

authors end up committing the same *faux pas* they identify in their traditionalist counterparts. They contend that traditional approaches have simply distracted from the difficulties of war texts. But Webb and Oeste appear to do the same when they suggest that we must widen the lens so that any sinner divinely punished becomes a “literary” Canaanite. If all punished sinners are Canaanites then some punished sinners (who happen actually to be ethnic Canaanites) cannot be Canaanites in any distinctive way. Simply put, to paraphrase a popular slogan, if everyone is a Canaanite then no one is a Canaanite. The tensions in traditional approaches have not been resolved; the lens has been widened so far as to render the killing of the Canaanites moot. A more fertile approach—to my mind—accounts for the challenges by positing a unique role and standing for Israel vis-à-vis the church, a reality that resolves tensions in the war texts of Revelation, and by understanding Yahweh war against the backdrop of the exodus event rather than exclusively of sacred space. In summary, traditional approaches are likely more valid than the authors give them credit for. While this book provides an informative backdrop on warfare in the ancient world and will prove enlightening to many readers, the authors attempt to resolve observed tensions in previous approaches must be ultimately judged to fall short.

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Psalms 73–150, by Daniel J. Estes. New American Commentary. Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2019. 671 pp. \$32.99.

Daniel Estes, Distinguished Professor of Old Testament at Cedarville University, has specialized in the study of Old Testament Wisdom literature and the Psalms for many years, and now he has added to his accomplishments in this area by contributing the first volume of a planned two-volume commentary on the Psalms. (The preliminary word is that the companion volume might appear in 2024.) In the author’s preface to this commentary, Estes asks the obvious question, “Why is another commentary on Psalms needed?” After all, the canonical collection of Psalms is the most sung, chanted, prayed, read, memorized, translated, and commented upon portion of inspired scripture throughout two millennia of church history. The past couple decades have added a fair number of contemporary commentaries to that great cloud of witnesses. Is there really room for another commentary?

Estes answers that question by appealing to his intended audience and his specific approach. His audience, broadly speaking, is the church, not the academy. His approach is fundamentally exegetical, which is to say, Estes self-consciously steers away from questions of reception history and Christological interpretation and focuses his efforts on interpreting each psalm as an individual work of poetry.

Estes treats each psalm with discussions of (1) form, structure, and setting, (2) commentary, (3) theme, (4) intertextuality, (5) theology, and (6) response. In his commentary section on each psalm, every verse is treated succinctly. The following four sections typically receive one, or at most two, paragraphs of discussion. In his comments on “intertextuality” Estes does not spend a great deal of time turning over rocks or digging under roots to find connections with other portions of scripture. Instead, he simply points out what he sees as “the most prominent quotations, allusions, and echoes of the psalm in other biblical passages.”

Obviously, Estes has to be quite discriminating in order to compress so much material into such a brief commentary. He manages, for example, to discuss the entirety of Psalm 119 in forty-three pages. Psalm 117 requires only three pages, and most psalms require somewhere between five and twelve. This length is consistent with Estes’ goal for his commentary, which is “scholarship serving the church.” He wants to “invite readers to respond to the text in worship and obedience.” Estes does not try to bring anything new or unique to the discussion with this commentary. His comments are judicious and to the point, resting on solid scholarship but leaving out technical details and background discussions.

For those pastors and teachers who are wondering how this commentary compares to others in their library, Estes’ commentary does not have quite the literary or devotional flair of Kidner’s two-volume TOTC work, but it does have much more exegetical detail. Willem VanGemeren’s contribution to *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary* is closer in scope and content to Estes’ work, but Estes includes a few items, particularly his “Response” section to each psalm, which Van Gemeren does not. Estes’ commentary is written at about the same level as Gerald Wilson’s *NIVAC* volume on Psalms 1–72. Obviously, it does not have the detail or range of Goldingay’s or Ross’s three volume works, not to mention more technical commentaries. At the same time, footnotes and a bibliography point interested readers to where they can find these kinds of discussions should they need them. In sum, Estes hits his target by contributing a substantial commentary tailored to the needs of pastors and teachers. Amid all the available commentaries on the Psalms, this one should not be overlooked as a useful tool for pastors, teachers, Bible-study leaders, or any serious-minded Christian who wants to dig into the psalms.

Is another commentary on the Psalms needed? Yes, provided it has real quality to deliver, and this commentary by Estes does. At the end of the day, I would argue that there will never be an end to new commentaries on the Psalms, for the Psalms are endlessly fruitful in the lives of each generation of believers. It is always a joy to sit down with a thoughtful, Bible-believing scholar to ponder them anew.

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