

## *Book Reviews*

### **Framing Paul: An Epistolary Biography**

Douglas A. Campbell

Cambridge, UK: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

2014, xxii + 468 pp. paper, £25.99

ISBN 978-0-8028-7151-0

*Reviewed by Philip Richardson*

Following his bold tour de force, *The Deliverance of God*, Douglas Campbell now sets his sights on shattering another area of near consensus: the chronology and authenticity of Paul's letters. Campbell contends that scholars of Paul must provide an historical account of the circumstances of the letters in relation to one another. He takes his cue from John Knox (from 1950), whose methodology he follows when 'framing' the chronology of the letters' composition. This method looks at Paul's letters only, and does not try to correlate the data with Acts until a later stage. The ensuing discussion is like a fascinating detective story, as Campbell casts a fresh eye over Paul's letters and picks up textual clues that enable him to put the jigsaw together piece by piece. Campbell has a great gift for taking a potentially dry topic and engaging the reader in following along with him as he outlines his thought processes with brilliant lucidity.

He begins with Knox's observation that a sequence can be established for Paul's longest letters, Romans and 1 and 2 Corinthians, each of which addresses the collection for Jerusalem. This provides the lynchpin for the whole chronology. Along the way, Campbell introduces the concept of *Nebenadressat*, rendered in English as 'Addressees Alongside', which provides the insight that in Romans, Paul is deliberately echoing material to Corinth (from where Romans was written) as if to continue addressing the Corinthians, in addition to the Roman audience. Campbell believes that this insight provides corroborative evidence for the places of composition for other letters whose origins may be less clear than Romans.

Campbell's framing exercise requires him to revisit a number of scholarly minefields such as the number of letters to Corinth. Campbell's attempt to identify the 'letter of tears' (2 Cor. 2:4) involves a certain amount of supposition, twice claiming 'it would not be surprising if . . .' (certain issues were addressed in this letter), and then building on his own reconstruction. Nevertheless, he provides a thorough and well-argued defence of an unfashionable position with patristic pedigree: that 1 Corinthians is the 'letter of tears'. Further, Campbell rightly argues that the burden of proof for the partition of 2 Corinthians into multiple letters (perhaps the mainstream scholarly position) rests on its advocates. Against the grain of his professed fondness for partition theories (120), Campbell ruthlessly exposes many of the arguments for the division of the letter. Campbell rightly notes that the Greek-speaking, rhetorically-trained Chrysostom did not see the difficulty with the rhetorical shifts that modern interpreters do. In every discussion Campbell impresses with his ability to attack his subject from a variety of angles and here he also draws on the work of Hans-Josef Klauck on letter production to demonstrate that many scholarly theories of the 'cut and paste' variety would be practically impossible to execute with the materials to hand in Paul's day. Among his many well-made points, Campbell exposes the assumption that the letters to Corinth should contain the kind of literary unity expected by modern interpreters, considering the different factions Paul needs to address in a single correspondence.

Campbell then springs another surprise: the claim to have found another letter to the Philippians in the pages of the canonical one. His contention rests on a troublesome demonstrative pronoun: Paul's reference to writing "the same things" (*ta auta*) to his audience (Phil. 3:1). Campbell proposes an ingenious solution to this scholarly problem: Phil. 3:2–4:3 is an excerpt from a previous letter, explicitly introduced by Phil. 3:1b, with the new letter resuming at Phil. 4:4. One pronoun seems very slender grounds for such a novel thesis to this reviewer, and one wonders why Paul would cite the entire letter verbatim, given that it was already in their possession. Perhaps if instances of such activity could be found in other ancient letters the proposal might carry more weight. The more interesting but questionable propositions are that Paul is facing the same opponents in Philippians as he does in Rome and Corinth and that further examples of *Nebenadressat* indicate that Paul was imprisoned in Corinth, thus placing the letters close in time to one another. More controversially, Campbell posits that the Corinthians are again the *Nebenadressat* of this epistle and links the exhortation to restore the erring brother in Gal. 6:1 to 2 Cor. 2:5–11. This enables him to propose a date prior to the prison epistles, but after the Corinthians epistles, as a companion letter to the conjectured one he has identified in Philippians. Campbell builds on a previous journal article,

which seeks to provide an ‘absolute date’ for Paul’s escape from King Aretas in 2 Cor. 11:32–33 that he uses to anchor the chronology established so far.

Campbell then draws on ‘Stylometrics’ to demonstrate just how weak arguments can be for perceived differences in style between letters already judged to be Pauline and those held in doubt. The variations are often no more significant than those between letters already accepted as authentic and insufficiently significant to warrant the charges of pseudigraphy. Campbell provides some solid arguments for dating 1 and 2 Thessalonians close to one another, and around the time of the Gaian crisis of 40 C.E., in canonical sequence. This seemed one of the most balanced and convincing of his theses.

The following chapter mounts strong arguments for the Pauline authorship of Colossians and Ephesians, among other things. Campbell then notes the variety of textual variants for the addressees of Ephesians 1:1b and swiftly identifies the Laodiceans as the most likely recipients, which also fits the profile of the implied readers, who do not seem to know Paul personally. Yet ‘to the Laodiceans’ does not appear in any known manuscript; rather, Marcion simply lists it this way in the second century. It would have been good to interact with positions like H. W. Hoehner’s defence of the traditional destination or Philip Comfort’s defence of the argument that Ephesians is an encyclical.

Finally, Campbell turns his attention to the letters to Timothy and Titus. To his credit he considers the origin and authorship of each letter individually, rather than as the ‘Pastoral Epistles’. Campbell is troubled by what he sees as the awkwardness of references to characters and places in his travel plans in Titus that seem out of place, in terms of the chronology that he has developed thus far. Titus’ style is judged too different to other epistles to be considered Pauline. Campbell is fair to 1 Timothy, rejecting questions of style and the organization of churches as major obstacles to Pauline authorship. Yet, the objections he places to the citation in 1 Tim. 5:18 do not seem insuperable and Campbell’s scepticism about the presentation of Paul’s travel plans assume that his own reconstruction is cast-iron. Many details in 2 Timothy are described as ‘suspicious’ or ‘troubling’ for Pauline authorship, yet L. T. Johnson’s robust defence of Pauline authorship is not engaged. Finally, Campbell reveals his coup de grace for the traditional position: Marcion inherited a collection of ten Pauline letters and the Pastoral epistles would seem to oppose Marcion’s teaching; this neatly fits the internal evidence that Campbell has adduced. It may come as a surprise to many that in Campbell’s ‘frame’ all the ‘disputed Paulines’ (excepting the ‘Pastorals’) come before the undisputed ones in his sequence. His conclusion exudes confidence, averring that ‘interpreters will now be able to reach more accurate judgments . . . by presupposing this frame’ (410).

One concern with this work is the very danger that Campbell seeks to avoid: the charge of circularity, since possible conclusions that could be drawn at various stages are rejected precisely because they contradict his frame, which, after all, is only one way of reconstructing the chronology from the epistolary data. Of most concern though, is his approach to the book of Acts. Other chronologies that integrate the data of Acts are described as ‘muddled’ (xv). Campbell repeatedly emphasizes the need to bracket Acts out (e.g. 154, 356), and considers its reliability an open question (145), even suggesting that the Acts data could have been ‘spun out of thin air’ (21) yet hinting that he will return to the Acts data ‘in due course’ (153 note 31). To cite two recent examples, Craig Keener’s Acts commentary has questioned whether this approach to sources is historically legitimate and Bruce Winter’s *After Paul Left Corinth* argues that this is not the way that scholars of ancient history work. It also raises the question: would Campbell really allow the data in Acts to challenge his conclusions at a later stage?

Nevertheless, Campbell displays an astonishing breadth of learning, pursues lots of trails from fascinating angles and displays sure-footed and balanced judgment on many issues, if sometimes overstating his case on others. His case for the Pauline authorship of at least 10 of the epistles deserves a wide hearing. This detective story kept me gripped until the end and future scholars will have to respond to his thesis.

### **Introduction to World Christian History**

Derek Cooper

Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press

2016, 255 pp., paper, \$18.00

ISBN: 978-0-8308-4088-5

*Reviewed by Shivraj K. Mabendra*

This latest introduction to World Christianity comes with some bold new claims and unique perspectives. It carefully builds on the existing resources and secures a place for itself with a fresh emphasis. However, to those who have journeyed with Earl E. Cairns’ *Christianity Through the Centuries* or Spickard and Cragg’s *A Global History of Christianity* and similar notable one-volume works on the subject, the obvious curiosity will be in regard to the originality and novelty of Cooper’s contents and perspectives.

The stated purpose of Cooper's book is to provide an overview of world Christian history. Cooper constructs his brief yet captivating overview of the Christian past utilizing the United Nations geoscheme of nations, use of current names of countries, and new periodization of Christian history, among other things. With a PhD from the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, Cooper is an emerging Christian historian and biblical commentator. The associate professor of World Christianity at Biblical Theological Seminary, he is the author of *Exploring Church History* (2015) and other books. In the present book Cooper reintroduces world Christian history from global historical and theological points of view.

The book is divided into three chronological parts with chapters focusing on selected geographical regions. The first part discusses the emergence and spread of Christianity from the first to the seventh centuries. The continents in focus here are Asia, Africa and Europe. The chapter on Asia argues that Asia is the birthplace of Christianity and Christianity is originally an Asian religion. The chapter on Africa highlights the significance of the African church in the early centuries after Christ with special reference to its theological contributions. The chapter on Europe underlines the fact that Christianity is not a European religion rather it was imported from Asia. The second part of the book narrates the development of Christianity during the eighth through the fourteenth centuries, the Middle Ages. Here, the division and decline of Christianity in Asia, its struggle with and the defeat under Islam in Africa, and its establishment as a native and prominent religion in Europe has been meticulously elucidated.

The third and final part of the book focuses on the history of world Christianity from the fifteenth to the twenty-first centuries. In addition to the story of Christianity in Asia, Africa and Europe, this part includes three more chapters exclusively dedicated to exploring the rise and status of Christianity in Latin America, North America, and Oceania (Island nations in the Pacific Ocean). This period witnesses the collapse of indigenized and dominant Christianity in Europe, reintroduction and growth of Colonial then native Christianity in Africa, and the formation of minority and "foreign" identities of Christianity in Asia. Christianity in Latin America is reckoned as a Portuguese and Spanish Catholic phenomenon in the context of religio-cultural fusion. North America is argued to be the most diverse Christian region in the world with a growing non-Christian feature. Oceania is called the youngest Christian region on earth – Christianity being just about 200 years old. Cooper concludes by declaring that Christianity does not belong to any particular geographical region rather it is like the wind that blows where it wills.

Cooper's introduction to world Christianity reads like a fast paced narrative with useful signposts and key-themes in focus. It takes the reader to the

north and the south, the east and the west, and to the controversies and concerns in Christian history. A dominant theological perspective, besides geographic and cultural, is at the center of Cooper's reinterpretation. Overall, the book is a welcome overview of global Christian history. As a fine summary of global Christian history, this book is a significant tool for exploring world history of Christianity from a variety of viewpoints, especially geographical-theological.

### **Paul among the Apocalypses?: An Evaluation of the 'Apocalyptic Paul' in the Context of Jewish and Christian Apocalyptic Literature**

J.P. Davies

Library of New Testament Studies

New York, NY: Bloomsbury

2016, xiv, 219 pp., hardcover, \$122.00

ISBN: 978-0-5676-6728-1

*Reviewed by Michael Tavey*

During the past few decades, there has been a scholarly debate discussing how to best interpret eschatological concepts within the Pauline epistles. Many of these scholars have taken polarized positions, believing that Paul is best understood from only one eschatological perspective. These scholars range from Martyn to De Boer. In *Paul among the Apocalypses*, J.P. Davies addresses this debate, arguing that the soundest way in which to understand Paul, in reference to these eschatological concepts, is through a balanced position.

Chapter 1 introduces the reader to the current debate, informing him/her of both the elements of the debate and the most prominent scholars associated with the debate. Chapter 2 addresses the eschatological concept of epistemology, arguing that epistemology is best understood through a paradigm of synergy, where human wisdom and divine revelation work together to reveal "spiritual" truth. Chapter 3 addresses the eschatological concept of time/ages, especially as it relates to soteriology. In this chapter, Davies states eschatological time is best understood as both an "irruption" of the divine, where God un-expectedly penetrated the human flow of time, *and* as historically progressive. Thus, the incarnation and atonement, which transitions humanity from the "old age" to the "new age," is best understood as both an evasive act of God and as a progressive salvific

movement. Chapter 4 discusses the eschatological concept of cosmology, arguing that there is no strict separation between heaven and earth. Instead, heaven and earth are inexorably connected. Chapter 5 addresses the eschatological concept of soteriology, espousing deliverance and justice as the proper way for understanding salvation. Otherwise stated, when one is saved, one is both justified from personal sin *and* delivered from the cosmic forces of evil present in the current age. Finally, in Chapter 6, Davies concludes his book with a brief overview of the current debate, and his critique of it.

Davies' arguments are compelling, insightful, and convincing. With a sagacious intellect, and with a detailed methodology, Davies provides the reader with quite a comprehensive understanding of the subject. Each chapter employs a three step exegetical methodology, with each step building on the next. First, being keenly aware of the elements in the current debate, Davies addresses the primary eschatological concepts that control the debate and the major points of disagreement between scholars in reference to these concepts (i.e. Revelation and human Wisdom; Irruption and History; Heaven and Earth; Deliverance and Justice). Second, he exegetically analyzes each of those concepts from a thematic position, using the eschatological books of *1 Enoch*, *4 Ezra*, *2 Baruch*, *Daniel*, and *Revelation*. Third, and finally, he exegetically analyzes how these concepts are understood within the Pauline corpus, in light of the former texts.

In this methodical way, he allows the primary eschatological books, in both the Apocrypha and the standard Protestant Bible, to help elucidate Pauline eschatology. This is highly important, for it reveals that Davies allows the texts to "speak for themselves," instead of trying to force the texts to teach a preconceived presupposition that is foreign to the texts. Thus, not only is Davies work intellectually astute, but also intellectually authentic. Furthermore, by using Revelation as a resource, something rarely done in the current debate, Davies provides a more insightful way of understanding eschatology as understood within the Pauline epistles.

Davies' book will provide teachers, students, pastors, non-pastors, and others with an acute understanding of Pauline eschatology, which will help them better understand his epistles as a whole. Additionally, it will challenge readers in two specific ways: 1) to understand these complex eschatological concepts from a synergistic "both-and" position, instead of a polarized "either-or" position; and 2) to consider the possibility that many concepts in the Bible, not just eschatology, might be best understood from a non-polarized perspective. From start to finish, Davies' book is an insightful and informative read, and will be a great boon for anyone seeking to better understand and/or research Pauline eschatology.

## **Jonah and the Meanings of Our Lives: a Verse-by-Verse Contemporary Commentary**

Steven Bob

Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska; and Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication Society

2016, 228 pp., paper, \$19.95

ISBN: 978-0-8276-1220-4

## **Joseph: Portraits Through the Ages**

Alan T. Levenson

Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska; and Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society

2016, 284 pp., hardcover, \$32.95

ISBN: 978-0-8276-1250-1

*Reviewed by David Zucker*

These two works present a popular overview of their respective biblical books. Bob's book is more accessible; he devotes a short chapter to each of the forty-eight verses in Jonah. Steven Bob is a congregational rabbi (Reform). He often cites some of the revered traditional Jewish commentators from the Middle Ages and beyond such as Rashi (Rabbi Shlomo Yitzhaki, 11<sup>th</sup> c.), Abraham ibn Ezra (12<sup>th</sup> c.), and RaDaK (Rabbi David Kimchi, 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> c.). Yet equally he offers both professional and personal examples to illustrate his points. The work has an affinity to self-help/inspirational books. Levenson's area of expertise as an academic is modern Jewish history, but he has taught many courses on Joseph over the years. Sometimes regarded as the fourth Patriarch, the story of Joseph plays out primarily in Genesis 37-50. Most of Levenson's chapters focus on Joseph ("Joseph: Favored Son, Hated Brother;" "Joseph the Dreamer;" "Joseph from Rags to Riches;" and "Testing, Dreaming, Punishing.") Yet Levenson's approach is to present a broad portrait of Joseph, how he has been understood not just in a traditional sense (Joseph the *Tzadik* [the righteous one]), but how Joseph has been regarded by a wide variety of Jewish and non-Jewish sources. Like Bob, he quotes from traditional Jewish commentators, but also references material from psychology, feminist analysis and political science. Levenson includes other biblical figures associated directly or indirectly with Joseph such as Jacob, Rachel, Judah, and Tamar. It is not immediately clear what is his intended target audience. He presupposes some knowledge of Jewish traditions. Levenson often expresses his ideas in non-scholarly

populist terms. To his credit Levenson offers the reader a broad variety of views on Joseph. He sets out his goals in his introductory chapter and he is faithful to his word. The book features a selected bibliography, endnotes, and a helpful index.

### **Adam and the Genome: Reading Scripture after Genetic Science**

Dennis R. Venema & Scot McKnight

Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press

2017, 240pp., paper, \$19.99

ISBN: 978-1-5874-3394-8

*Reviewed by Logan Patriquin*

In this courageous volume, Brazo Press pairs an articulate and deeply devoted Christian biologist, Dennis Venema, with the prolific author and biblical scholar, Scot McKnight who look to overcome the false choice of evolution *or* faith. This is a deeply personal endeavor for Dr. Venema who has found his head near the Evangelical chopping block on a few occasions because of the frankness with which he speaks about our evolutionary history. After encountering Dennis' work at a BioLogos conference, Dr. McKnight jumped on the project no less eagerly because of his belief that "the number one reason young Christians leave the faith is the conflict between science and faith" (104 & 172).

As a pastor, I tend to believe that the number one reason that young people are abandoning the faith of their parents is the stark difference between church mom and home mom, Sunday morning dad and Friday night dad. Nonetheless, it goes without saying that in our culture today young people (especially those seeking secondary education) are presented with biological, sociological, and psychological facts that often erode their Christian faith. Dennis and Scot look to propose a helpful path forward for thoughtful laity and pastors alike when it comes to engaging evolutionary thought, particularly that surrounding the historicity of Adam (and as Dr. McKnight points out on numerous occasions, his often forgotten partner Eve).

There are a handful of well-known Christian scholars who have dedicated much of their thought life and academic rigor to constructing and presenting models for a Christian understanding of our biological and hamartiological origins within an evolutionary framework. Still, few have engaged the crucial fact that *evolution is a*

*population-level phenomenon* (44). Professor Venema discusses this reality with amazing depth but also enlightened clarity. He helps readers grasp this challenging issue by likening biological evolutionary developments through gradual shifts to the way the English language has changed over a period of about 1000 years (20-22 & 41).

Readers of Dr. Venema's section will be amazed by the breadth of content he is able to pack into about one hundred pages. He speaks with authority addressing Evangelical sensibilities like evidence for a *Mitochondrial Eve* (62). Also, I am aware of no better refutation of *Intelligent Design* (ID) theorists than that which Venema presents (67-91). Ultimately, Dennis reveals to the reader that there is no convincing case for a *historical* Adam and Eve as the biological fountainhead couple of the human race. In fact, the data suggests a population of no fewer than 10,000 original humans (44). How then should we deal with the fact that Adam and Eve are presented as the original humans and original sinners in the Bible? Venema defers here to the theologically trained mind of Scot McKnight, but one wonders if Dr. Venema wouldn't have some profound insights of his own if given the chance to theologize in print.

The tone of the book then shifts as Dr. McKnight takes over. He chronicles his struggle to grasp what contemporary scientific evidence is actually telling us about human origins while maintaining a high view of Scripture. His main focus is dissecting Paul's understanding of Adam (and his forgotten partner in crime, Eve). Perhaps, he suggests, Paul isn't using a *historical* Adam (as we understand "historical" today) in building his theological case for the universality of sin and our common need for salvation (106-109)? After laying out twelve theses for understanding Adam and Eve in the context of Ancient Near-Eastern culture, McKnight surveys the various inter-testamental Jewish understandings and uses of the famous Genesis 3 couple to shed light on the likely thought-world influencing the writings of Paul. Some of these theses are a bit short sighted and underdeveloped. They manage to skip over important "hot button" issues about humanity as creating in the *Imago Dei*, human sexuality and roles in a non-historical Adam evolutionary framework, as well as challenges to the Sabbath rest of God "after" creation is *completed*. He even glides over the problem of gratuitous natural "evil" within his proposed framework. All things considered though, he does a splendid job exposing readers to the fluidity with which the Genesis 3 couple is used theologically throughout the history and development of Jewish thought. We are in his debt for this illuminating presentation.

Ultimately, Scot McKnight concludes that the literary Adam of both Paul and Jesus is a "wax Adam" that both can be and was molded and shaped by various writers to serve whatever theological purpose they looked to develop (149). Sure, he

concedes, with a cursory read of the text it seems like Paul believes in a historical Adam as both the source of our DNA and sinful condition. But, he continues, when we acknowledge the less than firm Jewish interpretations of this Adam figure, we find that what Paul really advances is, “the *literary, genealogical* Adam who becomes an adjustable figure...filtered through the Jewish tradition of interpreting Adam as the *archetypal, moral, and exemplary*” (183 & 187). In the end, he concludes, “Paul does not anchor his gospel of redemption in the *historical* Adam, at least not as I have explained what ‘historical’ means when attached to Adam and Eve” (189).

How do we maintain a coherent Christian theology if biology excludes the idea of a genetic or even historical hamartiological ancestor? Scot McKnight’s answer is *Paul never intended for his presentation of our collective sin problem to be bound to a historical Adam (and Eve)*. Instead, Paul uses Adam as a literary counter-figure to Christ and we all should see ourselves in Paul’s Adam. This may be all true. Still, it seems so plain to the average reader that Paul *did* in fact believe in a historical Adam. Why wouldn’t he? He didn’t have contemporary science to help form his thought. If Paul did intend to structure his theology of redemption around a historical Adam figure, and contemporary science excludes such a theological bedrock figure, then is Paul’s theology errant? I don’t think so, but readers of *Adam and the Genome* will find the text wanting in addressing issues of scriptural authority if in fact Scot’s hypothesis is wrong. Also, even if Paul’s Adam is only a literary Adam then how do Christians come up with a constructive theology concerning original sin and human depravity that is a crucial part of so many theological traditions?

Venema and McKnight do a great job introducing readers to an intriguing and currently developing field. Their respective expertise as biologist and biblical scholar are put to good use in this fast-paced volume that will spark much helpful discussion in the years to come. Anyone interesting in critically engaging the field of science and religion concerning human origins will find this text valuable and insightful.



## **Apostle of the Last Days: The Life, Letters, and Theology of Paul**

C. Marvin Pate

Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications

2013, 320 pp., paper, £14.15

ISBN 978-0-8254-3892-9

*Reviewed by Philip Richardson*

The publisher's blurb claims that '*Apostle of the Last Days* will be welcomed in the classroom as a one-volume treatment of Paul's life and letters as well as his theology', however Pate's work does not read like a textbook at all. Absent are the surveys of different scholarly views on this or that subject, sidebars explaining various facets of life in the first century or overviews sketching out the possible occasion and audience for each letter. It is not that Pate fails to deal with these topics, but rather that he eschews any pretense of detached objectivity associated with a textbook. Instead, Pate drives forward a strong thesis that leaves the reader in no doubt where his views lie on each epistle and on Paul's overall theology.

As the title of the book indicates, Pate's emphasis is on an apocalyptic reading of Paul that places inaugurated eschatology (the kingdom has come in Jesus Christ but is yet to be consummated) at the heart of Paul's theology. Pate devotes his introduction, an opening chapter and a concluding chapter on the theology of Paul to substantiating this claim, and makes a convincing case for its centrality. The chapters in-between treat each of the letters in turn in their assumed chronological order (though evidence for this is not provided in the book). Pate's distinctive thesis is that Paul is confronting competing eschatologies in each letter: the perspectives of Hellenistic religion, the imperial cult and various forms of Judaism; the latter subdivided further as the consistent eschatology of mainstream Judaism, the realized eschatology of *merkabab* (the heavenly throne mysticism of apocalyptic Jewish works) Judaizers and the inaugurated eschatology of what he calls 'non-*merkabab* Judaizers'. The chapters dealing with the individual letters typically see Paul fighting a war on at least three fronts; presenting his apocalyptic perspective in contradistinction to Hellenistic religion, the Imperial cult, and one or more forms of Judaism or Judaizers. These chapters evince serious engagement with a wide range of scholarship, detailed use of primary (especially Jewish) sources, and each of these chapters end with a survey of the letter that applies Pate's thesis to the whole work. A number of features characterize Pate's style, such as frequent charts

presenting Paul's view in contrast to those of others, and lengthy citations from other scholars.

Pate is clearly writing as an evangelical to fellow evangelicals and sometimes his use of language is in danger of alienating others who might have benefitted from his scholarship, or indeed have been persuaded by it. Referring to any who do not ascribe Pauline authorship to all thirteen letters attributed to him as 'this left wing of Pauline scholarship' (11) seems unnecessarily polarizing, particularly as it appears at the start of the book, and effectively describes the majority of scholars. Similarly, claiming that 'no reputable theologian today' would date Acts beyond the first century (15) implicitly dismisses major Acts scholars such as Pervo, Parsons and Tyson (whether or not we agree with such scholars over Acts or Pauline authorship!). At other times, Pate presents his own view without acknowledging that it may be contested. For instance, Pate notes that Galatians 'is considered by many Pauline scholars to be the first of Paul's letters.' (37) This is certainly true, but it is important to at least note that the majority of scholars give that place instead to 1 Thessalonians.

Pate's vigorous articulation of his thesis constitutes both a strength and a weakness. He leaves the reader in no doubt where his position lies and presents evidence of thorough research and original thinking on a wide range of topics and letters. The drawback of this approach is that those beginning Pauline studies do not get a clear sense of the strength of other's positions and some of those positions are dismissed too quickly. For example, Pate is clearly no fan of the 'New Perspective on Paul', which is dealt with rather hastily on pages 72 without engaging with the evidence presented. Without necessarily agreeing with every nuance of the 'perspective', it is a shame that some of its insights on the social context of Paul's arguments could not be acknowledged. Having said that, in other places Pate is fair enough to affirm the positions of scholars associated with this perspective (such as N. T. Wright and J. D. G. Dunn) in different areas of their work.

Sometimes Pate seems to overstate the evidence. His Deuteronomic reading of letters like 1 Thessalonians and Romans provides plenty of food for thought, but is 'curses' an accurate summary of the thrust of Rom. 9–11 (164)? Is it certain that Paul's simple use of the word 'glory' in the doxology 'to whom be the glory forever and ever' (Gal. 1:5), 'taps into the Jewish apocalyptic notion of the glorious resurrection body of the righteous associated with the dawning of the age to come' (41)? While Galatians and Romans have much in common, is it appropriate to describe Romans as a refutation of 'Judaizers, like Galatians' (169), given the differences in tone and emphasis between the two letters? It is also assumed on page 178 that Romans 7:1–25 speaks consistently of the present

experience of a Christian, so that the introductory reader would be unaware that this is a huge area of controversy. At times it would have been good to hear from other perspectives. Pate has little to say about rhetorical analyses of the letters, and I wondered whether the Greco-Roman philosophical and social context of the Pauline churches could have been given more attention.

Pate's book raised a number of important questions for me. Firstly, can we be certain that Paul is fighting a war on at least three fronts (Hellenistic religion, imperial cult and one or more forms of Judaism/Judaizing) in each of his letters? The chapters on Colossians and Ephesians demonstrate convincingly how differing backgrounds each make sense of what Paul may be opposing, but whether he is opposing several philosophies simultaneously and in each letter is a moot point. At times, the main issue might be a distortion of Paul's own teaching and other influences, such as Stoicism, may also come into play. Secondly, Pate frequently takes both Paul's affirmative and negative statements and reads out of them the position of Paul's opponents. There is clearly some justification for this practice and every scholar does it to an extent, but can we take every statement of Paul's and confidently assume that its obverse describes a position of Paul's opponents? Pate's approach to mirror reading seems too detailed at times.

There are a number of editorial errors. Pages 31–32 are identical to pages 33–34 and the last paragraph on page 56 contains some jumbled overlapping sentences. There is a wrongly substituted word in each of the lengthy citations on pages 61, 82 and 200. The absence of a bibliography was surprising and any future edition would benefit from the addition of an index.

Nevertheless, these criticisms and questions notwithstanding, Pate is to be commended on a well-researched book, which combines detailed and original exegesis with innovative thinking about the backgrounds of Paul's letters. No one will agree with every detail of his reconstruction of the letters' occasions and audiences but Pate provides much food for thought.



## The Enduring Authority of Scripture

D.A. Carson, ed.

Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans

2016, 1256 pp., hardcover, \$65.00

ISBN: 978-0-8028-6576-2

*Reviewed by Zachariah S. Motts*

*The Enduring Authority of Scripture* is a collection of recent scholarly articles on the issues surrounding the inspiration, inerrancy, and authority of scripture. It is divided into four main sections devoted to history, Bible and theology, philosophy and epistemology, and comparative religions. D.A. Carson has gathered thirty-six conservative evangelical thinkers who exchanged articles and met to discuss the pieces of this massive tome. The attempt made to discuss the nature of scriptural authority from so many angles is ambitious.

If the reader, however, is looking for a diversity of theological positions, arguments, counterpoints, and discussions, this is not that sort of book. While reading *EAS*, one gets the impression that there is a larger conversation happening, but the reader is given only a narrow range within that conversation. Across the borders of the individual articles, it seems that there are certain axes to grind. There is a concern that inerrancy, foundationalism, and biblicism should be rehabilitated in chastened forms, that inerrancy be shown as having historical provenance, and, negatively, that literary criticism, postmodernism, and those who would label parts of the Bible as “myth” be shown as mistaken. Names like Donald Dayton, Nancy Murphy, Stanley Grenz, and John Franke appear often to be argued against.

On the other hand, John Frame is referred to positively and often within *EAS*. For those familiar with the presuppositionalism of John Frame, many of the arguments for authority and inerrancy will have a familiar ring. Mark Thompson notes, “many have observed that arguments about final authority in any sphere cannot avoid being formally circular” (622). Or, Paul Helm writes, “Whether or not the Bible is accepted as true, let alone inerrant, with regard to all that it teaches, is obviously a matter of trust, and not firsthand verification” (918). Helm uses this reasoning in a way that suggests coming to a conclusion that there is an error within the Bible is practically impossible from the starting point of the doctrine of inerrancy. The presupposition is strong enough that the evidence is always expected to harmonize. This may be convincing for those already within this loop, but, for others, this looks like a philosophical smoke screen.

While there is an article that discusses science and evolution in relation to the Bible and a historical survey of the church and the rise of science in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the articles are careful not to step on conservative toes. The article by Kirsten Birkett seems to be open to evolutionary theory, yet the thrust of the article comes down to not wedding science too closely with theology (with Polkinghorne and Peacocke used as negative examples of this). This ambivalent stance is a source of confusion within the text. While there are authors who argue that inerrancy does not mean literalism and that some form of inerrancy but not literalism was the position of the Church Fathers, there are other authors who make statements assuming the complete historicity of Adam and Eve, the rainbow as a promise to Noah, and the Tower of Babel. Carson himself goes after authors “who espouse a form of historical criticism that is happy to get rid of Adam and Eve and the fall, and very loose on whether the exodus took place, and comfortable with great swathes of pseudonymity and with Jesus making predictions that are erroneous” after suggesting that those who hold multiple authors of Isaiah or a “very late” date for Deuteronomy do not have a “high view” of scripture (14). I wonder whether the position of the editor of *EAS* may be illustrative of why there is a narrowness to this thick book.

Towards the end of *EAS*, the comparative religions section was a pleasant surprise in that the authors took careful time to survey positions within Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam. These explorations do not provide much to the normative understanding of the Bible, but the comparisons are of missiological interest.

When I first opened this book, I was hoping for a lively discussion from diverse perspectives. After that initial disappointment, I was hoping to find a new synthesis on the evangelical side of the meaning of the authority of the Bible. I was disappointed there also. Most of these articles are surveys or rebuttals without a new synthesis. *EAS* can feel at times like a conservative defense maneuver, an entrenchment around the word “inerrancy.”

