

Women in the Retellings of the Nation's History: Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and 1–2 Maccabees.

As noted, this “book is intended for advanced undergraduate and graduate students in seminaries and universities, as well as interested lay readers.” One hopes that readers might question some of these essays by asking whether some of these voices are overly polemical or strident. An androcentric/patriarchal society is not necessarily misogynistic. Likewise, why is there not more of an effort to find gender-neutral language? God as *melekh* can also be translated as “ruler” or “sovereign”; it need not be king. Likewise the English for YHWH need not be Lord; other choices include YHWH itself using the actual Hebrew letters, Eternal, or Adonai. To that extent, there are some limits to the usefulness of this volume.

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*1–2 Samuel.* By Paul S. Evans. The Story of God Biblical Commentary. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018. Pp. 549. Cloth, \$44.99.

Discussing the different approaches of his fellow biblical scholars, Victor H. Matthews writes of maximalists and minimalists (Matthews, *History of Bronze and Iron Age Israel* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019]). Regarding the former, those who “rely on a faith commitment to guide their interpretations of the biblical materials and see the biblical account as a fully accurate account of Israel’s history,” that faction will be

pleased with Paul S. Evans’ work; the minimalists who “take the view that the Bible is basically a fictionalized account of events created in the Hellenistic period (third to second centuries BCE) by scribes and priests, who wished to create a foundation story for their community” (*History of Bronze*, p. 2) less so. Following the general rubrics of *The Story of God Biblical Commentary* series, Evans divides 1–2 Samuel into forty-seven sections. Each grouping features three parts: Listen to the Story, which includes the complete NIV text, with occasional references to other texts; Explain the Story, which presents some of Evans’ understanding of the historical setting for those chapter(s); and finally, Live the Story, which offers a very Christian-centric reflection on how the story can be lived in the real religious world. This book should serve well those who subscribe to a maximalist viewpoint, be they pastors, students, Sunday school teachers, or laity in general. Evans is an Assistant Professor of Hebrew Scriptures at McMaster Divinity College in Hamilton, Ontario.

As Evans explains in his Introduction, the point of view that he takes is a specifically Christian-focused one, that 1–2 Samuel “was written to teach its reader about God and [God’s] working in the world” both in the past, but also “in the future with the coming of Jesus Christ to fulfill the Davidic promises” (p. 19). It is with this last approach in mind that each section ends with some observations how Christians can live the biblical word in real time. For example, in the Live the Story part of David and Abigail

(1 Sam 25), Evans refers to “David as mixture of sinner and saint,” and then he prooftexts with a quote from Paul, “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom 3:23). Evans then goes on to write of “God’s preventive grace,” explaining that “David’s struggle with Nabal illustrates the truth of 1 Corinthians 10:13 that ‘No temptation has overtaken you... God...will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear’ (259–60). In the section dealing with the woman at Endor (1 Sam 28) Evans shows two sides of his writing. On the positive side he offers a good exegesis on the wearing and tearing of robes (p. 280). Negatively, despite the fact that NIV never terms the woman a witch, in addition to correctly labeling her a medium, Evans many times describes her as a witch, and also as a charlatan. He is very unsettled about her activities (pp. 280–84). Although he generally writes well, at times Evans unnecessarily employs trite language. “... the cat was out of the bag”; “right under David’s nose” (p. 428); “how close he was to blowing it” (p. 258); “David who was currently in the business of capturing towns” (p. 280); “David... as his chickens come home to roost” (p. 432). Evans believes that “the modern church finds itself in a largely hostile environment”; yet Scripture “can be a source of hope for the church, which may be discouraged with their role in the world today” (pp. 433–44). His answer is that people “need to submit to God’s will” (p. 436). Given his approach and his goals, Evans succeeds in making this Scripture interesting for and accessible to his audience.

## Book Reviews

Some relevant background information: I am a rabbi and I have published a series of books on the Hebrew Scriptures specifically from the viewpoint as an Introduction for Christians and Jews (see DavidJZucker.org). When I volunteered to review this work, the BTB book review editor asked me to “consider whether and how it is (or isn’t) useful for its intended audience in part by considering whether it is (or isn’t) useful for you as a reader. That is, one way of framing the issue is by addressing whether a Rabbi could learn something from it. Another way is by addressing whether it is objectionable from your point of view. [Further ...] a review of this kind of work needs to address the question of whether the book, by virtue of being written for a Christian evangelical audience, is anti-Jewish in its content or approach.” To address those matters immediately: first, yes, this book is useful for its intended audience (pastors, students... laity in general). Second, it was useful for me, and as a rabbi I learned from Evans’s approach and his studies. No, I did not find the book objectionable, nor did I find it anti-Jewish in its content or approach, although I was disappointed that Evans continued to use the abbreviations BC and AD, and not BCE and CE (Before the Common Era, Common Era, designations which are now fairly well accepted within the interfaith community. He also continues to use the masculine singular term for God, he/his, when more neutral language reflecting God’s being genderless would be preferable for many people.

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*A Baptism of Judgment in the Fire of the Holy Spirit: John’s Eschatological Proclamation in Matthew 3.* By Daniel W. McManigal. T & T Clark Library of New Testament Studies 595. London, UK: Bloomsbury, 2019. Pp. xv + 208. Cloth, \$114.00.

The present book, containing “the first extended treatment of the baptism in the Holy Spirit in Matthew’s gospel” (dust jacket), offers an impressive intertextual analysis of the possible biblical and parabiblical background of Matthew 3:11, assembling a reasonably persuasive case for the interpretation of this logion as signifying judgment. Given the investigation’s self-imposed limitation (2) to “the Matthean form” of Matthew 3:11, no discussion of the synoptic pre-history of the Baptist’s prophetic judgment speech is to be expected. As such, the author places his study outside the domain of the gospel tradition’s critical study and its circle of interests. Consequently, this book is to be recommended to those readers whose interest in the New Testament is not primarily historical and is focused on Matthew’s use of the Bible.

Although the author’s attention is directed to Matthew 3:11, the broader context of this verse, including Matthew’s infancy narrative, is featured prominently. The programmatic character of Matthew’s opening chapters means that one’s interpretations here carry important implications for the remainder of the Gospel. The book’s third chapter is key, laying the foundation for the remainder of the study. In

it McManigal opts for the interpretation of the Holy Spirit and fire in Matthew 3:11 as signifying eschatological judgment with its two possible outcomes. Although other possibilities exist (discussed in the same chapter), this certainly is an uncontroversial opinion that has generated some assent elsewhere. Almost immediately, however, McManigal moves to reductively focus the universal character of said judgment on specifically Israel’s “impending national doom” (22). With this decision he selects an interpretive lens which in the remainder of the book is applied to the entirety of Matthew’s gospel. As the book’s discussion unfolds, this lens enables a loosely concomitant thesis, namely, that the first Gospel presents its readers with a new exodus in which Israel typologically represents Egypt (e.g., 76, 113, 130–31), an exodus “out of Israel and to Jesus” (120).

What is the exegetical justification for this? It is well known that John’s judgment speech is addressed in this Gospel specifically to the Pharisees and Sadducees (Matt 3:7), whom Matthew distinguishes from the rest of the people (Matt 3:5–6). This is a redactional decision, because at this juncture Matthew can be seen expanding his Markan source. Thus, in Matthew it is the religious authorities who are the “brood of vipers” and those who are said to falsely claim Abraham as their father. McManigal is not unaware of this (e.g., 22, 115, 142, 167) but nevertheless insists that in Matthew’s compositional framework “the Pharisees and Sadducees are representative of Israel” (167). In defense of his position, McManigal calls attention to