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Boda, M J, Falk, D K & Werline, R (eds) 2007 – *Seeking the favor of God, Vol 2: The development of penitential prayer in second temple Judaism*

Publisher: Society of Biblical Literature. Soft cover, 281 pages. Price: £22.99

Reviewer: Prof Dr P M Venter (University of Pretoria)

Four publications dealing with the genre of the Penitential Prayer, published since 1998, led to the formation of the Penitential Prayer Consultation during the annual SBL meetings held in 2003, 2004, and 2005. The consultation was organized by a steering committee consisting of Richard Bautch, Mark Boda, Daniel Falk, Judith Newman and Rodney Werline. They agreed on three successive themes: origin, development and impact. Ten papers presented during the second consultation meeting of 2004, dealing with the theme of development of penitential prayers in the Second Temple period, were collected and published in this second volume of a trilogy.

In the "Preface" (pp xi-xv) the editors Boda, Falk and Werline, offer background information on their publication and provide a brief summary of the contents of each of the ten contributions included in the book. In the "Afterword" (pp 227-237) Eileen Schuller assesses the second consultation and points to future work that needs to be undertaken in respect of penitential prayer. She indicates three areas in respect of which the consultation expressed appreciation for the complex and diverse developments in prayer during the Second Temple Judaism: "formally, as lament, petition, penitence and praise come together in new combinations; theologically, as new apocalyptic and deterministic understandings of divine action come together with long-held covenantal paradigms; and socio-historically, as penitence becomes a daily activity that seeks to find a place within new institutions such as the synagogue" (p 237).

The publication includes a lengthy bibliography (pp 239-254), a list of contributors and their affiliations (p 255), an ancient source index (pp 257-274), an index of modern authors (pp 275-278) and a subject index (pp 279-281).

The first and last chapters present a research survey and a reflection on the study of penitential prayer respectively. The remaining papers can be divided into two subcategories. Five of them deal with literature from the second century BCE and four with the Dead Sea Scrolls. In a research survey (pp 1-15) Schuller summarizes how prayer in Second Temple Judaism had been studied in the past and also summarizes the future task of defining the parameters of the corpus of penitential prayer. In his reflections (pp 209-225) Werline tests his proposed definition of penitential prayer given during the first consultation in 2003 by analyzing prayers that border on the margin of his definition. He makes an appeal for flexibility in the definition of penitential prayers as the "enlisting of penitential prayers into a new role, [let] the prayers change and take on new elements of form and thus move further from what they were in an earlier period" (p 225).

The papers by Werline and Venter both deal with Daniel 9. Applying the theories of Geertz, Turner, and Bell to ritual, Werline, relates his contribution to the situation of the *maskilim*. Penitential prayers "are a dynamic social performance that takes place within a web of social relationships and power structures; they are a form of mediation of those relationships" (p 32). Venter (pp 33-49) indicates how Deuteronomistic theology and apocalyptic theology are juxtaposed in Daniel 9 to form a new ideological matrix for penitential prayers conducted in the synagogue.

Floyd discusses the use of penitential prayers from the perspective of the deuterocanonical book of Baruch (pp 51-81). Study of Baruch 1:1a-3:8 has major implications for the

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ongoing discussion on the genre, setting, ideology, and historical development of penitential prayers. In her contribution Flesher studies female imagery and lamentations in the book of Judith (pp 83-104). Contra Westermann, she shows that the lament was never replaced by penitential prayers, but that both forms were used. It should rather be borne in mind that the exile resulted in a shift in theological thinking and consequently “the tone and language of the prayers shifted in response to this new theological commitment” (p 103). Newman’s study of the Prayer of Manasseh (pp 105-125) analyzes the formal similarities and differences between the prayer and Psalm 51. In her paper she argues that Manasseh’s prayer “represents a counter discourse to other penitential prayers of the Second Temple period ...” (p 105). It does not have marked structural or lexical affinities with the early postexilic corporate prayers of penitence.

In the section with contributions on the relation of penitential prayers to the Dead Sea Scrolls, Falk studies the influence of scriptural motifs on the development of institutionalized penitential prayer (pp 127-157). He first studies scriptural resources for penitential prayer and then uses this information to examine the influence of these on the Dead Sea Scrolls. He concludes that penitential prayers played an essential part in a system of atonement at Qumran, which usually included sacrifice. Arnold’s study of repentance and the Qumran covenant ceremony (pp 159-175) indicates that the Qumran community used forms prominent in the penitential prayer tradition but that the ceremony itself did not precisely take on the form of a penitential prayer. The ceremony was rather a rite of passage establishing the strict boundaries of the community. Chazon depicts the *Words of the Luminaries* (pp 177-186) as a document standing at the crossroads of a new development in the history of penitential prayer. It is a “sterling example of how penitential prayer was pressed into a service of new religious practice of daily petition for ongoing needs” (p 186). In her contribution, Nitzan studies traditional and atypical motifs in penitential prayers from Qumran (pp 187-208). She indicates that common Jewish penitential prayers were brought to Qumran by men who joined the community and that a “presectarian circle of penitents close to the Qumran community” (p 207) could even be suggested.

This publication indeed showcases the complexity and diversity of the phenomenon of penitential prayers. Scholars in the field of Second Temple studies will find it an enriching experience to read this book. It is also highly recommended for those interested in prayers and their different forms in the Bible.

Bondos, D A 2007 – *Salvation and the cross*

Publisher: Fortress. 210 Pages. Price: Unknown

Reviewer: Prof Dr D P Veldsman (University of Pretoria)

David Brandos is an ordained Lutheran minister and professor of Theology at the Theological Community of Mexico. He teaches Systematic Theology and Biblical Studies at an ecumenical consortium of seminaries in Mexico City. Since 2005, Brandos has published three monographs, namely *The Letter and the Spirit: Discerning God’s Will in a Complex World* (2005), *Paul on the cross: Reconstructing the apostle’s story of redemption* (2006) and *Salvation and the cross* (2007). The latter work is on soteriology, that is, on the meaning of being saved and therefore also of the Christian claim that Christ died for our sins.

From his vantage point that “when Christians speak of salvation, they tell a story”, Brandos poses the (descriptive) question on the what, why and how of redemption as it is

understood by Christians. In the thirteen chapters he covers stories of redemption from the 7th century BC prophet Isaiah (Ch 1) to the 20th century liberation and feminist theologians Jon Sobrino (Ch 12) and Rosemary Radford Ruether (Ch 13) to uncover the rich, diverse and even competing (objective and subjective) understandings of salvation, their social context and their strengths and weaknesses. The work includes: The writings of Luke and Paul (Ch 2-3), the Church Fathers Irenaeus, Gregory of Nyssa and Anselm (Ch 4-6), the Reformers Luther and Calvin (Ch 7-8), and the German theologians Ritschl, Barth and Bultmann (Ch 9-11). Brandos has chosen these specific “stories on salvation” since they offer the reader a rich variety of very different perspectives on the subject. Brandos (page 3) – in my opinion – succeeds well in reaching the aim he has set for himself. In his own words: “By gaining a deeper understanding of the many problems, questions, and issues involved, it is hoped that the readers may be enabled to develop their own views on the subject more clearly while at the same time gaining a greater appreciation of views that differ from their own as well as the difficulties inherent to all of these views”. This he has done exceptionally well. His soteriological survey in which “these figures speak for themselves”, can admirably serve both the reading and teaching of soteriological viewpoints for student and teacher alike, especially since he highlights not only the inescapable connectivity of different views on salvation with different understandings of God, but also their varied dependence on the work of the Holy Spirit, the Church, the word of God and the sacraments given the adopted understandings of the work of Christ. Brandos convincingly concludes that any understanding of God, salvation or the work of Christ will in many respects be inevitably problematic. What is, however, important to him, is that in its own way, each of the stories of redemption he considered, is capable of contributing to the transformation of human beings and the world. This indeed is not only a theological mouthful, but a valuable insight for formulating any soteriological perspective. What enhances the value of text even more, is the inclusion of a helpful Timeline (ix-xi), Additional Resources (consisting of lists for Further Reading and Discussion Questions on each chapter, 199-210) a Glossary (211-213) and an Index (215-220).



Cooper, T D 2007 – Dimensions of evil: Contemporary perspectives

Publishers: Fortress Press. Paperback 285 pages. Price: Unknown

Reviewer: Ms Anastasia Apostolides (University of Pretoria)

This book deals with the problem of evil. Terry D Cooper, a Professor of Psychology at St. Louis Community College-Meramec, analyzes how evil is understood by the multiple perspectives of evolutionary biology, evolutionary psychology, philosophy and systematic theology, ethics, feminist theory, liberation theology and so on. Cooper examines the works of pivotal thinkers such as Charles Darwin, Rosemary Radford Ruether, Sigmund Freud, Aaron Beck, Carl Jung, Paul Tillich and Phil Hefner, to name but a few. Cooper aims to investigate the destruction caused by evil in the natural, psychological and social or systemic realms experienced in life. Cooper begins by stating that “writing a book on evil is an overwhelming task that can easily push an author into feelings of embarrassing grandiosity” (page 8), but also explains that this is “not a definitive book on the entire problem of evil”, but a book that “furthers the conversation” on the problem of evil (p 9).

In chapters one and two Cooper explores Darwin’s theory of evolution and the destructiveness of nature or natural evil that it presents. Darwin’s work still remains a challenge to traditional theological views of God. Cooper furthers his examination of post-

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Darwinian theologies by examining the work John Haught and Langdon Gilkey, and then contrasts their viewpoints with the work of atheistic evolutionists Richard Dawkin and Daniel Dennett. Cooper tries to establish how far Darwin can be extended to describe evolutionary psychology and its explanation of human destructiveness.

In chapters three and four Cooper deals with human destructiveness from a psychological viewpoint. Cooper examines Sigmund Freud, Erich Fromm and Ernest Becker. Cooper then uses the work of Paul Tillich and Reinhold Niebuhr to do a theological critique of Freud, Fromm and Becker. Next Cooper explores a cognitive perspective on evil, paying particular attention to the work of Aaron Beck, Carl Jung and John Stanford. Cooper then turns to the work of theologian David Augsburger on the issue of hate.

In chapters five and six Cooper looks at social explanations of evil. Stanley Milgram, Philip Zimbardo and Roy Baumeister outlined and analyzed, that evil can be explained from a “dispositional” or “situationist” viewpoint. Next Cooper tackles the question of the relative importance of whether social and or individual sin should have the advantage in a discussion of evil. Cooper explores this question by bringing into contact feminist and liberation viewpoints with the work of theologians Langdon Gilkey and Reinhold Niebuhr.

In chapter 7 Cooper presents his concluding thoughts by drawing attention to twelve major convictions he derived from his explorations into the problem of evil. He concludes the book by stating: “My hope is that this survey of destructiveness – natural, personal, and social – a survey that is by no means exhaustive, will prove helpful as we continue both to understand and combat evil around us and within us” (p 264).

This is a thought provoking book on the problem of evil. Cooper succeeds in what he set out do in the beginning of the book: not to collapse one dimension of evil into another. Cooper was quick to establish in the beginning of the book that he was “deeply suspicious of reductionistic views of evil” (p 9). Cooper acknowledges the power of natural, personal and social or systemic evil and believes that a multidisciplinary approach is fundamental in the study of evil. This book is a must for anyone who is doing a study on the problem of evil.



Dunn, J D G 2007 – *The new perspective on Paul*

Publisher: Mohr Siebeck. Paperback, 536 pages. Price: Unknown

Reviewer: Dr M Cromhout (Johannesburg)

Now and again biblical scholarship and theology undergo what can be called a paradigm shift in interpretation. The “New Perspective on Paul” (NPP) certainly is such a paradigm shift. The “new perspective” is a term Dunn originally used for E P Sanders’ work on Early Judaism and Paul, but it has since developed to now being mainly associated with the work of Dunn himself. Ever since the now famous Mansion Memorial Lecture delivered by Dunn in 1982, Pauline studies – at least in some circles – have challenged the received Protestant/Reformed tradition’s interpretation of what Paul meant by “works of the law”. The point of the enterprise was to understand that Paul’s argument *also* had a social and ethnic dimension to it when appreciated within its historical context, and therefore should not exclusively be seen through the lens of Martin Luther’s basic theology of justification by faith as it developed in reaction against Roman Catholicism. Employing social studies, Dunn opened up new territory for understanding Paul, serving to enlighten those who welcome it,

and soliciting vigorous opposition from others who see it as a threat that will destroy the very foundation of the Protestant/Reformed theological tradition.

Dunn's basic thesis is that "works of the law" do not refer to "legalistic works righteousness", or to the fact that one could "earn" one's salvation through "works". What Paul opposed, rather, was the insistence of Israelite believers in Jesus to maintain the social boundary between Israelite and Gentile. The "works of the law" – mainly circumcision, dietary laws and Sabbath observance – which the Gentile believers had to adopt, were important "badges" of identity, or "test cases" of fidelity to Israel's covenant with God. As far as these Israelite believers were concerned, Gentiles had to become members of Israel's covenant, and so adopt "Jewish" identity through circumcision and/or observing purity laws and the Sabbath day. They could not exercise their faith in Jesus by remaining Gentiles. It is the Gentile adoption of these "badges" of identity or "works of the law" that Paul strongly opposed. He attacked the social function of the law, a certain attitude towards the law, whereby the law served as a boundary marker between "Jew" and Gentile.

Dunn also insists, however, that "works of the law" refer to the *entire* law, yet it specifically focuses on those "test cases" of covenant fidelity and matters for which "Jews" were persecuted during the Maccabean period. In tension with this is Dunn's argument that the law still had a positive function for Paul, that is, when it is "denationalized" and no longer the sole possession and boundary marker of Israel, and so can still be a guide for everyday life, especially in its fulfillment of the love command. Paul had a narrow and a broad approach to the law: one will not be justified by doing the works of the law (attacking the social function of the law), yet one will still be judged by the law (where it still reveals God's commandments). This tension in Dunn's interpretation is an aspect which still needs to be resolved.

Related arguments are Paul's reproach of Israelite "boasting". This is not "boasting" about one's own works and achievement, but Paul's attack is on "Jews" and their self-perceived covenant "set-apartness", their sense of having a privileged status in the eyes of God, and not being liable to condemnation as the Gentiles were. Paul moved away from his former "zeal", which, as in the tradition of Phinehas, focused on protecting Israel's "set-apartness" to God.

The above argument formed part of the reason, so Dunn has maintained for nearly 30 years, why Paul had developed his theology of justification by faith. It was to help remove the social boundary between "Jew" and Gentile and to oppose a wrong (boundary making) attitude to the law in view of the all embracing gospel.

This is the NPP of Dunn in a nutshell, which of course, contains many more nuances and aspects of interpretation than could be discussed here. These can be discovered and digested from the book that contains Dunn's continuous work and legacy on the NPP. The majority of the articles (chaps. 2-21) were published between 1983 to 2004, comprising 20 articles that set out, develop, and answer objections to the NPP. There are also two "new" additions: chapter one sets out another defence of the NPP, while chapter 22 looks at Philippians 3:2-14, a passage that had not yet received serious attention in terms of the NPP from Dunn.

So does the NPP undermine the Protestant/Reformed theological basis and tradition of justification by faith? This notion Dunn repeatedly denies. "I affirm", Dunn maintains, "as a central point of Christian faith that God's acceptance of any and every person is by his grace alone and through faith alone ... For my own part, even though it is not the language of the Reformed tradition, I have no particular problem in affirming that the doctrine of justification ... is *articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae*; I am astonished by and repudiate entirely the charge that 'the new perspective on Paul' constitutes an attack on and denial of that Lutheran fundamental ... It is *not* opposed to the classic Reformed doctrine of justification. It simply observes that a social and ethnic dimension was part of the doctrine from its formulation, was indeed integral to the first recorded exposition and defence of the doctrine – 'Jew first but also Greek'" (pp. 21, 33). On the whole, Dunn attempts to address a total of 12

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misunderstandings, confusions and objections triggered by the NPP in the first chapter. If Romans was Paul's own defense of his doctrine, then chapter 1 in this book is Dunn's own defense of the NPP.

Chapter 22 looks at Philippians 3:2-14, as the bulk of Dunn's work on the NPP focused on Galatians and Romans. Again, Paul is addressing a situation in which his mission is challenged as indicated by verses 2-4, and again he has to address the problem of "Jewish" confidence in their ethnic identity. Paul turns to his own reasons for having confidence in the flesh, a confidence which is based in the things listed in 3:4-6. For Dunn, 3:4-5a lists matters pertaining to confidence in ethnic identity, while 3:5b-6 pertains to matters of choice, and Paul's extra commitment and sense of self-achievement in terms of that identity. Dunn aptly notes, "if the first half of the list of Paul's pre-Christian grounds for confidence before God gives substance to the insights and emphasis of the new perspective, then it could equally be said that the second half of the list gives as much substance to the emphasis of the old perspective" (p 474). Needless to say, Dunn goes on to deny the latter, and this entire passage for him is a vindication of the NPP and the theological nuances it brought to light.

What Paul lists, he goes on to describe as "rubbish" or "excrement". It is the all consuming life as a Pharisee and advantages as a circumcised Israelite that Paul has in mind. Yet, it does not mean he denied these things of having any value. Dunn argues that Paul still saw continuing value in circumcision, the Law, and his own status as an Israelite (Rm 3:1-2; 11:1; 2 Cor 11:22). "*The sharpness of the contrast is not so much to denigrate what he had previously counted as gain, as to enhance to the highest degree the value he now attributes to Christ, to the knowledge of Christ, and to the prospect of gaining Christ*" (p 475). However, if Philippians was a situational letter, it has to be asked what value, if any, can be attached to something described as *ta skubala*? Dunn himself writes of Paul seeing these things as comparatively "valueless and entirely unsatisfactory understanding of the righteousness required by God" (p 483).

Another motif also evident in the NPP is Paul describing the process of salvation in vv 9-11. The righteousness of God Paul will only secure at the resurrection from the dead – it is not something he already attained. This points to participation "in Christ" or the process of personal transformation "in Christ", and therefore justification should not be understood as limited to an "alien righteousness" imputed to the believer, or the cross as atonement. In contrast with his previous confidence, Paul tells us in humility that there was still much to be done on his part, requiring intense personal exertion in order to reach the goal and win the prize "of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (3:14). What we find here is Dunn's insistence in other articles on distinguishing between initial justification and final justification – salvation for Paul is a process!

Dunn and his work on the NPP have brought to light the importance of ethnic identity in the New Testament, and the challenge Paul faced in his attempt to make one people out of the many. This book is a testimony to Paul's struggle in this regard, as well as Dunn's identification of that struggle when appreciated in its social and historical context, dimensions that cannot be ignored in the development of Paul's theology. If you are a supporter of the NPP, this book is a convenient collection of Dunn's work on the topic and a necessary addition to your library. If not, it will be a principal dialogue partner. Either way, the book is a testimony to Dunn's contribution to New Testament theology, and, I believe, a testimony to how a scholar has improved our understanding of Paul and his doctrine of justification by faith.



Du Toit, C W 2007 – *Viewed from the shoulders of God: Themes in science and theology*

Publisher: Research Institute for Theology and Religion, University of South Africa. 371 Pages. Price: Unknown

Reviewer: Prof Dr Jerome A Stone (Chicago, U S A)

This book covers many of the topics current in the debates about science and religion. Its stance is that we should “accept the multifaceted biological nature of existence without surrendering the values that are essential for the human spirit to survive.” Its orientation “is basically Christian, with due regard to possible approaches from other religious traditions” (p vi).

“The aim of the science-religion debate is not to ‘rescue’ religion from science. The gods don’t need protection, they speak for themselves.” Rather, the goal should be “to clarify humankind’s apparently incorrigible religiosity, and to reconcile the substance of faith and the concomitant expectations with our understanding of the physical functioning of the cosmos.” Further, “to highlight the irrationality of religion – as scholars like Dawkins do – is easy. Pointing out misuses of religion is our duty; ... hushing up scientific findings that appear to threaten religion is dishonest; denying the personal value that religion has for millions of human beings is a fallacy” (p vi).

Topics covered include evolutionary biology, the analogy between human organizations and autopoietic cell systems, cognitive science, the anthropic principle, intelligent design, and neuropsychological models of religious experience. The author does well in exploring religion and science from the point of view of metaphor, narrative, cartography, language, traditions and worldviews, including such key phrases as nature, the *imago Dei* and *natural law*. The discussion of Karl Barth is generally illuminating, as is that of Arthur Peacocke, Hume and Voltaire.

There is an excellent discussion of the proto-logical (not eschatological) literature of Genesis 3-11 portraying the human quest for dominance. Moving beyond Adam and Eve, this section models how Biblical insights can be utilized in a non-literalist fashion in the science-and-religion discussion. There is a brief but most illuminating discussion of the controversy between Robert Boyle and Hobbes about the significance of an air pump. This not only established the value of experimentation, but illustrates “how bias, ideology and worldview influence our interpretation of ‘empirical reality’,” for what was at stake was the nature of science, the relation between matter and spirit, and the democratic social constitution of Restoration England (p 116). There is an excellent discussion of the possibility and need for using the concept of “human nature” (p 136-137). The summary of seven models of the mind-brain relationship (dualism [Eccles, Popper], holistic dualism, reductive materialism [Churchland, Shoemaker], non-reductive physicalism [Murphy, Sperry, Searle], eliminative materialism [Monod, Rorty, Crick, Dennett], emergentist monism [Clayton], and supervenient theories of mind) is helpful, although proponents of these views might question whether their views can be adequately portrayed so briefly (pp 282-289). Treating naturalism (Boyle [sc], Davies, Dawkins) and supernaturalism (Haught, Dembski, Shannon) as a false dichotomy (*contra* Ruse) with Gregersen, Drees and Moltmann in the middle is helpful, though Paley is hardly a naturalist.

This book would be better if it had expounded specific issues in greater detail for readers new to the topics. On the other hand, it needs greater depth of analysis or a clearer viewpoint to be significant for the advanced reader. This reviewer often found it difficult to ascertain the writer’s position in a particular passage, that is, when he passed from expounding a problem to setting forth a proposed solution. On a couple of minor notes, Charley Hardwick is misidentified as a woman (perhaps because of the spelling) and in the

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bibliography Crosby is misspelled. This book covers many of the significant topics in the science and religion area and the bibliography is wide-ranging and covers well the European, South African, and North American discussions. It is a stimulating book, but beginners will need to supplement it.



Fisk, B N 2001 – *Do you not remember? Scripture, story and exegesis in the rewritten Bible of Pseudo-Philo* (Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha Supplement Series 37)

Publisher: Sheffield Academic Press. Hard cover, 375 pages. Price: Unknown.

Reviewer: Prof Dr P M Venter (University of Pretoria)

This monograph deals with historical hermeneutics. The author investigates the methods and principles found in the first century CE book of *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* (LAB), an anonymous chronicle transmitted in the name of Philo of Alexandria bearing the soubriquet *Pseudo-Philo*. This book belongs to the category known as *rewritten Bible*. What we have here as in the case of Chronicles, the Animal Vision in 1 Enoch 85-90, Jubilees, Genesis Apocryphon, 1 Esdras and Josephus' Antiquities, is "an impressive volume of narrative exegesis in which the line between interpreting the ancient text and responding to contemporary culture is largely hidden from view" (p 331).

The outstanding characteristic of LAB is its "imaginative weaving of subsidiary Scriptures into the primary narrative sequence" (p 14). The author deploys Scripture from other, sometimes distant contexts into the Biblical story. Fisk sets out to study the methods and motivations used in this process. Although several studies have been undertaken on the strategies and techniques used for this rewriting, there is still a gap as far as studying the underlying hermeneutical framework of this enterprise is concerned.

In the first chapter (pp 13-53) the author proposes that a study of LAB's hermeneutical strategies and compositional techniques would be best served by analysis on both the synchronic and the diachronic level. LAB represents a trajectory of aggadic traditions parallelizing contemporary interpretive traditions, but at the same time shows exclusive structures and hermeneutical strategies. A comprehensive method of investigation can be developed by establishing a link with previous research done on the intertextual texture of LAB. Three areas have been highlighted: LAB is linked to existing patterns and connections within the Hebrew Bible; it shows significant agreement with contemporaneous Christian exegesis; it shows a clear link with haggadah and rabbinic midrash.

In chapter 2 (pp 54-108) Fisk indicates how a grid can be constructed from these three areas to approach and interpret LAB. Having paid attention to the date and provenance of LAB and the central themes of covenant in the second half of the first chapter, the author dedicates the second chapter to the way in which Fishbane, Hays and Boyarin read texts and identified intertexts. He links each of them to one of the three areas indicated above. Fishbane identified categories and strategies of aggadic exegesis in the Hebrew Bible. He demonstrated how *traditum* and *tradio* correspond. Later tradents not only preserved but also transformed their sacred traditions to reaffirm the past and adapt to the present. Hays indicated how the Christian Paul stood firmly in this same dynamic tradition in his rereading of Scriptures. In his writings he echoed the scriptural theme of God's faithfulness. Hays' theory of scriptural echoes in Paul played a large role in Fisk's later analysis of the contemporary LAB. In Boyarin's publication the author learned about the interaction between the

heterogeneity of the biblical text and midrashic exegesis. In applying ancient scriptures dialogue takes place between a text filled with gaps inviting a new text to take up those challenges. An intertext is created between reader and text.

From this information Frisk develops in chapter 3 (pp 109-135) what he calls “an eclectic approach to the narrative exegesis of Pseudo-Philo” (p 109). Focusing on the use of “secondary Scripture” (p 109 – Scripture found elsewhere in the Bible) he develops a grid to study LAB’s compositional technique and Frisk’s hermeneutical strategy. His model comprises 6 hypotheses on the process of re-reading Scriptural texts. These are then corroborated in the last chapter. His model is then formalized on page 119 in a diagram indicating the interpretational process as belonging to one of four quadrants formed by the movement between *traditio* and *traditum* and simultaneously between static reiteration and dynamic innovation.

Chapters 4 (pp 136-190), 5 (pp 191-263) and 6 (pp 264-313) present a technical analysis of sections from LAB 12-24. In each analysis the order is followed of first investigating the compositional technique and then the hermeneutical strategy. As spin-off each of these chapters demonstrates Fishbane’s proposal of three basic motivating social settings for re-reading: either alienation, or textual obsolescence or social-historical dislocation. In each chapter the author presents an extensive analysis of a specific section of LAB using the methods developed in chapters 2 and 3 to indicate how LAB used secondary Scripture to give its own interpretation of Israel’s history. Subjects dealt with include Israel’s journey from Egypt to the borders of the land (LAB 9-19), several narratives in LAB 15-18 dealing with the challenges to God’s fidelity to Israel, and the paradigmatic function of Israel’s past in LAB 19-23.

In the final chapter 7 (pp 314-331) Fisk returns to the theses presented in chapter 3 (wrongly indicated as ch 2 on p 315). He refers to the study done in the previous three chapters to establish the validity of the six theses he proposed. Dealing lastly with the subject of the hermeneutical relation between *traditum* and *traditio*, he points out that the subtlety of LAB’s hermeneutical use of Scripture has hitherto not been fully appreciated. The covenantal framework and the hermeneutical common ground shared by LAB and contemporaneous exegetical works are still to be explored by further research.

An extensive bibliography is published on pp 332-349, an index of modern authors on pp 371-375 and a very useful index of ancient sources on pp 350-370. Comprehensive footnotes appear on nearly every page of the publication.

As this publication deals with a very specialized area of hermeneutical investigation, a smaller circle of readers is to be expected. For those who are, however, interested in historic hermeneutics and the subject of “rewritten Bible”, his study is highly recommended. It will also play an immense role in bridging the gap between Old Testament and New Testament studies.

Flusser, D 2007 – *Judaism of the second temple period (Vol 1: Qumran and Apocalypticism)*

Publisher: Eerdmans. Hardcover, 370 pages. Price: \$36.00

Reviewer: Dr M Cromhout (Johannesburg)

This first volume of two is a collection of 22 articles originally published in Hebrew, and now translated into English and made available to a wider readership by Azzan Yadin. David Flusser, who passed away in 2000, is recognized as a leading Jewish scholar of the New

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Testament and Early Christianity, but as the sub-title indicates, this volume focuses on some of his work on Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls (which Flusser openly identifies with the Essenes), a work that already commenced when the DSS were discovered. The articles in this collection range from those which have a broad appeal, to those catering for inter-textual specialists and the true DSS connoisseur. A notable strength is Flusser's ability to recognize inter-textual allusions or connections across the spectrum of "Jewish" literature of this period, however subtle they may be. This includes connections between the DSS and later liturgical forms of Jewish worship, with the Tanak, Josephus, the Apocrypha, as well as traditions and attitudes evident in Jesus, early Christianity and of course, the New Testament. For any specialist in the DSS, this book is a welcome addition filled to the brim with opportunities for learning and insightful scholarship.



Hardin, J K 2008 – *Galatians and the imperial cult*

Publisher: Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck. 188 Pages. Price: Unknown

Reviewer: Prof Dr W Carter (Brite Divinity School – Christian University Fort Worth, USA)

This book intends to examine "Galatians against the backdrop of the imperial cult in order to determine its value for understanding the social and religious setting of the recipients of Paul's letter" (p 19).

In Part 1 on the imperial cult, chapter 2 provides a somewhat generalized and simplified introduction to the imperial cult and ideology. The first half identifies some ways in which the cult proliferated, while the second part discusses the cult's "reception" among local populations. The division is awkward, suggesting that Rome exported the imperial cult while provincials willingly received/consumed it. Previous studies of this interaction – not considered here – indicate a much more interactive and ambivalent process. The discussion also does not consider the relationship between "Romanization" and the imperial cult. The use of a sociological model of empire (G Lenski's?) might have helped to establish the hierarchical empire's concentrations (and deprivations) of power, status, and wealth. While the discussion rightly notes the involvement of non-elites, it neglects gender and observances in associations and households.

Chapter 3 examines the degree to which the imperial cult and ideology impacted on Galatia. The discussion catalogues archaeological evidence for the imperial cult and ideology. A lack of methodological sophistication prevents examination of a range of negotiations. The use of James C Scott's work, and postcolonial theory might have complexified and teased out the multivalent and ambiguous ways the powerless (and powerful) negotiated imperializing power. There is little contribution to be found in these chapters.

Part 2 turns to Galatians. Chapter 4 argues that Paul's statements in Galatians 6:12-13 about the agitators are reliable. Engaging Winter's analysis, Hardin argues that the agitators were local Jewish Jesus-believers, not Galatian outsiders (pp 92-94). They participated in the imperial cult (pp 102-110), but sought to avoid civic and synagogal persecution for associating with separated Gentile Christians who did not observe the cult (pp 91, 114, 144). The agitators sought to circumcise them not because Jewish groups enjoyed exemption as *religio licita* (rightly rejected) but to regulate their status by reintegrating the

Gentile believers with a more societally “normalized” (cult-participating) group, thereby also securing their own protection from persecution.

Chapter 5, “Days, Months, Seasons, Years’ and the Imperial Cult (Gl 4:10),” argues that Galatians 4:10 refers not to the Mosaic law but to the imperial cult and its festivals. The salvation-history sketch in 4:1-7 awakens “the Galatian Jesus-believers from their observance of the emperor cult” (pp 138; also 134, 138-139, 141, 145) to which they have returned under social and familial pressure in order to allay their social dislocation (pp 143-144, 146-147). The agitators advocate circumcision to normalize the Gentile believers in society thereby avoiding their own persecution from civic authorities for being affiliated with a Gentile group that did not observe the imperial cult (p 144).

I find this reconstruction of the Galatian crisis in relation to the imperial cult unsatisfactory. At best, it is imprecise in terms and confused in articulation; at worst the main argument is simply incoherent. In chapter 4, for example, Hardin argues initially that the Gentile Galatian believers have separated from the agitators (Jewish Jesus-believers, 93-94). But within ten pages he contradicts himself by arguing that the agitators urge circumcision for Gentile believers because civic authorities and synagogues were persecuting the agitators *for associating with a group* that did not observe the imperial cult (pp 91, 111-113, my emphasis). So were they associating or not? “No” on pp 93-94; “yes” on pp 111-113, and “not yet” on p 111 (Paul is “attempting to persuade the Galatians to dissociate themselves from the opponents;” p 96).

Or again, Hardin argues in chapter 4 that the Gentile Galatian believers do not participate in the imperial cult (pp 91, 114) while the agitators do (p 91). But in chapter 5, initially Hardin argues – plausibly – that Galatians 4:10 refers to the imperial cult in which Paul’s addressees *were* participating (“you are observing ...” present tense). Hardin then builds his argument on their NOT observing the cult. That is why the addressees had, so the argument goes, created an ambiguous social location for themselves “in no man’s land” (p 112) and why Jewish Jesus-believers pressured them to be circumcised, partly to alleviate this ambiguity (normalize status, 143) as well as to protect themselves from persecution. But if the addressees are already observing the imperial cult as Hardin’s exegesis of 4:10 claims (contrary to his argument of chapter 4), they do not have an ambiguous status that needs to be resolved, they are “normalized,” there are no association difficulties for (participating) Jewish Jesus-believers (if they were associating?) because everyone is participating in the imperial cult, there is no reason for circumcision, and there would be no persecution! Chapter 5 destroys chapter 4.

Throughout, Hardin asserts the key role of persecution for both the Gentile believers (for not participating in the cult) and for the agitators in associating with them. Hardin produces no first-century provincial evidence that civic authorities routinely persecuted those who did not participate in the imperial cult or those who associated with groups that did not participate. While there was societal pressure to participate, participation was not required. There are other problems. Despite the book’s title and Hardin’s insistence on exegesis (18), the discussion of both Galatians and the imperial cult is minimal. Only 2 passages – generously 12 verses – receive detailed discussion. The inadequate understanding of the pervasive presence of empire is reflected in the frequent use of the image “background/backdrop” (e.g. 19, 47, 48, 86 [2x], 91, 113, 114, 116, 123, 149 [3x], 150, 151, 155 [2x]). The empire was foreground not “background,” constituting the multi-faceted daily reality negotiated by millions, as previous work (that Hardin at times disparages) has established. The book’s minimal contribution is also evident in that much of the (confused) “argument” comprises modifications to previous proposals from B Winter and T Witulski. Throughout there are typos (p 2 “bene”), wrong words (p 58, “catch site” should read “catch sight;” p 137, “Christ’s son” should read “God’s son”).

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This is not to conclude that Galatians has nothing to do with the imperial cult. The good work of Brigitte Kahl, Davina Lopez, and Crossan and Reed, to name some not engaged by this discussion, suggests otherwise.



Instone-Brewer, D 2002 – *Divorce and remarriage in the Bible: The social and literary context*

Publishers: Eerdmans. 355 pages. Price: Unknown

Reviewer: Rev A E Dreyer-Krüger (Rustenburg)

As the subtitle suggests, Instone-Brewer examines in great detail the social and literary context of marriage and the associated topics of divorce and remarriage in the Old and New Testament periods. He attempts to show that because of the background knowledge and assumptions of the first-century reader, based on developments in the abovementioned periods, the conclusions they would have reached on Jesus' and Paul's teachings on divorce and remarriage would have been different than those of later readers, because by the second century, such knowledge and assumptions had already been forgotten.

Instone-Brewer begins by looking at ancient Israel and the Near East and its influence on Mosaic material. In these times a marriage was primarily seen as a contract which involved payments, agreed stipulations and penalties. It was almost impossible for a woman to remarry. The Law of Moses brought the divorce certificate which gave woman the right to remarry, especially in the case of abandonment. The Mosaic Law also stipulated the ways in which a husband had to care for his wife. This included supplying her with food, clothing and love.

In chapter three the point is made that the prophets often portrayed the relationship between Israel and God as a marriage, from which God divorced Godself because of a breach of the marriage contract. The intertestamental period, discussed in chapter four, brought great changes that increased both the rights of woman and the security of marriages within Judaism. By the first century there was general agreement concerning most aspects of divorce and remarriage within rabbinic Judaism. According to divorce law, the decision to end the marriage contract was that of the husband, because he had to write the divorce certificate. A wife could force a husband to divorce her if she could prove to a rabbinic court that he had broken the marriage contract, but it seldom happened. The author claims that one development during these times influenced almost all divorces among Jews. The Hillelites introduced a new interpretation of Deuteronomy 24:1 by which they allowed divorce for "any matter", while the Shammaites interpreted the same text as saying "for a matter of indecency". Most Jewish divorces therefore took place on Hillelite grounds, because there was no need to prove anything in court. It is worth noting that the Shammaites accepted the validity of this type of divorce even though it was contrary to what they would have decided. Meanwhile, in the greater Greco-Roman context it became easier for both men and woman to initiate a divorce, and anyone could divorce simply by separating from one's spouse.

Instone-Brewer approaches the problem of Jesus' radical teaching about divorce and remarriage from an interesting angle. An important investigation in this regard concerns the abbreviated texts that we find in the Gospels. He claims that usually the exegesis was largely absent from these debates because these text were regularly used in the synagogue and

because it was widely known at the time. By the second century what used to be common knowledge was quickly disappearing, largely because of the disappearance of the Shammaite group. Commonly understood phrases were also removed, but would have been mentally added by first century readers. The added phrase "for any matter" as it appears in Matthew 19:3 which does not appear in Mark or Luke, is one such example. This phrase referred to the Hillelite interpretation of Deuteronomy 24:1, an interpretation Jesus did not agree with at all – hence the view that remarriage after this type of divorce is invalid. As far as this issue is concerned, Jesus differed from opinions within Judaism, including that of the Shammaites. Furthermore, the author concludes that in instances where the Gospels are completely silent about an important matter like the silence about remarriage after the death of a spouse or Jesus' opinion about the grounds for divorce in Exodus 21:10-11, Jesus' silence can be ascribed to the fact that on these points he agreed with the unanimously held opinion of Judaism. One such example is Jesus' silence about the Old Testament grounds for divorce. The author claims that the assumption that Jesus regarded the exception of *porneia* as the only ground for divorce is wrong, because it would mean that the Shammaites too had allowed divorce only on the grounds of adultery, which is simply not the case. At first these arguments appear to be rather weak but the author's extensive research is convincing. The author delicately adds to the exegeses and arguments from their abbreviated forms and concludes six separate matters about which Jesus taught.

Chapter seven shows that the world in which Paul lived was completely different from that in which Jesus lived. It is shown that Paul reacts mainly to the practice in the Greco-Roman world in terms of which anyone could divorce simply by separating from one's spouse. Like Jesus, Paul emphasized ways to stay married, rather than ways to divorce.

Chapter eight deals with the marriage vows in Judaism and Christianity and concludes that the Christian marriage service can be regarded as a version of the biblical marriage contract, largely because the wording "cherish, honor and love" can be traced back to the Bible and Old Testament marriage contracts.

This reviewer regards chapter nine as the most important chapter in the book because it traces the history of interpretation of these difficult texts and the reason for the wrong assumptions that were regularly made from early on. Because virtually all non-Hillelite teaching was lost during the late first century, the question of divorce on the grounds of the "any matter" interpretation was understood as a question about "any divorce". Similarly, when Jesus condemned divorces for "any matter", he appeared to condemn all divorces. When he affirmed the interpretation "a matter of indecency" he appeared to have made an exception for adultery only.

Instone-Brewer brings new insights because of his reading of the text in a culturally sensitive way through the eyes of a Christian living at the time when the texts were written. He shows convincingly that the traditional view most churches hold, is based on reading the text through the eyes of someone from the second century or beyond, when specific details of the first-century culture have been forgotten. This is why most churches regard divorce per se as a sin, which is not the case in the New Testament where sin lies in the breaking of the marriage vows. This does not mean that divorce should be encouraged. Because of his research Instone-Brewer has a more pastoral view of divorce and remarriage, while at the same time concluding that according to the New Testament divorce should be avoided whenever possible. A believer should never break the marriage vows and should try to forgive a repentant partner who has done so.

By taking into account the social and literary context to an extent never seen before, this book offers new insights into the original meaning of Jesus' and Paul's teaching about divorce and remarriage, Instone-Brewer succeeds both in simplifying the original meaning of the texts and in complicating matters for the modern church which for centuries has based its teaching on wrong assumptions. It challenges the church to review its teaching and makes an exemplary contribution to this field of enquiry.

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Metzger, P L 2007 – *Consuming Jesus: Beyond race and class divisions in a consumer church*

Publisher: Eerdmans. Pages: 201. Price: \$16.00

Reviewer: Dr M J Manala (University of South Africa)

Dr Metzger highlights his concern about the structural coldness and insensitivity to the issues of race and class divisions evident in the American Evangelical Christianity, which he calls a consumer religion. He ascribes this coldness and insensitivity to an absence of practical love which he says is inhibiting efforts to spread the love of Jesus Christ.

In chapter 1, Metzger traces the historical missteps of American evangelicalism over the years, leading to a reversal of the evangelical legacy in terms of social and cultural engagement. This chapter outlines ably the consumer-driven religion's privatization and power politics. Metzger highlights appeals to what he calls *anti-intellectualism* in their theologizing and the adoption thereof, retreating to a teaching of the gospel, which focuses exclusively on *soul saving* that strengthened antipathy to social engagement, developing *tendencies of premillennial eschatology*, moving away from *world-changing gospel and embracing a world-resisting and worldly gospel*. All of this is the result of the evangelicals' pride, power mongering and falling out with God and his purpose for the Church of Christ.

In chapter 2, the consumer Balrog that is characterized by adherence to homogenous church growth principles, interest in numerical, monetary and political success, is challenged and exposed as the worst form of betrayal of the gospel of Jesus Christ. This consumer ethos, Metzger posits as a divorce by American evangelicals from Christ's central message of love that can never mix with the consumerist ethos. Metzger quite harshly criticizes this ethos and prophetically denounces it, cursing its possible continuation. The churches are being exposed in this chapter as followers of a disordered vision that leads to their failure to confront and deal with race and class divisions in the church.

Metzger in chapter 3 investigates the unconquerable power of Christ's atoning work. He shows that the power of consumerism, legalism, racialism and class division cannot stand in the face of Christ's atonement power. Metzger uses Christ's victory over the powers and principalities to inform and encourage the needed engagement of the church in the struggle against consumerism, legalistic distortions, racialization and divisions.

Chapter 4 presents recommendations towards an inside-out shake up which the author indicates, is needed to remove the individualistic and consumerist conception of salvation. He calls for a rebirth, i.e. regeneration, repentance and forgiveness in order for the American Evangelical Christians to overcome race and class barriers in a consumer church, not just affect structural change or engagement. The evangelical theological legacy, emphasizing rebirth, primary relationships and personal responsibility is roped in as means of combating moralism, escapism and consumerist teachings and structures.

In chapter 5, the author presents the vision of the church as the Ark that has at its centre and is dependent upon the Scripture and the Lord's Supper for its "unimaginable power that intends to confront and consume race and class divisions in the church". In this context, the church should understand the Bible story as "the ultimate Story". Metzger says: "We must approach the Bible ... from the standpoint that it envelopes and consumes us when we consume it" (p 113). The significance of Sacraments, especially the Lord's Supper, is highlighted as a way of reshaping the church's identity as a family and community sent to witness to Christ's victory over the fallen powers.

Chapter 6 discusses "ways in which Christians can confront the consumer church and culture with the Ark in hopes of reconciling those different ethnic and economic backgrounds" (p 133). The author challenges Christians to shake off their commodity and church growth orientation and to adopt a communal and co-missional model that focuses on building

qualitative relationships and partnerships to help break down divisions among people. Christians are called: "to relocate, reconcile and redistribute the Lord's bounty" (p 137). The building of a beloved community through the "rebinding work of shalom" is the goal.

Metzger concludes this seminal work with a reference to the eschatological banquet, a banquet to which everyone is invited without discrimination and at which all are welcome. What a vision in the presence of the powers of consumerism and class divisions! This highly prophetic book is recommended to theologians from all persuasions, theological students, lay leaders and all Christians who can read and understand English. Its wealth should be distributed to all the people of God.



Nel, G 2007 – *The compassionate leader: Leading like Jesus did. How treating people properly can give you the corporate edge*

ISBN: 978 0 620 39849 7, Pages i-150. Price: Unknown

Reviewer: Rev Frikkie J Labuschagne (Parys)

Dr Gerhard Nel is a minister in the Netherdutch Reformed Church in Arcadia, Pretoria. He obtained his doctorate in New Testament Studies from the University of Pretoria on the theme of Jesus' ethics.

The *Compassionate leader* follows a dialogical approach. The primary purpose of this book is to enable leaders or potential leaders to apply the Christian ethics outlined in their work environment.

"*Leading like Jesus did*" sets the tone for the author's approach to a highly debatable subject: leadership. Effective leadership happens when you as a leader have the ability to lead with compassion and to address the needs of people.

Potential readers are:

- Ministers
- Leaders and potential leaders
- Business people
- Members of congregations

The compassionate leader is a book on Jesus and a new way of leading people. Christians in the business world should apply a new ethics if they want to make a difference and lead people effectively.

"Research shows that spirituality in the work place enhances individual creativity, honesty and trust within companies. Employees also experience a sense of spiritual fulfillment and they are more committed to the organization's targets, goals and aspirations." Based on the life and work of Jesus, this book will help leaders to identify and associate with Jesus' leadership and "management style".

The following facets of Compassionate Leadership are addressed in this very practical and principle-based book:

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- Leading with sensitivity leads to compassion with oneself and could extend to compassion towards others.
- Emotional intelligence enables compassionate leaders to manage their own emotions.
- Responsible corporate leadership should be based on sound moral values and principles.
- The “soft” leadership style that Jesus himself displayed, can be compared to the new and highly appreciated charismatic leadership style. Jesus replaced an autocratic management style with a sensitive approach.
- The book will help any leader in facilitating change. Change is a reality every leader has to deal with. Jesus taught his followers to have an attitude of life-long learning.
- A relational approach to leadership will bring compassionate relationships into focus again. Jesus displayed an emphatic approach towards everyone he encountered.

The compassionate leader is attractively presented and is easy to read.



Peels, H G L 2007 – God en geweld in het Oude Testament

Uitgewers: Theologische Universiteit Apeldoorn, Nederland

Resensent: Dr F J Boshoff (Ermelo)

Veral sedert die 20ste eeu kry mens die indruk dat ons in ons wêreld te doen het met 'n geweldsontploffing van ongekende omvang. Tegnologie maak dit ook moontlik om baie gou op hoogte te wees van waar oral geweld plaasvind.

Die kerk met die evangelie van Jesus Christus as riglyn kan nie anders nie as om hierdie geweld af te keur en teen te gaan. Die kerk het ook die taak om liefde, barmhartigheid en vergewingsgesindheid te verkondig.

Wanneer oor die verhouding tussen Ou Testament en Nuwe Testament gedink word, is dit juis die geweldstema wat verantwoordelik is vir baie van die kritiek teen die Ou Testament, ook vandag.

Peels hou hom in hierdie boek besig met die probleem van geweld in die Bybel en veral die Ou Testament. Hy toon aan dat die bewuswording van “geweld” as tema in die Bybel baie resent is aangesien die lemma “geweld” nie in vroeëre woordeboeke of ensiklopedieë voorkom nie. Dit begin eers verskyn laat in die tweede helfte van die twintigste eeu.

Hierdie boek is 'n bundel van vyf artikels en twee referate wat vroeër in ander tydskrifte verskyn het.

In hierdie boek word die kritiek van S Janse op Peels se standpunt oor geweld breedvoerig weergegee. Twee van Janse se artikels waarin hy ernstige kritiek uitspreek, is in hierdie boek opgeneem. Peels se antwoord verskyn telkens daarnaas.

Die ernstigste beswaar teen die Ou Testament as deel van die Bybel is dat geweld nie net telkens goedgekeur word nie, maar dat God self as Geweldenaar beskryf word. Met meer as duisend tekste waar daar sprake is van geweld, toorn, straf, stryd, oorlog, moord, “is (het) niet overtrokken om de Bijbel te typeren als een van de bloedigste boeken uit de wereldliteratuur ...”

Dit klink nie goed in 2007 nie. In ons tyd word gesoek na 'n "sagte God", want daar word gevra wat die verskil sou wees tussen 'n Palestyn wat vandag in 'n selfmoordpoging homself in 'n bus of restaurant opblaas en onskuldiges vermink en vermoor en die Bybelse Simson wat met sy dood meer vyande dood gemaak het as gedurende sy lewe.

Die boek eindig met die akademiese rede wat Peels gehou het op 11 September 2006, 'n besondere datum presies vyf jaar nadat die wêreldgeskiedenis in sekere sin 'n nuwe wending geneem het. Sedertdien verskyn die tema van geweld hoog op die politieke, sosiale en godsdienstige agenda van die hedendaagse samelewing.

Vir die gemiddelde Bybelleser is dit 'n onthutsende ervaring om te ontdek dat die mees prominente antropologiese tema in die Ou Testament juis dié van geweld is.

Dit bring mee dat eksegetiese sowel as Bybelse teologie vandag voor die besondere uitdaging te staan kom om die vraag te probeer antwoord: Hoe moet geweld in die Ou Testament beskou word?

Die boek is in 'n gemaklike styl geskryf wat dit toeganklik maak vir enigeen wat meer wil weet oor hierdie aktuele tema. Dit word veral vir predikante aanbeveel om in ons gewelddadige tyd kennis te neem van die geweldstema in die Ou Testament.

