

not need the translations, though they may find the footnotes helpful as a reference commentary. It seems the primary market for these volumes would be libraries where the student and interested nonspecialist could gain ready access to this excellent resource on biblical translation and interpretation.

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Michael, J. Ramsey. *Interpreting the Book of Revelation*. Guides to New Testament Exegesis, vol. 7. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992. 150 pp. \$9.99.

Interpreting the Book of Revelation is another addition to the excellent Guides to New Testament Exegesis series edited by Scot McKnight and designed to provide interpretive handbooks for each of the genres of the NT. The author attempts to follow in the tradition established by the three previously published volumes of the series. This is a great challenge, due to the nature of the Book of Revelation.

Michael, however, seems equal to the challenge, despite his assessment that Revelation is a mixed genre defying description. It has characteristics of letter, apocalypse, and classic prophecy. Yet, if it is a letter, it is unlike any other extant early Christian letter; if it is an apocalypse, it is like no other apocalypse; if it is a prophecy, it is unique among prophecies (31-32). Michael prefers to see it as a letter which contains a narrative, or story line. But he finds this somewhat inadequate, arguing, more precisely, for either prophetic letter, based on its long title, or apocalyptic letter, based on its content (31). At the same time, he doubts "how crucial the determination of genre is for the interpretation of specific passages" (32). He maintains that "the judgment that it is a letter, an apocalypse, or a prophecy will not take the student very far. The form of a specific passage under discussion is at least as important to the interpretive task as the genre of the entire book" (33).

If the reader did not figure it out by reading the table of contents, it becomes apparent already in the introduction that Michael is a proponent of narrative analysis, an "inside" approach to the text which he favors over "the so-called 'historical-critical method'" (16). Although he admits that the book must also be "interpreted 'from the outside' in light of what can be known of the times in which it was written and the traditions then alive" (18), he subsequently argues that "the student who wants to interpret Revelation probably will have to live with a considerable degree of uncertainty about its date and historical setting" (46). While he believes it is important for students to "familiarize themselves with the historical and social setting of the Book of Revelation in the late first century," he holds that "this setting is known to us only generally." Consequently, "if a precise historical setting is the 'key' to understanding Revelation, then understanding will elude us" (50).

One notable thing about this volume is the spirit of openness Michael displays toward alternative understandings of the Book of Revelation. He displays a healthy lack of dogmatism about his own suggested solutions to the

problems in the book. In fact, he raises far more problems and questions than he tries to resolve, and he seems quite comfortable leaving the solutions to the student. This is evident, for example, in his chapter on the structure of Revelation. While he proposes a structure, he admits that it is only one among many proposals, and concludes that "the best outline is the one you have made for yourself" (71). The student who is looking for airtight answers to the problems of the Book of Revelation will not find them in this volume. Michael expects the reader to lay aside well-worn presuppositions and to use the tools and suggestions he has given to craft his or her own new solutions through an openness to the text, especially from the inside.

The book is quite readable, with one exception. The Greek of each cited word or phrase is given in both Greek font and transliterated form. This complicates the reading unnecessarily. The editor claims in the preface that the series is designed for the student or pastor who has had at least one year of Greek. For these, Greek should be sufficient and providing transliteration is redundant. Those who do not read Greek would find the transliteration meaningless as well.

I counted only ten editorial errors in the book. Most are of the kind that would not unduly distract the average reader. On p. 81, however, the reader needs to know that the cross-reference to "see p. 000" should probably read "see pp. 120-123." Michael appears to contradict himself on pp. 106 and 113 in regard to how far the interpreter is wise to go beyond what is made explicit in the text by the "reliable narrator" (cf. 100, 114, 123). On p. 111, Michael seems to imply that Brenton's edition of the LXX contains both Theodotion's and the LXX version of Daniel, but this is not so. While Rahlfs' edition does contain both texts, Brenton and *The NIV Triglot Old Testament* (Zondervan, 1981) contain only Theodotion's version of Daniel.

The author provides a "Select Bibliography." The selection could be debated, but on the whole is representative. Michael has limited himself to twenty works. I would have added a few others, like the commentaries by Collins (NT Message, Michael Glazier, 1979), Fiorenza (Proclamation, Fortress, 1991), and Sweet (Westminster Pelican/SCM, 1990). While I would take issue with Michael on several points of interpretation, his interpretation of 1:19 seems reasonable, particularly in light of the concept of the "reliable narrator." In this he makes a real contribution. Certainly he opens the mind of the reader to some nontraditional concepts in interpreting Revelation, and the student will be rewarded for the time spent with this helpful volume.

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Morris, Leon. *The Gospel According to Matthew*. Pillar NT Commentary Series. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1992; Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1992. xvii + 781 pp. \$39.99.

When examining a commentary one may rightly ask whether the work is essentially derivative or whether it breaks new ground. This one by Leon