

It is difficult, at first, to take a commentary seriously in which there are no word studies, no examination of grammar and syntax, and no informative articles on the politics, economy, and religious and social customs of the day. However, if one keeps in mind that the aim of *The Communicator's Commentary* is to make better "communicators" out of those who are not trained in biblical studies, what is lacking in the technical handling of NT books is more than compensated for by the practical application of Scripture.

The commentary on Luke has an "Editor's Preface" in which the goals for the series are laid out. A short introduction deals with authorship, date of composition, and a preview of several themes found in Luke. *The New King James Bible* provides the text for the commentary. At the end there is a brief bibliography with 34 entries. A number of the standard commentaries on Luke are listed, together with several general works on the Synoptic Gospels. This bibliography would be strengthened, however, if some of the older works from the beginning of this century were omitted and newer studies were listed, e.g., the works of I. Howard Marshall.

Larson is to be commended for his readable, and often entertaining, comments on Luke's Gospel. Several times I found myself chuckling over his illustrations and anecdotes. Any preacher, professional or lay, will find this commentary to be a gold mine of useful stories for sermon illustrations. The practical applications of passages from Luke are virtual seed beds of sermon ideas.

Although the reader of this commentary who is trained in biblical studies will probably find it to be superficial, a lay preacher will find it to be a valuable source of ideas and illustrations. Without a question, *The Communicator's Commentary* series will fill a great need.

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Singer, Karl Helmut. *Die Metalle Gold, Silber, Bronze, Kupfer und Eisen im Alten Testament und ihre Symbolik*. Forschung zur Bibel, vol. 43. Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1980. 195 pp. DM 39.00 (paper).

This volume is the published form of a University of Mainz dissertation, investigating the terms for the metals of gold, silver, bronze, copper and iron in the OT and their symbolic meaning. The author has divided his study into three major parts: Part A consists of an exploration of the terminology of the five metals, Part B compares the metals with each other, and Part C investigates the symbolism of these metals. The focus of this monograph is not so much on the archaeological aspects of these

metals, a subject treated extensively by other scholars, but rather on the interrelationship of these five metals and their symbolical connections.

The usual term for "gold" in the OT is *zāhāb*, but such terms as *hārūš*, *pāz*, *keṭem*, and *d^ehab* also designate gold and may serve to distinguish its quality or purity. The comparison with gold reveals value, purity, and preciousness. Gold is the "royal metal." Only in Dan 2:38 is the king identified with gold. Generally, gold reveals the wealth, splendor, and power of the king or deity. The purer the gold, the higher the dignity and splendor of what is symbolized by gold.

The Hebrew term for "silver" is *keseṭ*, while in Aramaic it is *k^esap*. This metal is employed in various connections, and in particular as a monetary measure or means. Silver does not symbolize permanence and durability, but communicates something that is threatened in its value and insecure in a crisis. It is of "second rank" as a metal and symbolizes that which is of inferior value as compared to the royal metal gold. As far as Dan 2:32 is concerned, the silver kingdom is inferior to that of gold and reveals a lesser status. The inferior nature of the symbolism is carried on throughout the OT, including the usage of silver in cultic or political spheres.

The Hebrew term for "bronze" or "copper" is *n^ehošeṭ*, and in Aramaic the term is *n^ehāš*. It is not clear in every case of usage of these terms whether it is bronze or copper that is in view. These metals were commonly used for making utensils and tools before iron became widely utilized and even during the time when iron was in common use for such purposes. On the basis of the strength inherent in bronze, this metal became a symbol of strength, hardness, and insurmountability. At the same time, bronze/copper is of lesser value than the precious metals of gold and silver; and as such, it symbolizes a worsening of the situation as compared with what is signified by gold and silver. Indeed, an additional and increasing inferiority is communicated (cf. Dan 2:39).

The term for "iron" is *barzel* in Hebrew and *parzel* in Aramaic. The etymology is still uncertain. It derives either from the Hittite (a Caucasian origin?) or from Sumerian (cf. G. F. Hasel, "Iron," *ISBE* 2 [1982]: 880-882). Iron was known for its strength and durability. In terms of value, in comparison to gold, silver, and bronze, iron was a less valuable commodity.

The sequence of the four metals of gold, silver, bronze, and iron in Dan 2 does not mean from "the strongest to the less strong" (*pace* O. Plöger, J. Goettsberger), but rather an increasing strength (p. 131). I feel that Singer has not captured the symbolic aspect of the four-empire schema adequately. It is *twofold* in its symbolic nature, the sequence of gold-silver-bronze-iron in Dan 2 indicating (a) a decreasing value, and (b) an increasing strength. Singer makes a contribution, however, by

noting that iron also communicates symbolically that the times are getting worse for God's people, so that the iron period of time is one of hardship and difficulty for the pious ones. I disagree with Singer once more, however, in his attempt to link Persian influence to the metal sequence in Dan 2. New archaeological information indicates that there is a common Near-Eastern pattern of metal sequence which goes back to Neo-Babylonian sources predating those of Persian (or Greek) provenance (see G. F. Hasel, "The Four World Empires in Daniel 2 Against Its Near Eastern Environment," *JSOT* 12 [1979]:17-30).

This monograph is broad in its scope as regards the metals under discussion. The author treats the OT and some deuterocanonical texts. Unfortunately, no comparison is made with the symbolism of these metals in the larger ancient Near-Eastern environment. It would have been instructive to observe the meaning of these metals in Babylonian, Assyrian, Ugaritic, Hittite, and Egyptian texts and to have compared these results with those pertaining to the OT.

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