

Bembry's second conclusion is that the tradition eventually came to consider Yahweh as old, especially in the key reference to an "Ancient of Days" in Dan 7. Again, Bembry is interested in comparative readings of this moniker, with special attention to Ugaritic literature; it may be no coincidence that Yahweh "ages" precisely in the apocalyptic appropriation of ancient mythic imagery. Bembry tentatively traces a historical trajectory in which Yahweh's El-like attributes (authority, wisdom, and fatherhood) ultimately lead to a transformation. In earlier traditions, Yahweh was a youthful warrior; but in the final layers of the biblical tradition, Yahweh has come of age.

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*WealthWatch: A Study of Socioeconomic Conflict in the Bible*, by MICHAEL S. MOORE. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2011. xv + 302 pp. \$35.00.

Adam Smith once said that "consumption is the sole end and purpose of all production," stating succinctly the goals of the capitalist society that the world has inexorably become over the two centuries since his time. For Christians in a capitalist world, navigating the flows of capital, labor, knowledge, and goods offers challenges that theologians have only begun to consider. Steering a course between simplistic presentations of the "Bible's view of money" (often mere boosterism for the "American Way") and the rejection of the Christian tradition remains desirable, for as an older master taught, "where your wealth is, there will your heart be also." Michael Moore helps readers begin the exploration of this major topic.

This learned yet readable book may be read at several levels. First, lay readers, ministers, and students will benefit from a text that is clear, often eloquent, and thought-provoking, while at the same time scholars will also learn from both the main text and the informative footnotes adorning it. Given Moore's stated desire that this work provoke a sustained conversation, the polyphonic overture to readers makes sense. Second, the book can be read at a primary level as a meditation of the socioeconomic implications of the Bible, but it also offers an excellent model of how to make sense of literature from Mesopotamia and Israel (HB, Dead Sea Scrolls, and what Moore calls Nazarene texts, i.e., the NT). His interpretations of Mesopotamian myth, in particular, show the sure hand of a scholar who penetrates to the inner workings of texts and hears them as intelligent examinations of real-world issues of their own time and ours.

Framing the ancient and modern discourses as ones of "socioeconomic conflict," Moore examines the ways in which mythic texts from Mesopotamia challenged the production and consumption structures of their own time (ch. 2). He then shows how some of the tropes of myth carried over into the HB, where the Israelite understandings of Yhwh either preserved or transformed the older material, radicalizing the critique and articulating new concerns about acquisition, protection, slavery, and deprivation. The biblical challenge to primogeniture and other techniques for managing family inheritance comes to the fore

(ch. 3). Later Jewish texts, shaped by the experience of foreign domination, emphasized taxation and slavery as major concerns (ch. 4), while the early Christian texts portrayed Jesus in a haggadic mode pointing his audience back to Torah (ch. 5). Moore concludes the work with suggestions for further reflection on major issues today, including bribery and political corruption, slavery, and indebtedness owing to job loss or illness. He demonstrates his central contention that “the socioeconomic conflict motifs embedded within the primary literature of the Judeo-Christian tradition remain an enormously untapped resource for postmodern Westerners” (231).

How does one assess this work, then? On the one hand, *WealthWatch* demonstrates an astonishing breadth and depth of reading (with a bibliography of almost sixty pages and about 1700 footnotes). On the whole, the learning usually functions to illuminate the problem at hand, allowing the main text to avoid chasing too many rabbit trails. More significantly, Moore has integrated his vast reading in a way that illuminates the problems with which he is engaged. His work models a careful approach to texts, a thoughtful engagement with modern economic theory (at least at a non-technical level), and a humane interest in everyday problems. All of this is commendable and makes the book worthy of a wide readership.

On the other hand, a number of conceptions of the book should provoke further questions: (1) does “conflict” adequately describe the socioeconomic conceptions of the Bible, or should cooperation, reciprocity, reform, or other structural commitments also be considered? (2) Do the texts about cosmic change (e.g., the Erra myth) describe economic or environmental change, or some combination of the two (see 95–96)? Or put another way, how should we conceive of “socioeconomic” issues given the intermeshing of social and ecological forces in the economic choices made in capitalist societies (e.g., the survival of traditions that make rational choice theories difficult to sustain)? (3) Given the susceptibility of all “great literature” to multiple interpretations, can one readily read off socioeconomic concerns from such stories as Gilgamesh’s conflict with Ishtar or the stories of Genesis? I think so, and Moore thinks so, but this is not self-evident; future scholarship will need to take up the question.

In short, then, this book clears the way for much more research connecting biblical theology with the praxis of modern Christians and others who seek to find meaning amid the decadence of late capitalism. Michael Moore deserves our thanks for charting a course away from dishonest thinking, self-promotion, and the libertarian will to power so characteristic of the dominant Western culture without taking refuge in sentimentality, escapism, or unsustainable practices.

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*Testing Scripture: A Scientist Explores the Bible*, by JOHN POLKINGHORNE.  
Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2010. xii + 108 pp. \$17.99.

Most books on science and religion aim to persuade believers that they can take science seriously. Polkinghorne aims to persuade scientifically minded readers that