

Chapter 7 is also quite helpful. Here Hwang demonstrates that many Western studies of aniconism in the Old Testament miss subtle nuances that arise when viewing the same material from the perspective of an Asian culture that is steeped in idolatry. For example, Hwang argues that Westerners often understand prophetic critiques of idolatry, such as those by Isaiah and Jeremiah, as rising from the prophets' efforts to show that idols are non-entities, just pieces of wood and stone. What this misses, however, is that this position essentially derives from a secular, scientific perspective predominant in the West. Eastern cultures, on the other hand, typically carry a more sophisticated view of relics, one that is likely more resonant with ancient cultures. By this understanding one recognizes instead that the prophets seek polemically to demonstrate that idols represent (false) deities that are impotent in the face of Yahweh's sovereign power. In other words, it is pointless to worship the idol not simply because the idol is a rock but because it represents a god who cannot save. This provides a more nuanced perspective to capture how the OT confronts idolatry and prevails over it.

The next chapter looks at creation and pantheism from an Eastern perspective. Here he notes that creation should be understood not merely as a divine act *ex nihilo* but also as a polemic against religious dualisms that predominate in the many non-Western, including ancient, cultures. The concluding chapter ties together the themes to suggest a path forward. Hwang concludes that "a thoroughly Asian contextual theology of the OT may also prove useful to Western Christianity at a time when it is still compromised frequently by the syncretism of imagining itself to be the center and the non-West to be the periphery" (199). Hwang looks rather to a day when Christians of every tribe, tongue, and nation, can together make meaningful contributions to a theology of Scripture that better mirrors the sovereign God who reigns over all the cosmos. This reviewer joins him in this hope.

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Biblical Aramaic for Biblical Interpreters: A Parallel Hebrew-Aramaic Handbook, by Scott N. Callaham. Wilmore, KY: GlossaHouse, 2021. xv + 249 pp. \$35.99.

Through extending certain learning patterns that have already been well-established via a student's study of biblical Hebrew, one can cut a much more efficient path toward the effective interpretation of so-called "biblical Aramaic" (Gen 31:47; Jer 10:11; Ezra 4:8–6:18; 7:12–26; Dan 2:4b–7:28). For this reason, Scott N. Callaham is to be commended for his fine work: *Biblical Aramaic for Biblical Interpreters: A Parallel Hebrew-Aramaic Handbook*.

To be clear, within *Biblical Aramaic for Biblical Interpreters*

(hereafter *BABI*), Callaham reviews the most fundamental aspects of biblical Hebrew (BH) grammar as part and parcel of learning biblical Aramaic (BA) using the comparative method; hence the volume's (appropriate) subtitle: *A Parallel Hebrew-Aramaic Handbook*. Said otherwise, because BH and BA are both Northwest Semitic languages, the "family resemblance" between each of them makes possible a dramatic reduction in learning time if one provides (as Callaham successfully does) a "running outline-style overview" of BH so as to build a bridge to "span the language to BA" (x).

Whenever *BABI* places biblical Hebrew and biblical Aramaic words/concepts side-by-side for comparison, the arrangement is (generally) BH on the left (review material) and BA on the right (new information). The book itself is arranged into two main parts: (1) Non-Verbs, i.e., particles, prepositions, nouns, numbers, adjectives, etc., and (2) Verbs. Inexplicably, though, both sections are non-titled (the above overview thus employs my own terminology).

A detailed glossary (187–235), a list of non-annotated "recommended resources" for students of biblical Aramaic (177), a short appendix (more on both of these later), and a clear Scripture index (color-coded to highlight the explicitly Aramaic citations) round out the volume. Regrettably, though, there is no author index. This is a particularly grievous (and somewhat pedagogically insensitive) omission as Callaham's remarkably thorough and up-to-date bibliography is (alone) worth the price of the book (236–45). But, without an author index, finding those helpful in-book citations (including Callaham's impressive and extensive engagement with other BH and BA reference grammars, such as Joüon, Segert, Merwe et al., and Waltke and O'Connor, for example) is needlessly laborious. Might future editions remedy this oversight?

The outline format of this textbook commends its use as a reference tool for exegesis. Quite uniquely, however, yet also most welcome, Callaham employs a clear abbreviation system (J, M, R) to point to the corresponding sections of three standard intermediate BA grammars with a view "toward maximizing the book's usefulness as a reference at the introductory and intermediate levels" (xiii). These three grammars are: (1) Alger F. Johns, *A Short Grammar of Biblical Aramaic*, rev. ed. (Andrews University Press, 1972) [J]; (2) Takamitsu Muraoka, *A Biblical Aramaic Reader: With an Outline Grammar*, 2nd rev. ed. (Peeters, 2020) [M]; and (3) Frank Rosenthal, *A Grammar of Biblical Aramaic*, 7th exp. ed., (Harrassowitz, 2006) [R].

It cannot, perhaps, be overstated how useful these cross-references are to any user of *BABI* as they are "one-of-a-kind" unique to Callaham. To be clear, no other introductory grammar of biblical Aramaic I am aware of (one thinks, for instance, of the otherwise fine works of Greenspahn, Steinmann, and Schuele) provides such exhaustive and clear cataloging of what have inconvertibly been considered the *crème de la crème* of resources for this biblical language.

By way of comparison, while Van Pelt does provide not a few references to Rosenthal's grammar, for instance, within his *Basics of Biblical*

Aramaic: Complete Grammar, Lexicon, and Annotated Text (Zondervan, 2011), most of these citations occur in the Annotated Biblical Aramaic Text portion—not the grammar. Arguably, this feature also warrants *BABT*'s purchase.

In a related way, Callaham (unlike certain other, similar works) provides appropriate cautions and caveats in claiming that this book is suitable for independent study, stating,

For strongly motivated and self-directed learners...the student should gather learning aids for reference. To view grammatical concepts in context, students should carry out searches with advanced Bible software...as they work through the textbook. These searches will fortify grammatical concepts with more contextual examples than are possible to include in this textbook. Furthermore, in rough priority order they should consult [see above] one or more of the...BA grammars...the teaching grammar previously used for BH study, and a BH reference grammar. Critical consultation of these resources can fill gaps in understanding that would typically call for a teacher's insight and guidance. Of course, wise use of these resources benefits students in every learning setting (xii).

Special mention should also be made here of Callaham's consistently effective use of color throughout the text. Red, black, and blue ink, alongside special shading, and bold font, make for exceptionally clear comparisons and contrasts between biblical Aramaic and Hebrew. Subtle differences in paradigms, verbal forms, etc., that ought not to be unnoticed but could, otherwise, be skipped altogether or easily glossed over, are clearly marked via this time-saving tool. There is also a good use of white space throughout the text with ample room for notetaking including, at times, certain pages dedicated to this task and/or various learning exercises. The numerous charts/diagrams/tables etc. only enhance the value of the text. One does note, though, that, at times, some of the graphics do look a little "blocky" without "fine" edges (e.g., 1, 6–7).

As noted above, the book also contains a brief appendix (178–86) that provides a reproduction of the Aramaic text of Daniel 7 according to the *Biblica Hebraica Stuttgartensia* alongside a Hebrew translation (derived from Ms. Or. 72 in the collection of Biblioteca Angelica in Rome, folios 243–244) aligned word-for-word to demonstrate the similarity between Aramaic and Hebrew, at least as perceived by a medieval translator (179). The helpful color-coordination (red ink for Hebrew/black ink for Aramaic) is an exceptionally nice touch for students and the inclusion of a full color reproduction of a photograph (see pg. 186) of Or. Ms. 72, Folio 244 Verso (the final word of Dan 7:4 until the fourth from final word of Dan 7:19) is a real bonus.

To critique, the fact that the recommended resources for students of biblical Aramaic (177) is non-annotated does somewhat mar its utility. Given that each of the works cited vary considerably with respect to tone, scope, position, theological orientation, and technical detail, would not a few comments have enhanced its usability and been a great boon to the reader?

as with many other disabilities, it is important to see the glass half-full. The challenges should not eclipse the blessings.

But what about distracting behaviors in church? The author responds, "We seek to make biblically wise distinctions between spiritual or sin issues (the realm of the heart) and bodily or brain-based issues and weaknesses" (13). For example, although it may be more challenging for a person with ASD to obey Scripture in some behaviors, neither we nor they should give up pursuing Christlikeness. We must acknowledge the challenge and support the biblical process of salvation and spiritual growth in every person. All of us struggle to grow spiritually.

How might we respond like a biblical church to the needs of people with ASD and their families? Using the fictitious name, Josh, the author thoughtfully suggests, "Josh's youth leader may need to spend significant one-on-one time with Josh, asking questions and listening to his honest struggles. As trust develops, he can help Josh understand viewpoints other than his own" (16). If Josh's pastor gets called away or is too busy in the moment, he can also look for a few mature and compassionate peers to befriend Josh. One-on-one ministry is a universal response to disability, whatever the disability might be. It should not surprise us that the "one another" passages are a key to addressing disability in the church. What is more, one-on-one relationship is usually what people with disabilities are longing for, even if they cannot show it. In a nutshell, people with disabilities need Christian fellowship. People with ASD need a local church family.

But the church also needs people with ASD and their families. In the future, expect people on the autism spectrum to be more numerous and increasingly prominent in the church. Not only are the numbers of people with ASD increasing, but also, we are starting to understand and discuss the issues that cause people with ASD and their families to feel driven away. Expect more pastors and missionaries, indeed all forms of Christian leadership on the ASD spectrum in the future.

Some families with ASD who have left their local church report that the church does not care about people with ASD, indeed with any disability. I must politely disagree. I believe that churches, congregations, and pastors want to help people with ASD and their families. But they are not sure how. What we need are more studies like this one that inform us, encourage us to respond biblically, and give us practical guidance about what we need to do.

The book's small size contributes to its strength. Although data- and detail-filled, it addresses the basic issues of ASD as well as a biblical response. This reviewer highly recommends the book as it will help individuals with ASD, their families, and their churches gain a better understanding of the blessings and the challenges accompanying ASD. People with ASD can and will contribute to the local church in unique and unimagined ways. They have much to offer. We cannot let them leave.

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