommt.

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'This commentary seeks to correct the faulty reading that results from placing the individual at the center of the message of Romans. One of the repercussions of such individualism is that almost all hymns speak of individual Christian experience instead of the corporate people of God.' With these bold words, Tom Holland introduces his new commentary on Paul's letter to the Christian church in Rome. Holland is Head of Biblical Research at the Wales Evangelical School of Theology and the author of *Contours of Pauline Theology* (2004), in which he has already proposed a corporate reading of Paul's letters. Central to this approach is the 'New Exodus' paradigm: Jesus the Messiah is greater than Moses, and the New Testament shows that God has acted decisively in the death of his own Son, to bring