

to be included in the exposition of the text itself. These sidebars, thus, are essentially excurses discussing matters of canonical, theological and historical importance (e.g., the Sabbath, 206–7; the slaughter of the innocents, 272–73; the fulfillment of the new covenant, 285–289; messianic hope, 312; and echoes of Lamentations 1 in Revelation, 445). These sidebars—although optional for the interpreter—are, nevertheless, another useful tool supplying yet another tool for the tasks of exegesis and preaching.

In the end, the *Kerux Commentary for Biblical Preaching and Teaching* is an invaluable resource for both exegesis and exposition. It seems clear that this commentary series seeks to be the ideal blend of a technical commentary on the one hand and a practical, pastorally-minded, homiletical commentary on the other. Although this is far from an easy task to achieve, from the perspective of the present reviewer this mission is accomplished. Hebraists, on the one hand, will feel right at home with many sections dealing with explicit issues of grammar and syntax, but a non-specialist will benefit greatly by the impressive clarity of the exposition. As one who is both involved in academics as well as a full-time pastor and expositor, the present reviewer can vouch for this commentary as an impressive piece of scholarship that deceives the eye with its seeming simplicity. To put it another way, as a self-contained exegetical, theological, and homiletical commentary, this multitool is useful for both ministry and the academy.

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The Testimony of the Four Gospels, in *Christ of the Consummation: A New Testament Biblical Theology*, by O. Palmer Robertson. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2022. xxxiii + 360 pp. \$27.99.

O. Palmer Robertson most recently served as director and principal of the African Bible University of Uganda after teaching at several other institutions, including Reformed Theological Seminary and Westminster Theological Seminary. After a long ministry in academic settings and the church, Robertson's *The Testimony of the Four Gospels* is the first installment in a planned three-volume NT theology. In the preface, Robertson acknowledges the influence of Geerhardus Vos, and, like Vos, Robertson attempts to trace the "historic progressiveness of the revelation-process" through the apostolic era (xxviii).

Robertson's work is divided into eight chapters following a foreword by D. A. Carson and a "Further Word" from Richard Gaffin. In his introduction (chap. 1), Robertson outlines his methodology and presuppositions. He believes that the NT writings present a unified message despite their unique features *and* that they agree with the OT's witness to Christ. This presupposition is seen in three distinctives of his

approach: (1) "Retracing the Historical Progression across the Various Phases of New Covenant Revelation as the Organizing Principle" (9–10), (2) "The Foundational Role of the Old Covenant Scriptures" (10), and (3) "Contemporary Application of New Testament Biblical Theology: An Effort to Realize the Stated Goal of the Various Writers of the New Testament" (16). The first distinctive is evidenced by how Robertson presents the events leading up to and occurring during the earthly ministry of Christ in chronological order (chaps. 2–6). This synthesis of Christ's life and preaching is followed by a rather long chapter (chap. 7 has 162 pages!) which looks at each Evangelists' unique witness (lexical and thematic) albeit in a proposed chronological order of writing (Mark, Matthew, Luke, and then John). The second distinctive is clearly seen in Robertson's unapologetic insistence that the old covenant documents point to Jesus as the promised deliverer. For example, Robertson begins his section on "Preliminary Revelations" of Christ (chap. 2) by arguing that Isaiah 7:14 is a direct prophecy of Jesus's virgin birth. Students of the whole Bible will be glad to read the following quote: "Learners from the Christ today must also seek the depths of the old covenant as the basis of their new covenant faith even as did Matthew, Paul, and the writer of Hebrews" (11). Finally, as to the final distinctive, not only does Robertson clearly state the goals of each of the Gospels, but his work often takes on a warm devotional or even fervently evangelistic tone as he calls the reader to respond rightly to the gospel's demands and promises.

This emphasis on application combined with Robertson's clarity of communication and gift in turning a phrase gives the work a popular feel at times (e.g., "An 'atheistic fish' might break the surface of the water, declaring, 'I don't believe in the ocean,' and then plunge back into the sea," 247). However, there is still plenty of interaction with some of the most relevant scholarly debates in the Gospels (e.g., the genre of the Gospels, the structure of Matthew, Wright and exile, Watts and new exodus, the longer ending of Mark [which Robertson favors], John's characterization of the "Jews," etc.), even if sometimes this is done in lengthy footnotes. I sometimes wanted more argumentation than probably can be included in only 300 pages, but Robertson does a fair job of pointing the reader to other sources—frequently older but valuable sources that are often overlooked.

However, the strength of the work is the seamless manner in which Robertson moves between discussing the theology of the individual Evangelists and synthesizing that theology using the categories of systematic theology. This is biblical theology at its finest—allowing each biblical writer to have his own voice and idiom but also assuming that all of the writers may be correlated without contradiction because of the presence of One Divine Author. To give a few examples: Robertson demonstrates how Matthew 20:28 and Mark 10:45 teach a particular and substitutionary atonement (132–33); he speaks of the important distinction between justification and progressive sanctification using John 13:5–10 (281); and he highlights the emphasis on election and

perseverance in Jesus's words in John 6 (285). This emphasis on the united testimony of the NT documents is refreshing. As Robertson states, "Consider the united testimony of the Synoptics as carefully as you will. But then believe the whole or do not believe it" (165).

Where I questioned Robertson's conclusions, he was usually dealing with issues related to eschatology or the "kingdom of God/heaven," notoriously debated interpretative issues. Robertson argues that the "kingdom of God" arrives with Christ, especially with the cross (126), and is presently expanding until its consummation at Christ's Second Coming (102). The present church "is not in itself altogether identical with the kingdom" but "may be regarded as the point of entrance for individuals into the kingdom" (113; cf. 199). I appreciate the emphasis on the growing constituency of the kingdom, but I wonder if more emphasis could have been placed on the promised place to which these people will someday be gathered, that is, entrance into the King's realm, the restored world. Related to this, Robertson rightly notes that Jesus's miracles, especially his exorcisms, "anticipate the consummation in which all things will be restored to their pristine origins" (109). However, what does that mean for the time while we wait for the King's return? Should we still expect miracles and exorcisms to continue, or is there an aspect of the "kingdom" that came and went in the first century?

Finally, Robertson argues that Matthew's "kingdom of heaven" to describe the "kingdom of God" is likely motivated by his desire to emphasize, drawing from the prophet Daniel, the universal nature of the coming kingdom (198). However, he also argues that Jesus's global reign (cf. Ps 72:8; Zech 14:9) rules out a distinctively Jewish or Israelite kingdom following the Second Coming (see, e.g., 245). But if the Jewish people (or as Robertson urges that we translate *Ἰουδαῖος*, "the Judean" people) are an example of God's grace as survivors of the Babylonian exile, would it not be another great display of God's grace to include all twelve tribes of Israel as a reconstituted nation, regathered from an even greater exile, within Jesus's coming global empire? Do we have to choose between a kingdom for Israel and a global kingdom?

These questions aside, this is a greatly helpful work. It frequently drove me back to Scripture as I looked up passages and took notes. I hope it receives a wide reading and that God uses it directly or indirectly to draw people to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.

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The Savior's Farewell: Comfort from the Upper Room, by Martyn McGeown. Jenson, MI: Reformed Free Publishing Association, 2022. 345 pp. \$29.95.

The author of this volume, Martyn McGeown, is a graduate of