

Bronze Age Levantine sociopolitical structures. Benz well articulates the sociopolitical parallels between Amarna Canaan and premonarchic Israel, and he discusses possible Israelite strategies for maintaining a decentralized land. But, he does not really explore the significance of any sociopolitical continuity aside from the general conclusion that some of early Israel's constituents emerged from the sociopolitical milieu of the Late Bronze Age. Benz should have investigated this issue in more detail, just as he should have more thoroughly examined how continuity may relate to core biblical traditions portraying Israel as an outsider (the exodus traditions).

Notwithstanding these criticisms, *The Land before the Kingdom of Israel* is an important contribution to our understanding of premonarchic Israel. It persuasively characterizes Israel as a multipolity decentralized land during the judges period and offers a new approach to understanding the later centralization of the Israelite monarchy.

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Michael S. Moore. *What Is This Babbling Trying to Say? Essays on Biblical Interpretation*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2016. Pp. xix + 348. ISBN 978-1-4982-0852-9. \$40.00 paper.

This volume is a compilation of revised and updated essays that have been published over several decades. The book consists of 17 chapters that are subdivided into three parts: "Torah," "Prophecy and Apocalyptic," and "Wisdom and Other Writings." Each chapter addresses an issue in a biblical text in light of historical, cultural, social, and comparative intertextual studies.

"Part 1: Torah" includes three chapters. In ch. 1, "Another Look at Balaam," Moore takes a comparative anthropological approach to the nature of Balaam's activity in Balaam's cycle of Num 22–24 in the inscription from Tell Deir 'Allā and argues that Balaam acts as "diviner/seer" and "exorcist" (p. 18). In ch. 2, "Balaam the 'Prophet?'" the author continues the discussion about the Balaam tradition and compares the Deir 'Allā text with Hebrew prophetic passages (pp. 21–23). In ch. 3, "Role Preemption in the Israelite Priesthood," Moore examines the purification rituals in Judg 17–18 and Lev 8–9 in comparison with two Akkadian purification rituals, proposing that ANE texts might have had a significant influence on Israelite priestly rituals (p. 27).

"Part 2: Prophecy and Apocalyptic" consists of eight chapters. Chapter 4, "Yahweh's Day," analyzes different interpretive approaches of this concept and advances a holistic interpretation strategy that "transcends not only the Testaments, but literary-historical categories in general" (p. 57). Chapter 5, "Jeremiah's Progressive Paradox," examines the sapiential texts Jer 8:8–9, 9:22–23, and 18:18 from a preexilic perspective and treats them as a confrontation between Jeremiah and the sages in Jerusalem (pp. 79–80). Chapter 6 studies the identity crisis of Jeremiah in his confrontation with the priestly elite and the wise men of Jerusalem and offers pastoral application to those who struggle to remain faithful in their ministry (p. 92). Ch. 7 compares the metaphors in Jeremiah's

laments and the poetry of the Hodayot scroll found in Qumran Cave 1 and suggests that the Qumran writer creatively appropriates the metaphors from Jeremiah's laments to meet the needs of his own audience (p. 120).

Chapter 8 ("Jehu's Coronation and Purge of Israel") reads Jehu's story (2 Kgs 9:1–10:31) along with an Ugaritic text to argue that the story of Jehu's coronation and purge is "most likely a multi-leveled parody" of religious traditions of Israel's neighbors (p. 125). Chapter 9 ("Big Dreams and Broken Promises: Solomon's Treaty with Hiram") investigates the character and semantic field of this treaty (1 Kgs 5:1–18) to point out its socioeconomic and political undercurrents are similar to treaties described in the Amarna letters (p. 141). Chapter 10 ("Searching in Sheba: The Desire for 'Biblical Literacy'") interprets the Queen of Sheba's investigation of Solomon's wisdom as a pursuit of truth that leads to faith and worship of the one true God who has created wisdom (p. 163). Chapter 11 ("Resurrection and Immortality: Two Motifs Navigating Confluent Theological Streams in Dan 12:1–4") studies the relationship between prophetic and sapiential motifs in the prophetic literature, focusing on the resurrection of the dead and immortality of the righteous in Dan 12:1–4 (p. 177).

"Part 3: Wisdom and Other Writings" includes six chapters. Chapter 12 ("Ruth the Moabite and the Blessing of Foreigners") reads the blessings in the book of Ruth as part of "Aussengen trajectory," which bears witness to God as a loving kinsman-redeemer, "who will use any means . . . to replenish his creation" (p. 196). Chapter 13 ("To King or Not to King: A Canonical-Historical Approach to Ruth") looks at the book of Ruth through "the wandering-restoration lens, the religion-ethics lens, and the chaos-kindness lens" to analyze Ruth's theological message of hope (p. 205). Chapter 14 ("Job's Texts of Terror") investigates the use of the Hebrew term *šā'n* in Job 19:29 in light of the Deir 'Allā texts to propose that a possible embeddedness of non-Yahwistic material in the book of Job (pp. 223–35). Chapter 15 ("Human Suffering in Lamentation") focuses on laments as a way to express human grief and suffering and Lamentations as "the grief work of a nation, and indeed, of an entire religion" that ultimately leads to hope (pp. 243–44). Chapter 16 ("Bathsheba's Silence") examines Bathsheba's character and actions against the behavior of other ANE female mediators to demonstrate the puzzling contradictions of feminine power in a patriarchal world (p. 255). Chapter 17 ("'Wise Women' or 'Wisdom Woman?': A Biblical Study of Gender Roles") explores the boundaries of feminine identity that is formed by an ideal of the Wise Woman in Prov 1–9 and the wise women of the ANE and Israel (pp. 266–67).

This volume offers good examples of biblical interpretation that are attentive and informed by historical, social, cultural, and literary background of the biblical texts. It also displays methods of finding applications to timeless truth that are faithful to the messages of the biblical texts. While Moore does an excellent job of situating every biblical passage within its ancient Near Eastern background, at times he seems to prioritize the ANE literature. It is not always clear why it is necessary to read a certain biblical text in light of ANE literature. Why do we get a better understanding of Job if we read it as exhibiting features of non-Yahwistic literature? Or, how helpful is it to assume that the Israelites were so familiar with ANE literature of their neighbors that they would choose to use it for satirical purposes to advance their own theological agenda?

This notwithstanding, this book is a valuable addition to the field of biblical interpretation. It will serve as an excellent resource to those interested in methods of comparative, literary, and intertextual studies.

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Kyle Greenwood. *Scripture and Cosmology: Reading the Bible between the Ancient World and Modern Science*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2015. Pp. 250. ISBN 978-0-8308-4078-6. \$28.00.

The main thrust of Kyle Greenwood's (Associate Professor of OT and Hebrew Language, Colorado Christian University) book addresses the foreign structure of the universe presented in the OT, where the familiar concepts of space, planets, and stars give way to the threefold framework of heaven, earth, and sea. Drawing on the last 200 years of ancient Near East scholarship, it surveys the prevalence of the ancient Near East cosmological structure throughout Scripture. Greenwood demonstrates that this three-tiered universe, while strange for many 21st-century readers, is simply part of the cultural context in which the Israelites understood and explained God's creation and providence.

The book's first section establishes the necessity of understanding ancient Near East cosmology. In ch. two, Greenwood identifies shared elements between Egyptian, Canaanite, and Mesopotamian concepts of the cosmos. The three tiers helped explain phenomena such as precipitation, groundwater, and planetary movement. In chs. three and four, Greenwood focuses on the ancient Hebrew conception of the universe depicted in the accounts of creation.

The second and third sections consider how developments in philosophy and science affected Jewish and Christian readings of Scripture. Chapter five discusses the influence of Aristotelian cosmology on OT interpreters (including the authors of the NT), and ch. six examines how Protestants responded to the advent of the Copernican model. In chs. seven and eight, Greenwood provides a model for reading the Bible in light of scientific discoveries.

Throughout the book, Greenwood demonstrates that his primary concern is exegesis. He anticipates a contemporary consideration: how can modern Christians understand the rapid advances in science, technology, and medicine that seem contradictory to the cosmology of the Bible?

Greenwood's comprehensive way of answering this question is by far the strongest aspect of the book. He takes up the challenge of examining cosmology throughout vast swaths of the OT and examines the monoliths of Western European and American history and theology, from Aristotle to Darwin, Augustine to Warfield. He makes the case that the interpretive challenges faced by the reader are not limited to the 21st-century but are challenges that the church has addressed throughout its history. Greenwood emphasizes the historical nature of hermeneutics and brings the evangelical reader to a much-needed consideration of the past in order to understand modern exegesis better.

In addition, Greenwood provides practical methods for the Christian to comprehend the rapidly transforming field of science. His paradigm separates

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