Echevarría and Laird indeed provide a foundational survey of the life and theology of Paul. Whatever theological differences one might have with the authors (e.g., continuationism, amillennialism), readers can appreciate the book's irenic and readable style. The authors demonstrate a commendable familiarity with modern scholarship, church history, and exegetical minutiae, leaving thorough footnotes to point curious readers to their sources. Professors, students, pastors, and Christians in general who desire a scholarly and readable survey of the life and theology of Paul do well to add this work to their library.

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God's Israel and the Israel of God: Paul and Supersessionism, edited by Michael F. Bird and Scot McKnight. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Academic, 2023. 188 pp. $29.99.

Reactions to the Israel-Hamas War which Hamas cruelly provoked on October 7, 2023, highlighted once again the complex interaction of politics, history, and religion which is always in play whenever one discusses Israel. Although the focus of this book is limited to Paul and supersessionism, these issues are still near the surface, influencing the perspectives of all participants in the discussion. If there is one thing this book makes clear, it is that the connotations of the term "supersessionism" vary widely, not to say wildly. To many in the academy today, "supersessionism" implies a cardinal sin. That cardinal sin is having the arrogance to presume that Christianity is the true religion and Judaism is not.

Michael Bird puts his finger on this issue in his essay: "But if supersessionism can cover a multitude of perspectives about the church vis-à-vis the Jews—i.e., antiquation, representation, replacement, supplement, succession, superiority, superordination, etc.—then it is so broad as to be baseless as a criticism. Supersessionism, then, sadly amounts to nothing more than a mode of scholarly, in-house, deviant-labeling against any interpreter daring to articulate a perspective on Paul that is not sufficiently conducive to some preferred vision of inter-faith relationships" (48–49).

How does one constructively discuss the issue in such a hotly charged atmosphere? This book publishes an attempt to do just that.

Part One includes constructive essays by three biblical scholars: Scot McKnight, Michael Bird, and Ben Witherington III. All three argue, in effect, that it is impossible to do justice to Paul's writings without coming away with some form of supersessionism. Scot McKnight quotes with approval the Jewish scholar Jon D. Levenson: "Nowhere does Christianity betray its indebtedness to Judaism more than in its supersessionism" (41). The reason for this, McKnight says, is simply the issue of

ultimate religious truth. He concludes with this challenge: "The question to ask the one who uses the term 'supersession' is: Do you think Jesus is the Messiah and do you think salvation is found in him alone? The answer to that question will determine how one will use the term 'supersessionism'" (44). Michael Bird argues, "To be brutally honest, supersessionism is simply unavoidable if we are engaging in a close and contextual reading of Paul within Judaism…. The only questions are 'What type of supersessionism will be identified?' and 'What will one do with it?'" (54). Ben Witherington is more diplomatic, arguing that even the term "supersessionism" is anachronistic, but he clearly denies any form of "Paul-within-Judaism" interpretation.

Part Two of the book consists of responses by Lynn Cohick, David Rudolph, Janelle Peters, and Ronald Charles. Charles is the most critical, precisely because he does not believe that this entire issue is an issue of truth at all. He is more than happy to charge Paul with contradictions. Janelle Peters, for her part, makes Paul conform to contemporary Roman Catholic discussions and blithely concludes with the astonishing assertion, "Jews are saved with only the Jewish covenant…. Jews have salvation on their own terms" (144–45). The most interesting and valuable response is by David Rudolph, director of Messianic Jewish Studies at The King's University. He wants to know, "(1) Are non-Messianic Jews members of God's covenanted people? And (2) if so, do they as a people have a unique covenantal calling that distinguishes their calling from that of every other society or nation" (103)? He believes that McKnight is simply reworking N. T. Wright's "pernicious" version of supersessionism. It appears that a key concern for Rudolph is that Jews assimilating into the church (i.e., losing a unique covenantal identity in the church) deprives them of Jewishness in any meaningful sense and opens the door to anti-Semitism. His arguments on this score provide serious interaction and thus advance the purposes of the book. It seems significant to this reviewer, however, that he never answers the question of whether all Jews need to believe in Jesus to be in a right relationship with God. That is a critical question in this conversation.

Scot McKnight gives a final response to his interlocutors to conclude the book. He utilizes the term "expansionism" as a replacement for "supersessionism," by which he means "the people of God expands to include gentiles on the basis of faith in Jesus as Messiah. Israel is not replaced but expanded—but that expansion…occurs in Christ and through Christ" (170). At the end of the day, he sees this as the fundamental question: "If Jesus is the Messiah, what then?" (174).

This book is an enlightening and provocative discussion of the supersessionism debate. For any who want to know the current status of that debate, it is highly recommended.

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