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Review of Old Testament Theology by R.W.L. Moberly

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importance of a particular text for Judaism (e.g. Gen 2:4 and Shabbat). Often, however, Sweeney does not adequately dialogue with Jewish tradition. A casual glance at the index of authors reveals that great Jewish thinkers such as Rashi, Moses Maimonides, David Kimchi, and Abraham Heschel are rarely mentioned and are given far less attention than non-Jewish scholars. In sum, there is little in-depth interaction with Jewish thought in Sweeney's discussion of the biblical text.

Sweeney is an excellent scholar and has made many valuable contributions to the study of the Hebrew Bible, but *Tanak* falls somewhat short of the caliber of his other works. Those who are interested in reading another critical introduction of the Hebrew Bible will probably want to get this book, but those looking for a thoroughly Jewish reading of the text will be disappointed.

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Old Testament Theology: Reading the Hebrew Bible as Christian Scripture. By R. W. L. Moberly. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013, 352 pp., $34.99.

Fifteen years ago, R. W. L. Moberly expressed his desire for a new direction in the practice of OT theology. For him, the time had come for a *via media* that took seriously interpreting the OT both in the context of the Christian canon (Childs) and in a way that took seriously the need for contemporary relevance, à la Brueggemann ("OT Theology," in *The Face of OT Studies* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999]). This current work is his second recent foray into this theological arena, the first being his groundbreaking *Theology of Genesis* published in 2009 by Cambridge University Press. In the book's preface, Moberly flatly states he is trying "to model a way of doing Old Testament theology that is built around a dialectic between ancient text and contemporary questions, within a Christian frame of reference that is alert to other frames of reference," which for Moberly are primarily Jewish frames of reference (p. ix).

Rather than the usual comprehensive approach covering all the Tanakh, Moberly selects eight passages from the Law, Prophets, and Writings that in his view represent some of the chief concerns of Israel's Scriptures (p. 1). These concerns include many of the standard topics in OT theology such as God, election, idolatry, monotheism, covenant, torah, prophecy, wisdom, and psalms (p. 1). Though each topic can be read alone, the author suggests each chapter be read in sequence for a cumulative hearing of the significant voices in OT theology and a clearer understanding of the hermeneutical proposals (p. 4).

Moberly points to the hermeneutical focus reflected in his book's subtitle "Reading the Hebrew Bible *as* Christian Scripture," by stressing both the need to understand the Hebrew Bible as a Jewish compilation that preceded Christianity while still embracing the reality that these Jewish Scriptures were received by early Christianity and function as authoritative Scripture for the church. While he recognizes that reading the text as Christian Scripture is not the concern of all scholars,

he is hopeful that a well-carried-out reading of this sort will still provide illumination to interpreters outside the Christian camp.

Chapter titles include: (1) "A Love Supreme"; (2) "A Chosen People"; (3) "Daily Bread"; (4) "Does God Change?"; (5) "Isaiah and Jesus"; (6) "Educating Jonah"; (7) "Faith and Perplexity"; (8) "Where is Wisdom?" These are followed by an epilogue, which helpfully distills the main theological point made in each chapter. The main body of the book is followed by a comprehensive twenty-page bibliography and the usual author and Scripture indices.

For Moberly, the first five chapters of his work provide the doctrinal foundation for Israel's vision of God and life lived out in the divine presence while the next three topics wrestle with perennial problems in our human response to God (p. 281). Within each chapter, smaller font is used to discuss in more detail topics related to his main argument (p. 5).

The author's chapter on "Isaiah and Jesus" (chap. 5) provides one sample window into the methodological world of this book. Moberly acknowledges the central role that the book of Isaiah has played as a witness to Jesus as the Christ. To evaluate historic Christianity's appropriation of Isaiah, the first part of the chapter discusses the "principal issues" raised by such an approach. After noting the obscure nature of Isaiah's prophecy such that some of the Church fathers (e.g. Augustine) had trouble understanding the Christological focus of passages in Isaiah, Moberly recites the standard critical view that Hebrew prophecy has been found to be primarily forthtelling and concerned with the immediate response of the hearer to Yahweh's word. "Within the world of the text, the Jesus of the Gospels is not envisaged" and the Jewish objections to the use of Isaiah's prophecy as pointing to Christ are valid (p. 151).

The next section of the chapter critiques the classical long-term prediction and fulfillment understanding of prophecy by interacting with the works of evangelical scholars Oswalt, Motyer, and Kaiser. Moberly charges them with failing to distinguish the literary conventions in the text and ignoring the major conceptual debates about the supernatural in relationship to the world uncovered by the social and natural sciences (pp. 152–53). After rejecting traditional views of prophecy and fulfillment, the author oddly discusses and finds lacking the prediction-fulfillment mathematical computer models made famous by Drosnin in his work *The Bible Code*. Again, he chastises Drosnin and others of his ilk for not taking into account the results of scholarly studies on the language and history of prophecy in the Hebrew Bible (p. 154). Though he clearly accepts the historical-critical consensus on the formation and interpretation of Isaiah, Moberly does not despair, because the book of Isaiah can still find its Christological voice by reading it in the literary context of the Christian canon. For Moberly, "To claim that the meaning of Israel's scriptures may vary according to context is not a matter of special pleading by the Christian theologian, but a recognition of certain facets of the nature of texts as texts" (p. 158).

In the final section of the chapter, Moberly attempts a selective reading of Isaiah focusing on the theme of "exaltation and abasement" centered around Yahweh's activity found in Isaiah (e.g. Isaiah 2). The Lord exalts those who display the

moral qualities of God himself, such as the faithful Davidic king and the Lord's servant. This theme carries over into the NT in the words and character of Jesus (Matt 23:12; Phil 2:10–11).

The author should be applauded for his call for OT theologians to move their exegetical efforts beyond the historical meaning (the world behind the text), to concentrate in canonical context(s) on the world within the text, for the purpose of ultimately applying the word to the world in front of the text (i.e. to make contemporary application). Moberly's exegetical work is also quite good. His discussion of the proper translation and meaning of the *Shema* (chap. 1) reveals thorough philological and syntactical research and takes into account all the main views. His diachronic readings beginning with a historical-critical reading and culminating in a canonical interpretation are always illuminating and instructive.

While there are some positives in Moberly's approach, his work raises a number of concerns as well. First, with regard to the scope of OT theology and despite the enthusiasm of Moberly's claim otherwise, can detailed diachronic work on representative texts ever really encompass the unity and diversity of the OT canon as, for example, the more comprehensive theologies penned in recent days by the likes of Waltke or Goldingay at least attempt to do? Surely, William Dyrness's much earlier work on *Themes in OT Theology*, for all its strengths in exploring the major topics in the OT, suffered from the same weakness.

Second, evangelicals with a high view of Scripture will be wary of Moberley's easy acceptance and embrace of the assured results of higher criticism, so evident in his work on Isaiah and his critique of a classical evangelical approach to prophecy, prediction, and fulfillment. Prophetic texts make claims about the nature of ultimate reality that cannot be easily dismissed by reducing their statements to mere literary convention or reinterpreting them in light of current scientific issues.

Third, Moberley's approach to a diachronic canonical reading seems more akin to the method of James Sanders (vs. Childs) who argues for a canonical-critical method that celebrates the readings of successive communities of faith and has no interest in a single authoritative reading based on a received text that has religious authority for a specific community of faith, namely Christian (cf. Sanders, *Canon and Community*). If we as evangelicals accept Moberly's call to relegate interpreting the Hebrew Bible as Christian Scripture to "reading AS" rather than "reading IS," are we not jettisoning the binding authority of the text and conceding that the Christian reading is simply one reading among many with no more and no less authority than a comparative religions interpretation or one by a practicing Jewish scholar? Are we ready to concede that Advent readings of Isaiah are merely an exercise in Christian "imagination" (pp. 147, 151)?

Finally, one might question Moberly's thematic selections. Is the motif of "exaltation and abasement" really as central to the book of Isaiah as the author suggests? It seems a substantial case could be made that Isaiah as a book highlights Davidic covenant messianic concerns that mediate the establishment of God's rule over Israel and the nations that are made sure by God's power to affect history.

Despite these reservations, Moberly's work is a must-read of a moderate critic who commendably, in the tradition of Childs, is striving to read the Hebrew Bible

as Christian Scripture and make it applicable to the church in the early twenty-first century.

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The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Books of the Bible. 2 vols. Edited by Michael D. Coogan. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011, xxx + 600 pp., xii + 578 pp., $395.00.

This thorough and interesting work includes extended articles on every book included in any of the historical canons of the Jewish or Christian Scriptures, along with articles on important introductory issues and on important writings that reflect the early reception history of the biblical writings, such as the Dead Sea Scrolls, the OT Pseudepigrapha, the NT Pseudepigrapha, the Nag Hammadi Library, Targumim, and some writings of the Apostolic Fathers; as well as general essays on early Syriac, Greek, and Latin versions and on various literary genres, among others. English translations also get an entry, which stands out from the rest by the modern and culturally-specific nature of the corpus.

The first volume begins with a list of articles included in both volumes (they are in alphabetical order), a list of maps and charts (also for both volumes), and a four-page chart comparing the biblical canons of various religious traditions. Then there is a brief preface by the editor-in-chief, explaining the plan and orientation of the work. At the conclusion of the articles in the second volume, the reader is presented with a topical outline of contents, a directory of contributors, and an extended (94-page) index.

The preface explains that contributors on individual books were to follow a basic template as far as it would be appropriate for the material, including: (1) name(s) of book and its (their) meaning in English, and Hebrew and Greek as applicable; (2) canonical status and relation to canonical books or elements of those books; (3) authorship, both traditional attribution (Jewish and Christian, as relevant) and modern scholarly views; (4) date(s) of composition and historical context(s); (5) literary history; (6) structure and contents; (7) interpretation: what the book meant to its author(s) and audience(s) at the stages of its development, and how later readers and commentators have interpreted it; (8) reception history: how the book has been used in various media and genres, and other influence it has had; and (9) bibliography.

This two-volume work includes both less and more than what would normally be found in a typical Bible encyclopedia—less in that it does not deal with theological or cultural topics, but more in that the articles are much longer and in that it gives attention to reception history and to various types of literature relevant to the reception history. Also, unlike most encyclopedias, many of the bibliographies are helpfully annotated.

Most of the authors are well known in their fields and some are generally considered the most authoritative scholars on the topic (e.g. Tov on textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible, Royse on textual criticism of the NT). Some evangelicals