

BOOK REVIEWS

Beitzel, Barry J. *The Moody Atlas of Bible Lands*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1985. xviii + 234 pp. \$30.00.

A number of new Bible atlases have been published recently, but this volume certainly appears to be one of the better ones. Strictly speaking, this is more than a Bible atlas; in actuality it is a historical geography.

The Bible atlas type of book generally reproduces far fewer maps than does a historical geography, and thus the atlas tends to collect the important sites from various periods of history on maps that span several periods. In the case of this volume, however, the individual events are mapped on separate plates. This naturally requires a large number of maps; and indeed, there are 95 of them in the book. The publishers should also be commended for their generally high quality of production of those maps.

The historical geography also differs from the Bible atlas in that it provides much more explanatory text to go with the different events and features of the land that are mapped. Such is also the case here, for this volume provides an extended commentary on the maps and the features that are charted on them. All of this makes the book more usable for the general reader, but it also provides the specialist with more grist for the mill of his critique.

While the maps reproduced in this volume are excellent in quality, some of them seem a bit extraneous. Three examples of this come to mind; the borders of the promised land, in No. 2; the routes of travel taken by foreign conquerors coming into Canaan, in No. 6; and the extending of the Jordan-Rift-Valley fault line all the way into East Africa, in Map 8. Accompanying the 95 maps are 40 figures, mainly photographs of various scenes in the Middle East. These also are generally high in quality.

As a matter of personal preference, this reviewer would like to see the mapping of ancient sites supplemented on the same map with the routes of travel by which one obtained access to those sites. In this volume, however, the trade routes are charted separately (Map 19), while the cities are set in the topographical relief maps without showing the routes connecting these cities (Maps 14-15, 17). This procedure is, of course, simply a matter of judgment on the part of the author, the cartographers, and the publisher.

The author is known for his expertise especially in the area of geography of other parts of the Ancient Near East outside of Canaan. This is an interest which shows up in the maps of sites and routes of other parts of the ancient world that are not commonly included in the typical Bible atlas (Maps 16 and 18).

Beitzel writes from an unabashedly conservative or evangelical viewpoint. This reviewer is in sympathy with such a stance, but it is a stance that leads on occasion to unusual presentations. One case of this sort is the

charting of possible locations (two of them) for the Garden of Eden on Map 20—one in eastern Turkey, and one at the northern end of the Persian Gulf. The author might also have considered the territory of Bit-Adini, in the vicinity of the Upper Euphrates, for this is the only place in the ancient Near East where the name of Eden appears to have survived. Since all of these locations are speculative in character, one may question how much value there is in presenting them.

The route of the Exodus is perennially a matter of dispute in biblical geographies. The author opts for and charts the southern route to the traditional Mount Sinai at Jebel Musa. This may well be correct, and the author has considerable scholarly opinion in his favor (though also a considerable amount against him); but his choice is particularly problematical in view of the work done during the last decade by Israeli archaeologists in the Sinai peninsula. In this work, there has been no trace found of any Late-Bronze-Age settlement or even of transitory campsites during that period in the southern two-thirds of the Sinai peninsula. The question of the Exodus route remains open; nevertheless, Beitzel's views and discussion are useful in the ongoing consideration of the problem.

Matters of geography are also problematical in connection with the study of the Conquest in the book of Joshua. In Beitzel's rather brief presentation of this subject (pp. 95-99), he passes over quite briefly certain problems of rather large magnitude, such as the location of Ai, without giving much discussion of the issues. Some of the other sites connected with the southern campaign of Joshua are also in dispute, both with regard to their location and identification and with regard to how well the archaeology of those sites that have been excavated fit with this Conquest, whenever it is dated. This atlas is above all, however, a volume aimed at a readership among laypersons and pastors, so it is natural that a rather straightforward approach to the presentation of its various topics has been followed.

The mapping of the period of the Judges and the rise of David are quite complete—even extensive, one might say. In my view, it was optional whether to map all of the places where David fled as a fugitive from Saul (Map 43), but it certainly is important to chart the campaigns of David after he became king and the results of these campaigns (Maps 45-46).

The voyages of Solomon's ships (Map 47) present another matter that is somewhat speculative in nature. The charting of the divisions of Solomon's provinces (Map 49) is more important.

Map 52 gives a composite picture of the attacks of all of the foreign invaders against Israel and Judah from the tenth to sixth centuries B.C.—i.e., from the time of Shishak of Egypt to the time of Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. Then subsequent maps take up some of these invasions individually. Two invasions that are not taken up individually, but which should

have been, in my opinion, are the attacks of Shishak and of Sennacherib, in the late tenth and eighth centuries, respectively.

One can always quibble with many small points in the presentation of any given Bible atlas, because geographers are not yet of one mind on all of the relevant matters. Given the aim of this volume, however, I would say that this is a Bible atlas that does very well in reaching its goal, and it should find a wide area of usefulness among laity and pastors alike. I would strongly recommend its use by both groups; and if it is put to effective use by them, it will go a long way towards enriching the understanding of the Bible-reading public concerning the places and times in which the events of biblical history occurred.

Two minor criticisms of the production may be noted in conclusion: the print is sometimes uneven on different parts of the pages, appearing darker in some parts and lighter in others; and one fold of four pages was loose from the binding in the copy which was received for review.

Andrews University

WILLIAM H. SHEA

Brecht, Martin. *Martin Luther: His Road to Reformation 1483-1521*.

Trans. James L. Schaaf. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985. xv + 557 pp. \$36.95.

Martin Brecht's *Martin Luther. Sein Weg zur Reformation 1483-1521* (Stuttgart, 1981) richly deserves the attention of the wider audience that the present English translation affords it. One may ask the question, however, of just why there should be another biography of Luther added to the numerous ones that already exist, and why it should cover the Reformer's career only to 1521.

As the author himself points out, the massive amount of research on Luther in the decades since World War II has indicated the need for such an endeavor (p. xi). The decision to make the year 1521 the *terminus ad quem* for this biography is related to the author's intent to provide two further volumes in the series; and, moreover, there are volumes that for the present can close the gap—such as Heinrich Bornkamm's *Luther in Mid Career: 1521-1530* (translated by E. Theodore Bachmann and published in its English edition by Fortress Press in 1983 [German ed., 1979]), and the multi-authored two-volume *Leben und Werk Martin Luthers von 1526-1546*, edited by Helmar Junghans and published in Göttingen in 1983 (p. xii).

There is no question but that Brecht's work significantly updates that of other biographers of the Reformer's early career, such as Otto Scheel (1917-18), Heinrich Bornkamm (1925) and Herndon Fife (1928 and 1957). It does not always, however, give an intense scrutiny to significant backgrounds and developments as does E. G. Schwiebert's *Luther and His*