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Review: The Expositor's Bible Commentary, V 7: Daniel-Minor Prophets

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1 Kings. Word Biblical Commentary. By Simon J. De Vries. Waco, TX: Word Books, 1985. lxiv+286 pp. \$19.95.

The author of this commentary writes as a Christian scholar who aspires to search the text of Scripture with a view to living in subjection to it and thus embody Christ, who is alive (p. ix). The strengths of the work are in the meticulous attention to textual variants (based on awareness of text critical scholarship, which is still unusual for a commentary), the extensive bibliographies for individual sections, and the author's willingness to explore the personal application of the text to modern readers. He has taken criticism from other critical scholars for this willingness (e.g., *Biblical Archeologist* 49 [1986]: 252-53). For this reviewer, De Vries's efforts are appreciated.

At the same time the author's unwillingness to take seriously the witness of the text to God's supernatural intervention in history (p. xxxvi) is regrettable. Thus, for example, he views the story of the encounter on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18:19-40) as a holy legend, in which the purpose is to authorize the prophet, though the events may never have actually happened. Yet he acknowledges that the events would have been in keeping with the thought-world of the ancient Hebrews. In a period in Western civilization when intellectual leaders are speaking of the passing of the Enlightenment and the coming of a postcritical era, it is desirable that biblical scholars trained in historical-critical methods be willing to entertain possibilities formerly excluded by their world view.

Walter R. Bodine

Daniel and the Minor Prophets. Vol. 7: The Expositor's Bible Commentary. Edited by Frank E. Gabelein. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1985. 725 pp. \$24.95.

This volume has met its goal of explaining the Scriptures for "preachers, teachers and students of the Bible." The 12 Minor Prophets and Daniel are expounded by nine commentators. The emphasis of the series is on exposition, and as such, little stress is placed on the more technical aspects of the books. Consequently the section "Notes," though often helpful, varies among authors in comprehensiveness, sometimes being very good and sometimes leaving much to be desired.

Archer's exposition of Daniel has a very helpful introduction, discussing all the critical issues of the book. His comments on the text as well as critical notes are appropriate for pastors and to some extent for laypersons. He holds to a date of 457 B.C. for the beginning of Daniel's 70 heptads. The comments on 10:1 are confused partly because of a serious printing error.

Leon Wood has a helpful and adequate treatment of Hosea, but the "Notes" are uneven. More detailed explanation of some of the technical problems is needed. The work would have been improved with more references to critical and more recent scholarship (e.g., H. W. Wolff in the

Hermeneia series). Patterson treats the locust plague of Joel 2 as a historical army (Assyrian) rather than an eschatological event. He views Peter's use of Joel 2 as the beginning of "the last days" that will culminate in the return of Jesus the Messiah. McComiskey has an excellent introduction to Amos, and his commentary on Micah is good as are the notes.

Carl Armerding expounds Obadiah, Nahum, and Habbakuk. He dates Obadiah at 586 B.C. His structural analysis of Nahum and his literary comparison of Nahum to Isaiah are quite valuable. The material on Jonah was written by H. L. Ellison. His introduction is helpful as is his commentary. Larry Walker treated Zephaniah, but his discussion of the day of the Lord is weak. The messianic era is referred to but not developed.

The postexilic prophets were done by Robert Alden (Haggai and Malachi) and Kenneth Barker (Zechariah). The historical background and comments of Haggai and Malachi are adequate and useful. Barker's work on Zechariah is quite good and reflects current studies.

The commentary could have been improved by a historical introduction to each era with which the prophets were contemporaneous. This would have avoided some redundancy and would have provided a good overview of the period during which the prophets were preaching. But overall the reviewer is pleased to recommend volume 7 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*.

Homer Heater, Jr.

The Paranoid Prophet. By William Bachus. Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1986. 128 pp. Paper, \$4.95.

Why did Jonah behave as he did? And why did God behave as He did? The author of this piece of biblical drama, who is a clinical psychologist and a Lutheran minister, analyzes Jonah as suffering from paranoid personality disorder. His diagnosis is based primarily on data in the biblical text.

Obviously God was dealing with His prophet as much as He was dealing with the Ninevites. What Jonah learned about God and himself constitutes the climax of this well-told tale. The story is set in Nineveh after Jonah has preached and the city has repented. Jonah's inability to cope with God's severity toward himself and His grace toward the Ninevites drives him to seek help from a psychotherapist, who narrates his counseling sessions and other contacts with Jonah in the days that follow.

In addition to providing some helpful insights into Jonah, God, and people who are angry with God, this story exposes some of the basic inadequacies of several prevalent psychological theories. Anyone interested in a better understanding of the God of the Bible and people who are angry with God should find this book pleasingly fascinating.

Thomas L. Constable
