

Campbell does not set out to provide maximum-depth treatment on every topic. Nor should this book be viewed as itself a major scholarly advance in the study of Greek. Readers expecting this text to read like a technical journal article are going to be disappointed. Such an approach would work against the author's goals in writing, and much of this book's value lies precisely in its (relative) accessibility. Campbell demonstrates a remarkable ability to take a large body of material, introduce some of the critical questions at stake, narrow his focus to a few key voices in the conversation, and provide clear and concise summaries of key works coming from those voices. Recommended readings at the end of each chapter provide a way for the reader to keep going. Readers who are inspired to move beyond Campbell's book to engage with more detailed treatments of the topics may someday come to disagree with his particular treatment of one or more issue, but even if they do, they will appreciate this resource for giving them a solid start on their journey.

Timothy A. Hughes

The Message of the Twelve: Hearing the Voice of the Minor Prophets, by Richard Alan Fuhr, Jr. and Gary E. Yates. Nashville: B&H, 2016. xix + 360 pp. \$34.99.

Al Fuhr and Gary Yates, Old Testament professors at Liberty University School of Divinity, have produced an accessible overview and brief commentary on the biblical books collectively known as "The Twelve" or the Minor Prophets. While their endnotes and discussion of important terms point to a knowledge of the original Hebrew text, the work is easy to follow and by no means technical. Thus they have met and even surpassed their aim of producing an aid for personal study of the Scriptures.

The first few chapters deal with the historical and literary features that these 12 documents hold in common. The authors set the stage by sketching a history of the centuries during which the prophets served. Then they introduce the prophets themselves as spokesmen for the covenant Lord. Finally they introduce the reader to Hebrew poetry and survey common categories of word play and figures of speech.

Despite the title, *The Message of the Twelve* does not spend much time considering the message of the Book of the Twelve as a whole. In that sense the common designation "minor prophets" found in the subtitle is more appropriate to the content. In chapter 4, however, Fuhr and Yates do acknowledge evidence that "The Twelve" is a single, intentionally ordered, compilation within the Hebrew canon. This evidence helps them tentatively conclude that Joel's early placement in the collection is not chronological but thematic and literary (90), but they draw few other substantive conclusions from the literary unity of this section of Scripture.

From here the authors take time in the remaining chapters to draw out the message of each individual prophet and conclude with theology and application. Within this commentary section, the authors concentrate on helping the Christian reader understand the significance of structural devices, figures of speech, cultural customs, and opaque cultural references. For instance, in commenting on Joel, a callout box quotes a National Geographic article on the immensity and destructive appetite of locust swarms (94). Thus they seek to show that these oracles belong in the world of history and fact, not in the imagination of the biblical authors.

Once they have helped their readers see the original context, they are in a better position to guide them to the significance of the message for today. Each chapter of the book devotes several paragraphs to contemplating ways in which the message of the book may be personally relevant, that is, how the reader should respond. Limited as they are by culture and time, these applications can only travel so far, and at times they feel somewhat parochial or trite. Generally, however, they are provocative paragraphs, and altogether fitting for a work of this kind.

One of the greatest strengths of the book is the interpretive approach of the authors. The authority of the Scriptures as inspired documents is clear. They believe that the documents as we have them are the product of literary design, taking the oral words of the prophets and faithfully representing them in writing (27–29).

Their hermeneutical method is relatively straightforward, consistently centering on authorial intent established by the objective features of the text. When this hermeneutical lens is focused on the book of Zechariah, for example, the authors discern an expectation for the restoration of national Israel in the eschaton (286–99). When the same principles are applied to Haggai, a millennial temple is evident (260–62). From this vantage point, the messianic import of various texts throughout this section of the canon is also patent (23–24).

While the hermeneutical consistency of the authors is to be commended, the theological consistency of the work as a whole leaves something to be desired. For instance, the authors' understanding of the interplay between God's sovereignty and human choice does not appear to be consistent. At times, it seems that they desire to give the decisive role to human will. For instance, the Lord's response to the repentance of the Ninevites in Jonah is seen as an example in which the Lord, who "has exhaustive knowledge of all future possibilities," nevertheless "bases his resolution of a particular situation on the choices and decisions people make in response to his initiatives" (177). Similarly in Haggai the authors comment on the choice of the people to rebuild the temple, "The Lord 'stirring' the hearts of the people...reflects how divine sovereignty and human response cooperate in accomplishing the Lord's purposes. The Lord does not manipulate Israel's response to the prophetic word, but he does reward their choice to obey with enablement to carry out their good intentions" (260). However, in Zechariah, the Lord himself makes the decisive move: "The Lord would ultimately save his

people by acting in sovereign grace to change their hearts—they would mourn over their rejection of him that had culminated in the crucifixion of their Messiah (Zech 12:10)” (300). Putting these comments together, it appears that sometimes God decides to take charge, but other times he is content to allow humans to settle the matter.

That said, the book as a whole has much to commend it. The historical and grammatical explanations will take the general believing reader a step beyond his study Bibles, but they will not lose him in the details. The book would also be appropriate for a college-level course. In addition pastors may find the application sections for each prophet helpful, especially if they are serving in a suburban American context. While those looking for technical discussions will need to look elsewhere, the book serves its purposes well.

Jeremy Pittsley

Preaching Christ from Psalms: Foundations for Expository Sermons in the Christian Year, by Sidney Greidanus. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016. xx + 595 pp. \$40.00.

Preaching Christ from Psalms is the fifth and final volume in this series on preaching expository Christian sermons from the OT. Sidney Greidanus is professor emeritus of preaching at Calvin Theological Seminary. This is not a commentary on the whole book of Psalms, but rather a surprisingly substantive “how-to” manual for preaching selected Psalms. It thoroughly integrates theory and practice.

The introductory section helpfully summarizes key literary and theological elements that provide the exegetical and theological basis for preaching from the Psalms. Greidanus did not choose the easiest psalms, but instead selected 20 of the harder (i.e., generally non-royal, non-messianic) psalms as representative “case studies” (Pss 1; 2; 8; 22; 23; 29; 32; 47; 51; 72; 72:8–11; 80; 95; 96; 100; 104; 118; 118:10–24; 121; 122; 130; 146). These are arranged in liturgical (rather than canonical) order according to the schedule of the *Revised Common Lectionary* (RCL). Because two of these Psalms are included twice for different liturgical seasons, Greidanus writes a second chapter for the second use of them. Since there are 500+ pages for the body of this book, that results in over 22 pages (on average) for each sermon!

Greidanus has developed a very helpful tool for pastors who seek to preach “the whole counsel of God.” The author carefully walks the reader through each of the multiple steps of sermon preparation for each Psalm. Always, he mentions the reason *why* one might or might not make a given choice, and then immediately moves on to *how* such a choice applies to the present text. Combined with good footnotes showing research based in solid commentaries, this enables the preacher to make informed choices at each step of the process.