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Review: Exodus

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subject and the object of faith" (p. 98). The discoveries at Ras Ibn Hani only several miles from Ugarit are especially significant in that they give evidence for the reestablishment of the area after the Sea Peoples' invasion which destroyed Ugarit in 1200 B.C. Up until the present, there has been very little in the way of physical evidence of the culture of the Sea Peoples.

Chap. 7, "A Guide For Further Study And Reading," is also very helpful. It presents a bibliography for chaps. 2-6 and there are few if any significant omissions of publications necessary to an informed use of the Ugaritic materials.

Only a few shortcomings need be cited. There is a lack of photographs of the site and its artifacts which makes it necessary for the reader to consult *ANEP*. The maps and figures are rather bare. In fact, there is no map that places Ugarit within the ancient context of the Indus valley, Greece, or Mesopotamia. Fig. 14 is certainly not the best example of a clay tablet "indicating difficulties in reading (from surface abrasions)" p. 49. This tablet actually looks almost perfect. There are thousands of damaged tablets that show not only mild abrasions but severe ones plus lacunae from broken parts and burns from which Craigie might have presented an example. Since the decipherment began with the inscription on an axe handle (pp. 14, 16), it would have been more appropriate to show an axe head with an inscription beginning with the letter "l," with which Virolleaud started, than with the letter "h" as depicted in fig. 4, p. 14. It would also be very helpful to provide the reader with the Ugaritic text references, especially in chap. 5, so that the reader might compare Scripture with the Ugaritic evidence to form his own opinion.

Nevertheless, it must be noted that in the total absence of polemics, the fluent and pleasant style, the pertinent data, and the selective bibliography, Craigie has produced a very useful study tool. This book should be mandatory reading for all students of the Bible.

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Exodus, by Ronald F. Youngblood. Everyman's Bible Commentary. Chicago: Moody, 1983. Pp. 144. \$4.50. Paper.

This commentary was refreshing to read. There is every evidence of professional skill in it, and, equally important, an evidence of love and appreciation for Exodus is reflected on every page. This love is illustrated by the following quotation:

I am becoming increasingly convinced that Exodus is the Old Testament's greatest book. Not only does it expand on many of the themes and bring to fruition many of the promises of Genesis, but it also introduces us to the most profound meanings of the Lord's name, to the most basic summary of the Lord's law, to the divine instructions that brought into being the Lord's Tabernacle and priesthood, and to the divine initiative that established the Lord's covenant. . . [p. 7].

This appreciation of Exodus's theological importance animates the discussion throughout.

That the author is a thoroughgoing conservative is evident in his handling of points of scholarly debate. On Mosaic authorship he states: "there is conclusive evidence in favor of Mosaic authorship as opposed to the anonymous writers that the documentary hypothesis suggests" (p. 11). The astounding number of Israelites ("two to three million") is to be taken literally (pp. 72-73). Concerning the date of the exodus event, the author concludes: "no longer are there weighty reasons for preferring the 1295 date (the so-called 'Late Date' which is the near unanimous liberal position) over the 1445 date" (p. 14), and "the available evidence once again seems to be tilting rather decisively in favor of the traditional date of the Exodus—about 1445" (p. 16). While I have always promoted the early date, it is true that such a position is not in the majority. In order to solve one of the major problems for the early date position (the reference to Ramses in Exod 1:11) Youngblood states that "In both Genesis and Exodus, 'Ramses' was not the original name of the site but represents a minor editorial change made by scribes long after Moses' time to update the references for their readers, just as 'Dan' in Genesis 14:14 is an editorial update for the name of a city that was called 'Laish' until the days of the judges" (pp. 13-14). To be fair, however, it should be added that the major difference between the anachronism of Judg 18:29 and Exod 1:11 is that in the case of Dan/Laish the ancient name was "glossed" with the updated name, while retaining the former name. There is no versional support to reveal such an editorial updating in the case of the name Ramses in Exod 1:11.

There are a number of areas where I have modest disagreements. The author writes: "The establishment of God's chosen people of Israel as a 'kingdom of priests and a holy nation' (Exod 19:6) is the major theme of the book of Exodus." While this is certainly a theological truth, I doubt that it is in reality the major theme; it is mentioned only once in the entire book.

On the other hand, in characterizing the contents of the book, the author suggests, with many others, that it is the story of redemption. "The story of Exodus is the story of how God redeemed His people" (p. 18). It is precisely at this point that some serious issues need to be raised. The heart of the problem is identified when Youngblood writes, "Old Testament and New Testament redemption are not identical, of course" (p. 68). In no other place in his discussion is this basic distinction ever integrated into the theological meaning of "redemption" in the OT, as opposed to its meaning in the NT. Youngblood is an excellent theologian and knows the different meanings for the word "redemption" in the testaments: witness the statement, "Old Testament redemption at the time of the Exodus was primarily physical and political, whereas New Testament redemption is primarily spiritual" (p. 68). The rest of the commentary, however, has failed to make this important distinction clear.

An example demonstrates how a layperson might not come to the proper conclusions. "God has called us 'out of darkness into his wonderful light' (1 Pet 2:9), just as [emphasis mine] He did the Israelites at the time of the Exodus" (p. 92). While it is true that the ancient Israelites came into the

presence of divine light (the pillar of light), there was no necessary *salvation* in participating in the exodus (*contra* his statements on p. 100 implying that to participate evidenced this faith). Consider also the statement, "Just as the redemption [emphasis mine] brought about by the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ constitutes the main theme of the New Testament, so the redemption brought about by God's 'mighty acts of judgment' (7:4) at the time of the Exodus constitutes the main theme" (p. 68). Do we really want to argue that everyone who participated in the exodus event was eternally redeemed?

The answer, of course, is that "redemption" in Exodus does not mean "eternal redemption." As Youngblood points out, the basic meaning in the book is "ransom." God was creating for himself a nation which he "redeemed" from Egypt. The nation is not, however, redeemed in the NT sense of the word. In Exodus redemption centered around liberation from earthly bondage, earthly provision, and an earthly covenant whose blessings and curses are, in the main, earthly. It is striking to note that the two words normally translated "redeem" are either rare or unattested in the book. *פדו*, for example, is used eight times as a verb and once as a noun but never with God as the subject. *לגל* is used twice, only once with God as the subject. It is not necessary that the author should agree with my statements; rather, he should have made clearer to the lay reader the implications of the concept of OT "redemption" from Egypt.

There are several other points which might need clarification. For example, the so-called attestations of the tetragram at Ebla and Mari are hotly debated.¹ Furthermore, I doubt that Pharaoh was hoping for an increase of Hebrew wives for his harem when he ordered the killing of the male Hebrew babies (p. 28). I would also have preferred a greater emphasis on the plagues as a polemic against Egyptian gods and religion.

These comments do not reflect general dissatisfaction with the work. Both the author and the publisher are to be commended for giving to the entire Christian community an eminently readable and informative commentary by one of the better scholars in that community.

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¹For a convenient example see Giovanni Pettinato, "Ebla and the Bible," *BA* 43:4 (1980) 203-5. Most scholars no longer accept readings of the divine name Yahweh at Ebla. The common view is that the *yā* is hypocoristic; see Alfonso Archi, "The Epigraphic Evidence from Ebla and the Old Testament," *Bib* 60 (1979) 556-66. Some have maintained that the reading is a divine name, but argue that the deity *Ya* is like ²Elohim, generic; see, for example Mitchell Dahood, "The God *Yā* at Ebla?" *JBL* 100 (1981) 607-8. At the very least we ought to reserve judgment on the issue after the manner of K. A. Kitchen (*The Bible in its World: The Bible and Archaeology Today* [Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1978] 47).

The Gospel of John, by F. F. Bruce. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983. Pp. xii + 425. \$13.95.

This volume is a significant contribution to the available literature on the fourth gospel in that it is written by a leading scholar in the field of NT history and literature but is "intended for the general Christian reader who is interested in serious Bible study, not for the professional or specialist student" (p. 7). With this emphasis, technical points are generally reserved for notes at the end of each chapter, Greek and Hebrew words are transliterated, and a contemporary translation based on the 26th edition of the Nestle-Aland Text is offered.

The translation by Bruce is fresh and lucid. On occasion it includes the author's interpretations which are explained and supported in the comments. For example, *Ἰουδαῖοι* is translated "Judeans" in 7:1 and 11:8 in order to communicate more precisely what is implied. In 2:4 and 19:26, *γύναι* is translated "Lady" to avoid the mistaken notion of disrespect which one might assume from the English vocative, "Woman." The distinctively Johannine *Ἀμήν ἀμήν* is rendered "Indeed and in truth." Bruce supports his translation by referring to the Hebrew counterpart which means "steadfast," "sure," and writes: "On Jesus' lips it confirms the certainty and trustworthiness of what he says, and was preserved untranslated in the Greek-speaking church as his *ipsissima vox*, proclaiming his unique authority" (p. 62). The translation "Only-begotten" for *μονογενής* is surprising in light of the present day move to abandon that terminology in favor of "one of a kind" or "unique."

In light of the intent to write for the "general Christian reader," the following words and phrases are notable: "encomium" (pp. 60, 237), "*opus operatum*" (p. 85), "*sotto voce*" (pp. 174, 179), "*au pied de la lettre*" (p. 240), "ingressive sense of the aorist" (p. 246), "cerements" (p. 248), "an apotropaic offering" (p. 251), "nodal point" (p. 266), "*divus Iesus radiatus*" (p. 359), "hieratic" (p. 359), and "commination" (p. 375).

A problem encountered by the reviewer was not only that helpful material was reserved for endnotes but also that some of the interpretive gems were found there. Since five hundred and seventy-nine notes are found in the book, there was a constant paging from text to notes and back to text again. The temptation was to resist the trouble but the value of the notes caused that temptation to be overcome.

One must not let these problems outweigh the great merit of this book. It is a gold mine for the reader who desires to pursue the argument of the gospel from the standpoint of the best of present-day scholarship. From internal evidence, Bruce concludes that the source of this gospel is the beloved disciple, best identified as John, the son of Zebedee. He argues that the background of the writer's use of *λόγος* is found not in Greek philosophy but in Hebrew thought where it "denotes God in action, especially in creation, revelation and deliverance" (p. 29), which three works characterize the Jesus of the fourth gospel. An interesting observation is contained in a note on 1:2 about Jesus being the One who was with God from the beginning. Bruce postulates that this might be the answer of John to the question of who is with God in