

191). In the same fashion, Jesus himself remained steadfast in obedience in spite of tremendous suffering (p. 187). Thus Enns distances himself from any who might consider Ecclesiastes vacant of theological value or who might attribute the book to a thoroughly secular pessimist.

Concluding his theological thoughts with respect to the role of Ecclesiastes in Scripture, Enns challenges readers to recognize the place of counterpoint. The book of Ecclesiastes, as part of the canon of Scripture, reveals a believer's struggles and doubts. Qohelet articulates his frustrations and ascribes to God "the limited and fallen view of his creatures" (p. 201). Although many commentators and theologians agree with him, Enns builds his entire system upon assumptions that the book is post-exilic and that a more positive reading violates what he considers to be a legitimate hermeneutic.

Occasional paraphrases in the commentary section help to clarify what Enns believes Qohelet intends (e.g. pp. 41, 51, 59). The commentator writes engagingly, rather than academically or pedantically. For example, in his discussion of Qohelet's emphasis on the reality and inescapability of death, he picturesquely concludes that "Qohelet slams your face against the mortuary's front window" (p. 131). Elsewhere, describing Qohelet's protest against the injustices and absurdities that God gives mankind, Enns likens it to "a soldier firing his pistol at a wave of bombers: 'Do your worst, I'm going down fighting'" (p. 97). This volume makes a substantial contribution to the ongoing study of Ecclesiastes. Even readers who disagree with Enns will find the exegetical and theological discussions thought provoking and worthwhile.

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The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown: An Introduction to the New Testament. By Andreas J. Köstenberger, L. Scott Kellum, and Charles L. Quarles. Nashville: B & H, 2009, xxi + 954 pp., \$59.99.

The publication of a NT introduction is by no means a rare event. A wide number of new introductory texts and revised versions of previously-produced texts have been published in the twenty-first century alone. In the present instance, Andreas J. Köstenberger and L. Scott Kellum of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary (Wake Forest, NC) have collaborated with Charles L. Quarles of Louisiana College (Pineville, LA) to produce a detailed text of nearly 900 pages. It also includes a lengthy glossary and three indices: names, subjects, and Scripture. Following a brief preface, the text is structured in five parts: "Introduction" (chaps. 1–2); "Jesus and the Gospels" (chaps. 3–7); "The Early Church and Paul" (chaps. 8–15); "The General Epistles and Revelation" (chaps. 16–20); and "Conclusion" (chap. 21). Each chapter begins with a segment entitled "Core Knowledge," divided into three tiers: basic, intermediate, and advanced knowledge. Each chapter likewise closes with summary points regarding the contribution of the given book(s) to the canon (except for more general chapters—e.g. chaps. 1–2, 3, 9, 21), study questions,

and bibliographic resources for further study. Book outlines, sidebars, tables, meditations (something to think about), key facts, summaries, and maps are speckled throughout the text.

In the preface, the authors note that their title attempts to capture the essence of NT theology: the cradle (Jesus' virgin birth and incarnation), the cross (narrated in the Gospel passion narratives and explained in the NT letters), and the crown (the triumphant return of Christ and believers' reign with him; p. xiv). They further delineate six distinctive characteristics that mark their volume: user-friendly, comprehensive, conservative, balanced, up-to-date, and spiritually nurturing and application orientated (p. xvii).

Part 1, "Introduction" (pp. 1–99), consists of two chapters: "The Nature and Scope of Scripture" (chap. 1), and "The Political and Religious Background of the New Testament" (chap. 2). The initial chapter addresses matters of canon, text transmission, and inspiration. The second chapter, as the title suggests, provides an overview of background information relevant to the formal study of the NT.

Part 2, "Jesus and the Gospels" (pp. 101–327), begins with an introductory chapter on "Jesus and the Relationship between the Gospels" (chap. 3), followed by respective chapters covering the four Gospels: Matthew (chap. 4), Mark (chap. 5), Luke (chap. 6), and John (chap. 7). The initial chapter introduces readers to the formal study of Jesus, including references to Jesus outside the NT, the various quests for the historical Jesus, contemporary models of Jesus, chronological matters, historical Jesus criteria, and models regarding the interrelationship among the Gospels. The subsequent chapters on the Synoptic Gospels favor traditional authorship (the apostle Matthew; John Mark as interpreter of Peter; and Luke the physician) and early dating (Matthew: 50s or 60s; Mark: mid- to late 50s; Luke: c. 58–60). Each chapter also provides a unit-by-unit discussion of the content of these Gospels and an overview of their respective theology. The chapter on John contends for traditional authorship (John, the son of Zebedee and apostle) and favors a dating range of mid- to late 80s or early 90s. In addition to a unit-by-unit discussion of its content and a survey of its theology, the authors also discuss the relationship of this Gospel to the Synoptic Gospels and the larger Johannine corpus.

Part 3, "The Early Church and Paul" (pp. 329–666), the proportionately longest section of the book, encompasses "The Book of Acts" (chap. 8), an introductory chapter on Paul (chap. 9), followed by an overview of the traditional thirteen letters of the Pauline corpus (chaps. 10–15). The authors treat the letters of Paul in relation to Acts because it forms the basic framework for the discussion of Paul's life, ministry, and letters (cf. p. 329). Regarding Acts, they hold to traditional authorship (Luke), early dating (early 60s), and a high view of its historical accuracy. They characterize Acts as "theological history" (drawing on C. L. Blomberg; p. 340, n. 27). They identify four theological themes in Acts: salvation history, the universal scope of the Gospel, the Holy Spirit, and the resurrection and ascension of Jesus. The introductory chapter on Paul surveys "The Man and His Message" (chap. 9). The authors include in their discussion a survey of the New Perspective and its variations as well as a critique of them. Their subsequent treatment of the

traditional thirteen letters of Pauline corpus is organized according to their understanding of the chronological sequence of these letters. The authors maintain traditional Pauline authorship of all thirteen letters. They believe Galatians (chap. 10, pp. 405–29) was the earliest of Paul's letters. They thus favor a Southern Galatian destination and a date of origin before the Jerusalem council. The remainder of Paul's earlier letters are delineated along a familiar chronological sequence: 1–2 Thessalonians (chap. 11; c. 50 for both, favoring the traditional sequence), 1–2 Corinthians (chap. 12; c. 53 or 54 and c. 54 or 55 respectively), and Romans (chap. 13; c. mid- to late 50s). The authors adhere to a Roman provenance for the captivity letters (Philippians, Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon; chap. 14), though they consider Philippians most likely prior (c. 59) to the other three (c. 60). The authors additionally maintain Pauline authorship of the Pastoral Letters (1–2 Timothy, Titus; chap. 15) and further contend that the instructions of these letters transcend their original context and hence apply to the church of all ages (p. 642).

Part 4, "The General Epistles and Revelation" (pp. 667–872), as the title suggests, surveys the remaining books of the NT in their common canonical order: Hebrews (chap. 18), James (chap. 17), 1–2 Peter and Jude (chap. 18), 1–3 John (chap. 19), and Revelation (chap. 20). The authors date Hebrews in the mid-60s (c. 65) and suggest that the description "homily" or "sermon" certainly seems to fit it well. They call attention to the rhetorical devices employed in it and survey representative proposals regarding its structure. It was most likely written to a congregation of Jewish-Christians whom the author urged to move on to maturity in the face of looming persecution. They consider James a circular letter written (possibly from Jerusalem) in the mid-40s (c. 45) to diaspora Jewish Christians living outside of Jerusalem. The evidence indicates that the author was James, the son of Joseph and half-brother of Jesus. They identify the following theological themes in James: the relation between faith and works, wisdom and ethics, and Christology and eschatology. First and Second Peter were written from Rome to the same recipients in Northern Asia Minor. Simon Peter is the author of both letters (c. 62–63 and 65 respectively). The recipients were encouraged to stay the course in the face of persecution (1 Peter) and to combat false teachers (2 Peter). Jude was authored by Jude, a brother of James. The authors suggest a date of origin in the mid-50s to early 60s (c. 55–62). They do not consider Jude a Catholic (General) Epistle because it was addressed to a particular group of people (Jude 1–4). The authors consider it more likely that Jude was the source for 2 Peter 2 than *vice versa* or that both drew on a common source. 1–3 John are products of the apostle John (c. 90–95) to churches in and around Ephesus occasioned by the recent departure of false teachers (1 John), itinerant false teachers (2 John), and the autocratic actions of Diotrephes (3 John). Revelation was by the same author addressed slightly later (c. 95–96) to churches in Asia Minor to encourage them to remain faithful amidst persecution. The authors suggest that since the book makes explicit claims about future events relative to the return of Christ, "preference should be given to a form of the futuristic approach" (p. 852).

Part 5, "Conclusion" (pp. 873–95), offers an essay on the subject of "Unity and Diversity in the New Testament" (chap. 21, pp. 874–95). The authors suggest

that the one God, Jesus Christ, and the gospel are the three major pillars of NT theology. They characterize the NT documents not as a “disparate collection of ill-fitting parts,” but rather as “a well-composed symphony in which the different elements combine to a harmonious work that echoes into all the world to the glory of God and the edification of those ... who respond to the divine revelation ... in faith” (p. 893).

This is one of the most detailed NT introductions presently available. The authors self-consciously take their place along a trajectory of conservative introductions represented by scholars like Theodore Zahn (1838–1933), Donald Guthrie (1915–1992), and D. A. Carson and Douglas Moo. The scholarship is informed, irenic, well organized, and clearly presented throughout. The bibliographies, with some exceptions (e.g. Brendan Byrne, *Romans* [SP; Collegeville: Glazier, 1996]; Robert Jewett, *Romans: A Commentary* [Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006]), are typically up to date and well representative. Given the conservative orientation, level of detail, and length of the text, its primary audience is likely to be seminarians in evangelical institutions, but surely graduate students of the NT from any orientation will benefit from giving it a careful reading. The authors and publisher should also consider making web and/or electronic resources available to supplement the text. A planned abridged edition of the text (*The Lion and the Lamb: New Testament Essentials from The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown* [Nashville: B & H, forthcoming in July of this year]) should additionally make it a more viable option for undergraduate students and interested general readers.

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The Reliability of the New Testament: Bart D. Ehrman and Daniel B. Wallace in Dialogue. Edited by Robert B. Stewart. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011, xx + 220 pp. \$22.00 paper.

The showpiece of this collection of essays is a transcript of two lectures, one by Bart Ehrman (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill), and one by Dan Wallace (Dallas Theological Seminary), followed by interaction with the audience. Although the lecturers say little to each other, the “dialogue” continues as seven other scholars contribute chapters, some responding to Ehrman and others taking up text-critical issues. The editor includes an introduction, which is actually most meaningful if read last.

The Greer-Heard Point-Counterpoint Forum in Faith and Culture—designed to engage an evangelical Christian in dialogue with a non-evangelical or non-Christian—is to be commended for providing the venue for these lectures and papers. The forum was held April 4–5, 2008 on the campus of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. This collection merits close attention, particularly given the number of people influenced by Ehrman’s bestsellers.

It offers a thorough introduction to all twenty-seven books of the New Testament and closely examines events such as Christ's incarnation and virgin birth, his crucifixion and resurrection, and triumphant return. The second edition features updated bibliographies and footnotes, interpretation sections that cover different literary genres in the New Testament, an epilogue that canvasses the entire storyline of Scripture, and a variety of maps. All of these new features contribute to making this a life-long resource for students of Scripture. Pages: 1168 Publisher: B&H Academic Published: 20 Probably my favorite New Testament Introduction. It is lengthy and it is comprehensive, but it is packed with mountains of information on the New Testament, written in an approachable and fairly easy to read style. It is actually a pretty quick read (as quick as an 1100 page book could be). This book addresses every issue you could imagine in NT scholarship (plus a few you probably hadn't thought of yet) from the perspective of biblical inerrancy. It is so refreshing to see top-level scholarship that upholds the authority of the Word of God. Thank you for this book, it is an invaluable co It offers a thorough introduction to all twenty-seven books of the New Testament and closely examines events such as Christ's incarnation and virgin birth, his crucifixion and resurrection, and triumphant return. The second edition features updated bibliographies and footnotes, interpretation sections that cover different literary genres in the New Testament, an epilogue that canvasses the entire storyline of Scripture, and a variety of maps. All of these new features contribute to making this a life-long resource for students of Scripture. For this reason, *The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown* is offered to the serious New Testament student who seeks to better understand and share God's word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15). Across nearly one thousand pages, it thoroughly introduces all twenty-seven New Testament books and closely examines Christ's incarnation and virgin birth, the heart of His ministry shown so vividly in the Gospels Passion Narratives, and the triumphant return of Jesus and our eternal reign with Him as depicted in Revelation. An all-new comprehensive introduction to the New Testament, paying close attention to the historical, literary, and theological dimensions of the biblical text. About the authors.