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Review: Amos: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary

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Amos: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary. By Francis I. Andersen and David Noel Freedman. The Anchor Bible. Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1989. xlii + 979 pp. \$30.00.

One is struck immediately with the size of the volume. Andersen and Freedman's translation takes up some 17 pages, but the commentary is almost 1,000 pages. One has to wonder if the utility of these works for the person trying to find help in a book of the Bible might not be diminishing as the number of pages increases.

The impact of canonical criticism on this commentary is evidenced from the start. Without agreeing with all the presuppositions of canonical criticism, it is refreshing to see a study that is not obsessed with various forms, dissected in such a way as to leave little meaning in the text. There is also a more conservative treatment of the Hebrew text itself.

The authors' discussion of the unity of Amos is also refreshing. While holding to later additions, they insist that the diversity of the material should be attributed to stages in Amos's life. Even the epilogue, most often attributed to the postexilic period by critical writers, "belongs to the book of Amos, if not in its original formulation then in one composed shortly thereafter and well within the lifetime of people who knew the prophet and had heard his words" (p. 894). The authors' four points regarding the old criticism (p. 144) are worthy of serious evaluation by all students of the Old Testament.

It seems strange that the discussion of the day of Yahweh is so brief (particularly in light of extensive debate about lesser topics). Only a short statement is found in the commentary, and "day of Yahweh" does not even appear in the index.

This commentary is carefully thought out and thoughtfully presented. Obviously no one will agree with all the conclusions, but Andersen and Freedman have presented their arguments well. All will find the commentary helpful in understanding the argument of the eighth-century shepherd who went north to proclaim Yahweh's word to a sinful nation.

Homer Heater, Jr.

The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Matthew 24–28. By John MacArthur, Jr. Chicago: Moody Press, 1989. 359 pp. \$17.95.

The Olivet Discourse and the closing events of Jesus' life on earth recorded in the Gospel of Matthew are the subjects of this commentary. In general, MacArthur follows the premillennial interpretation of this portion of Scripture. He holds that Matthew 24:3-14 is still entirely future and that it speaks of the endtime. Some premillennial commentators hold that this section is, at least in part, being fulfilled in the present age. MacArthur, however, holds that, beginning in Matthew 24:15, the Great Tribulation is described, the last three and one-half years of the period leading up to the second coming of Christ as indicated in Daniel 9:27 and in Revelation.

The sign of the tribulation, the desolation of the temple, occurs three and one-half years before the Second Coming, and the sign of Christ's coming itself is His glory in the heavens as He descends to earth.

In his exposition of the signs, MacArthur holds that the fig tree is a natural illustration, not a typical one. In other words the Great Tribulation itself is the sign of the end of the age just as a budding fig tree is the sign that summer is near. The "generation" referred to in Matthew 24:34 is the gener-