

Book Reviews – Recensions – Buchbesprechungen

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Joshua

Historical Commentary on the Old Testament

Hartmut N. Rösel

Leuven: Peeters, 2011; xxix + 386pp., pb, €45, ISBN 978-90-429-2592-2

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dies ist ein neuer Kommentar zum Buch Josua, der sich der hochmodernen „höheren kritischen“ Methode bedient. Auf diese Weise werden Fragen der Postmoderne und Ansätze der Gegenwart, wie sie gelehrte Fachleute vorlegen, zusammen mit jedwedem konservativen Kommentar ausgeklammert. Das Buch bietet dem Wissenschaftler kaum etwas Neues, während der Pastor leer ausgeht und nichts von paränetischem Wert erhält.

SUMMARY

This is a new commentary on the book of Joshua that adopts the high-modern higher-critical method. Thus, post-modernist challenges and contemporary approaches such as are furnished by literary practitioners are bracketed-out together with all conservative comment. There is little new here for the scholar whereas the pastor is abandoned with nothing of paraenetic value.

RÉSUMÉ

Voici un nouveau commentaire du livre de Josué. Il adopte la méthode moderniste de haute critique. Il en résulte que les débats suscités par les conceptions post-modernes, les diverses approches de la critique littéraire, ainsi que les traitements d'un point de vue conservateur sont simplement ignorés. Le spécialiste n'y trouvera rien de nouveau et le pasteur aucun apport ayant une valeur parénétique.

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Reading this volume conjured up the mental image of an ornithologist discovering, to his or her immense surprise, a species long believed extinct. However, what would doubtless be ground for great excitement for the bird-specialist, only provoked depression in the reviewer.

Rösel early acknowledges his indebtedness to Martin Noth, and his definition of what he considers the scholarly fraternity to which he often appeals is quickly revealed in his bibliography. While Calvin (necessarily) gets a mention, as does Trent Butler's Word BC volume, evangelicals are notable by their absence. Merely reflecting upon the Dutch scene, the absence of Goslinga and Woudstra is symptomatic as is the inclusion of the non-academic volume by the liberal Auld; conservative scholarship simply does not come within Rösel's purview. However, and equally significantly, his work has a dinosaur-quality about it (hence the above analogy): all its discussion takes place within the parameters

of an unreconstructed historical critical methodology. Modern approaches (for example, literary analyses) are, effectively, bracketed out.

On authorship and date, 'Modern scholarship has completely abandoned the view that a person of Joshua's day could have written the book'. 'Joshua' emerged through a 'long process'. Indeed, parts owe their origin to a period when the 'Pentateuch was already regarded as canonical.' Thus, the complex issues related to the ban are dismissed with the comment that it is a 'utopian and late concept ... one never realised in Old Testament times'. On history, archaeological and literary grounds indicate that 'no united people called Israel ... could have conquered the land.' Naively, Rösel notes that archaeology cannot prove historicity and one wonders who he has met who ever thought any different (but see below). However, his minimalism is apparent, as in his discussion of the fall of Jericho (93-97) and his brief dismissal of the story of Ai (109). In the latter case this is done on literary grounds and (ironically) the claim that archaeology shows no town existed on the site at the time alleged for the conquest. Consequently, too, 'Next to nothing can be said about the personality of the historical Joshua' but he was obviously 'not the great leader' depicted.

As to application, Rösel cites Calvin's conviction of the value of the 'paraenetic aspect of Joshua' but notes that 'In this he differs markedly from modern scholars'. We are left with a study that is preoccupied with the supposed pre-history of the text reconstructed by means of the historical critical method and, if not its assured results, certainly its assured methodology. The result is that the expositor is mute as to contemporary relevance of the text.

The main body of the work is divided into divisions of the text that are accompanied by five sub-sections: a translation, bibliography, a section devoted to 'Essentials and Perspectives' and two sections entitled 'Scholarly Exposition' that explore, first, introductory issues before, second, providing an exegesis. Predictably, linguistic arguments are rehearsed as a means to determine vocabulary that is early or late: the arguments contingent upon the literary reconstruction that is adopted. To the present reviewer, these are viciously circular (see, for example, 38). Similarly, the author seems confident of his superior knowledge in, for example, the realm of military tactics. Of Joshua 2 he comments, 'sending the spies was meaningless from a purely military point of view'. Again, on the basis of undefined 'inconsistencies' in the Rahab story he is able to dismiss any historical validity to the account (it is a 'folktale with only a little sense of reality') and refers it to an un-evidenced popular motif that 'enjoyed and enjoys popularity in

the literature and art of many societies – right up to Hollywood today'. With the preface of such phrases as 'of course' and 'we must assume', Rösel proceeds on his way, meanwhile demonstrating considerable naivety (and/or ignorance) when he seeks to appeal to scholarly study of the forms of folktales. His identification of genre is altogether too general to carry weight.

As with many unreconstructed historical critical studies, Rösel is able to recognise 'inconsistencies', 'contradictory motifs' and 'contradictions' in the chronology that the editorial process failed to recognise (all identified, for example, on 58-59). The final author, he confidently asserts, 'had very few concrete ideas' about the nations of Canaan. As the book proceeds, countless examples of such methodological assumptions and conclusions can be evidenced.

The nineteenth century baptist preacher, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, wrote a book entitled 'Commenting on Commentaries'. One entry refers to a volume that he deemed 'suitable only to housemaids for lighting fires'. He might consign the present volume to the same category; though he might consider the incendiary possibilities as, perhaps, rather expensive.

The volume is solidly bound and stitched to promote longevity but at 45 Euros, its publishers clearly expect to sell it to specialists and libraries.

Stephen Dray
Southend, UK

The Spirit and the Restoration of Israel. New Exodus and New Creation Motifs in Galatians

**Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum
Neuen Testament, 2. Reihe 282**

Rodrigo J. Morales

Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010, xii + 200pp., €69.00,
pb, ISBN 978-3-16-150435-8

RÉSUMÉ

Dans cette thèse de doctorat, Rodrigo Morales fournit une étude éclairante de la pneumatologie paulinienne dans l'épître aux Galates en la replaçant dans le contexte de l'histoire de la tradition. Cette contribution complète utilement d'autres études récentes sur la pneumatologie paulinienne. Après avoir considéré les textes de l'Ancien Testament et du judaïsme du second temple qui associent la présence de l'Esprit à la restauration d'Israël, il examine le rôle accordé à l'Esprit dans l'argumentation de Paul, d'abord en Galates 3-4 puis en Galates 5-6.

SUMMARY

In this published version of his Duke dissertation, Rodrigo Morales provides an insightful tradition-historical study of Paul's pneumatology in Galatians, which provides a useful complement to other recent studies in Pauline pneumatology. After exploring OT and Second Temple texts that

associate the presence of the Spirit with the restoration of Israel, Morales investigates the role of the Spirit in Paul's argument in Galatians 3-4 and 5-6.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

In dieser veröffentlichten Ausgabe seiner Duke-Dissertation bietet Rodrigo Morales eine kluge traditionsgeschichtliche Studie zur Pneumatologie des Paulus im Galaterbrief. Sie liefert eine hilfreiche Ergänzung zu anderen, kürzlich erschienen Werken im Bereich paulinischer Pneumatologie. Nachdem Morales alttestamentliche und Zweite-Tempel Texte analysiert, welche die Gegenwart von Gottes Geist mit der Wiederherstellung Israels in Verbindung bringen, untersucht er die Rolle des Geistes im Argument des Paulus im Galaterbrief in den Kapiteln 3-4 und 5-6.

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In this published version of his Duke dissertation, Rodrigo J. Morales provides an insightful tradition-historical study of Paul's pneumatology in Galatians. This work nicely complements other recent studies in Pauline pneumatology such as Volker Rabens and John W. Yates. Though not situated as a response to Troels Engberg-Pedersen, Morales' work shows how Paul's pneumatology is in direct continuity with Old Testament (OT) and Second Temple Jewish traditions, and this stands in contrast with Engberg-Pedersen's preference for a Stoa-informed understanding.

In Galatians Paul does not cite key OT texts that mention the Spirit in the context of the restoration of Israel, but Morales shows Paul's continuity with his tradition by surveying central passages in OT and Second Temple texts which provide a context for expectations regarding the Spirit and the restoration of Israel. He thus focuses on 'multiply attested collocations of themes' in order to compare Paul with other writings. As a result, this tradition-historical study helpfully situates Paul's argument in Galatians which is so centred upon the Spirit.

The monograph begins in chapter 2 with a study of OT prophetic expectations relating the presence of the Spirit with the restoration of Israel. Isaiah garners the most attention along with Ezekiel and then Joel. A monolithic tradition does not arise; rather, the presence of the Spirit is associated with a number of other restoration themes. One progression with Second Temple texts (chapter 3) is the combination of OT promises of the Spirit with concepts such as heart and blessing in Deuteronomy. In addition, they repeat other OT prophetic themes related to the restoration of Israel.

After his exploration of OT and Second Temple traditions, Morales addresses key passages in Galatians 3-4 (chapter 4) and 5-6 (chapter 5). In chapter 4 the heart of his discussion is the notoriously debated 3:10-14. He argues, following James Scott and N.T. Wright, that the constellation of ideas represented in this section fits within a similar trajectory of the restoration of Israel by way of a new exodus typology. While some may not be convinced by that argument, Morales' primary focus on