

critic to be 100 percent certain that we have the “original wording of the text” in cases where manuscripts significantly disagree. Some statements are too strongly asserted, such as if the autographs remained, “they would have been venerated and worshipped” (p. 7). Or, when the authors are looking to affirm the accuracy of the text, they claim that “it should be remembered there are close to 5,000 Greek manuscripts” (p. 7). Actually it is closer to 5,880 manuscripts, but an additional explanation should be provided that the majority are fragments of texts, so that the reader does not form the misimpression that we have available close to 6,000 complete manuscripts of biblical books.

On a lesser note, some of the illustrative pictures could have been more appropriately placed in the text. For example, the picture of a rabbi (this should actually be a scribe) copying Hebrew Scripture (p. 2) is in a section talking about the Greek Septuagint instead of the section on the previous page that actually speaks about scribes copying Scripture. Similarly, the picture of a Lachish ostracon (p. 236) would have fit much better closer to Jeremiah 52, which actually mentions the destruction of Jerusalem (p. 241; for further examples, see “Arab farmer plowing,” p. 206; “Jewish men dancing,” p. 207; and “the broad wall,” p. 218).

Another lesser drawback is that Hindson and Towns often assume the main character of a biblical book is its author, even when the biblical text does not explicitly state this. Also, when Hindson and Towns acknowledge that a book is anonymous, they nonetheless offer suggestions as to its authorship (e.g. pp. 103, 112, 118, 127, 163).

It is an unquestionably difficult task to write a single-volume, college-level survey of the entire Bible that provides sufficient necessary information in a way that is accurate and understandable. While this survey’s pictures and charts are helpful, it lacks the necessary breadth of information needed to lay a sufficient foundation for the college student and layperson alike.

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Engaging the Christian Scriptures: An Introduction to the Bible. By Andrew E. Arterbury, W. H. Bellinger Jr., and Derek S. Dodson. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014, xii + 276 pp., \$26.99 paper.

A trio of authors has combined to produce a Bible primer from a critical perspective. Andrew E. Arterbury serves as associate professor of Christian Scriptures at Truett Theological Seminary, Baylor University. W. H. Bellinger Jr. is the W. Marshall and Lulie Craig Chairholder in Bible, professor of religion, and chair of the Department of Religion at Baylor. Derek S. Dodson serves as senior lecturer in religion at Baylor.

In a well-written and engaging style, this book blends the topics of Bible introduction and Bible survey. As an introduction, it touches on the areas of canonicity, textual criticism, higher criticism, and archaeology. As a survey, it covers issues

of authorship, dating, structure, theme, and Bible backgrounds (i.e. history, culture, and geography).

Following the prolegomena, each chapter discusses a major section of Scripture, whether the Pentateuch, Prophets, Writings, Gospels and Acts, Paul and Pauline tradition, or the General Epistles and Revelation. One chapter addresses the intertestamental period (chap. 5). The chapters conclude with a list of suggested resources for further reading. Maps, illustrations, and sidebars frequent the pages, and indexes of Scripture and subject cap the volume.

Insightfully, the authors draw out some of the literary aspects of the biblical books. For instance, the treatment of Genesis 12–50 recognizes the eminence of the Abrahamic covenant throughout the ancestral narratives: “This theme of the ancestral covenant promise and counter theme of threats to the promise provide the tension that drives the plot of this section of Genesis” (p. 38). Other examples of helpful literary observations include the sin-punishment-grace pattern in Genesis 2–11 (p. 33), the literary structure of Kings (p. 79), and the play on the name Onesimus (“useful”) in Phlm 10–11 (p. 224). On the other hand, the authors appear to question the historical accuracy of the Gospels when they assign them to the genre of “ancient biography,” which was “not written to be objective” (p. 149).

Regarding canonicity, the Hebrew Bible “took its final form in the second century CE” (p. 6), while the NT canon “may not have been finalized until the fifth or sixth century” (p. 7). In order to discern the canon, early Christians employed the criteria of “apostolicity, universality, and traditional use” (p. 9). By contrast, Gleason Archer contends that “the only true test of canonicity is the testimony of God the Holy Spirit to the authority of His own Word” (*A Survey of OT Introduction* [rev. ed.; Moody, 2007] 67). Moreover, the authors suppose that the literary superscriptions of the psalms reveal the liturgical collection rather than the author (pp. 107–8). In support of the authorship stance, see James Thirtle’s *The Titles of the Psalms: Their Nature and Meaning Explained* (New York: Henry Frowde, 1904).

The authorship and dating of biblical books and events coincides with critical scholarship. Concerning the composition of the Pentateuch, the authors focus on the final form of the text, but occasionally speak of origins, such as the Priestly tradition in Genesis 1 and the genealogies of Genesis (p. 44). In stride, they seem comfortable with the notion that “Genesis 1 and 2 provide two creation accounts” (p. 31). Furthermore, their support of a thirteenth-century-BC exodus (pp. 36, 66) creates a problem when they come to the dating of Jericho’s demise, since “the excavation of Jericho demonstrates ... the city was not occupied during that time” (p. 68). Additionally, given that the book of Job reached its final form after the sixth century BC (p. 118), Job 7 alludes to Psalm 8 (p. 16). Other scholars maintain the reverse—that Psalm 8 alludes to Job 7.

On the NT side, anonymous second-generation Christians wrote the Gospels between AD 65 and 90 (p. 143). The Synoptic Problem, according to the authors, finds a resolution in the Farrer Theory, which upholds Markan priority without relying upon the existence of Q (p. 153). Pseudonymous NT epistles may include Ephesians (p. 227), Colossians (p. 233), 2 Thessalonians (p. 232), the Pastoral Epistles (p. 229), 1 Peter (p. 247), and 2 Peter and Jude (p. 250). The authors present 2

Corinthians as a composite document (p. 222). The Gospel of John and the letters of John “probably did not come from the same author” (p. 147). Specifically, “the author of Revelation was most likely an itinerant prophet whose preaching circuit included the seven churches addressed in Revelation” (p. 254).

Arterbury, Bellinger, and Dodson limit the foretelling of events to “the immediate future related to its ancient audience” (p. 81). Judah’s demise in the sixth century BC signaled the “beginning of the end of prophecy” (p. 94). Consequently, “a predictive approach to Revelation misunderstands the purpose of Revelation” (p. 253). In addition, an acceptance of *vaticinium ex eventu* characterizes the work. Since “the book of Daniel was almost certainly composed in the midst of [a] second-century-BCE context” (p. 131), the composer could recall the four corrupt kingdoms depicted therein—Babylon, Media, Persia, and Greece (p. 123).

As for other distinctive interpretations, Paul in Romans 7 uses the first person singular to “create a dramatic effect” rather than to speak autobiographically (p. 219). In the Gospel of Matthew, Moses typifies Jesus (p. 161). The authors lean toward the south-Galatia theory (p. 205).

In terms of page count, the primer lacks balance, favoring the NT over the OT. Although the OT exceeds the NT in length and number of books, 117 pages expound the NT, while only 106 pages illumine the OT.

The authors succeed in publishing a “manageable, accessible, and affordable textbook that aims first and foremost to benefit students rather than their professors” (p. xi). Their intended audience includes collegians and seminarians enrolled in a one-semester introductory Bible course. Because the volume foregoes footnotes, endnotes, and depth of discussion, an undergraduate setting seems most appropriate. Professors can acquire online access to a test bank that corresponds to the book. Read alongside Scripture, this supplementary textbook engages readers who desire to gain exposure to critical viewpoints and practices in biblical studies.

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The Lost World of Adam and Eve: Genesis 2–3 and the Human Origins Debate. By John H. Walton. With a contribution by N.T. Wright. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2015, 248 pp., \$17.00 paper.

In this sequel to *The Lost World of Genesis One: Ancient Cosmology and the Origins Debate* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2009), John H. Walton further develops his innovative interpretation of the opening chapters of Genesis. Walton’s central argument is that the focus of Genesis 1–3’s intended message lies not with the material origins of the cosmos and humankind but with their function and ordering. He seeks to demonstrate the text’s functional focus via a study of the various lexical and conceptual elements within Genesis 1–3, supported by comparisons with ancient Near Eastern texts (predominantly Mesopotamian and Egyptian, with little reference to Hittite, Ugaritic, or Persian texts). Walton acknowledges that ancient and flawed conceptions about material origins may be implied in the worldview