

explicated the older texts . . . ?" (280). Crüsemann seems to find much of the priestly material as originating "in the period that was no longer dominated by the cry over guilt and what was lost, but rather consequences and new beginnings" (284), i.e., the period of Ezra and Nehemiah (294).

In chapter 8 Crüsemann specifies the social background to the development of the Pentateuch—or Torah. First, those in debt and the priests formed a social coalition (343). Second, some aristocrats who stayed in Judea desired to secure a relationship with those scattered abroad (343-345). Third, the Persian rule impacted on the prophetic role and demanded "a single law, a single document as the divine law of their God" (345-351).

In all this process of development the Decalogue (Exod 20; Deut 5) played a very significant role. In the Sinai event "it alone was given as God's direct word to the nation" (351). Crüsemann finds two major concepts being developed simultaneously in Israel—the unity of God and the unity of Torah (365-367).

The importance of Crüsemann's book is that he looks at a wide range of arguments and draws from several disciplines and methodologies. Even if the possible dates for the origin of the documents are those posited and argued for a long time now, Crüsemann has managed to show a lively development—social and historical—of the Torah. He also develops a reasonable argument as to why the Pentateuch must be seen as Israel's Torah.

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Ellis, Carl F., Jr. *Free At Last? The Gospel in the African-American Experience*. 2d ed. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996. 285 pp. \$12.99.

The basic approach of the author is to use the biblical Exodus as a model for the liberation of African-Americans. As the title suggests, the sentiment of the old Negro spiritual is questioned, "Free at last?" The subtitle provides the vision for answering the question.

The book is divided into four parts. The first, "A Primer" (really an introduction) indicates how Black militants rejected the hypocrisy of "the Christianity of the land" (called *Christianity-ism* by Ellis), but replaced it with the "religion" of secular humanism. Ellis says that this is untenable. He claims that like the ancient Israelites, African-Americans must get back in touch with their history, destiny, and collective consciousness (i.e., standards adopted by a people which affect *what* and *how* they do things; the grid used to understand the world). This is possible only through a God-centered view of the world (24-26). God's grace provides the *basis, power, and will* to resist oppression (28-30).

Part 2, "Reflecting Back," consists of six chapters which discuss major phases in the cultural history of the African-American experience. In the first, the Colored or Formative phase, early Black theology formulated a dynamic parallel between the ancient Hebrews and black slaves. Freedom was understood not merely as a reality in the hereafter, but as something to be pursued "this side of the Jordan" (53). Hence, a "*second exodus*": emancipation, Reconstruction and its

reversals, and beyond. The second, or Neo-Colored Phase, as advocated by Booker T. Washington, proposed vocational training for Blacks and consolidation around resources, in order to gain dignity and acceptance from the majority culture. But this proved elusive. The Negro Phase proposed that imitation was the key strategy for Blacks to assimilate into larger society. But this “pretending to be White is bondage to a lie and demeaning to a person’s character” (64). The Neo-Negro or Strategic Phase proposed that the way for African-Americans to be part of the American mainstream, and demolish the patterns of segregation, was through legal means. Initiated by the Montgomery Bus Boycott and fueled by Dr. Martin Luther King’s rhetoric of non-violent resistance, the Civil Rights Movement crusaded for justice and equality. It was a Red Sea experience. The fifth phase, the Black Phase, led to the discovery of “the richness of our heritage” (93). Losing the distinction of “complexion consciousness” (i.e., lighter versus darker hues) we were just Black, knowing that “no man or institution has the power to destroy the humanity of Black people” (94). We would cross the Jordan river.

Part 3, “Roots and Fruits of Consciousness,” is divided into four chapters. Major points of discussion include the following: (1) Christianity is beyond race and culture because its roots precede all races and cultures. “Ultimately, the roots of Christianity will lead us back to Adam and his response to God’s salvation and promises” (142); (2) The centrality of the Word of God in helping us to understand ourselves in relation to the God who *IS*; (3) the role and function of music in the theological dynamic of reconstructing African-Americans culture; i.e. how our songs “shape our ideas of God and his world” (173); (4) the need for a “soul dynamic,” i.e., a theological and cultural renewal needed to help revive faltering Black communities, Black consciousness, and Black churches. There is need for a *cultural seeding*, “an injection of the biblical world view into our culture” (184).

The two chapters of Part IV, “Toward a New Agenda,” suggest practical ways of applying the foregoing knowledge to our personal and community lives. At the top of the agenda for true liberation must be “the quest for godliness in every area of life” (189). Only this will bring empowerment to the struggle of the oppressed while maintaining dignity and cultural cohesion. Indeed, “True freedom is not the right to do what I want, it is the *power* to do what is *right*” (191). This *power* may be realized through the following means: a revamping of our educational system to reflect a wholistic, scriptural world-and-life view; a commitment to righteousness, goal orientation, and excellence; revitalization of family life, economic development, and political cohesion.

But for African-Americans to enter the Promised Land, we need a Joshua generation who will apply the soul dynamic to the issues now confronting us. This demands a two-fold need: an *intracultural* righteousness to free us of our own ungodliness; an *extracultural* righteousness to overcome oppression (196). This Joshua generation should not be limited to African-Americans only; it should transcend our culture and have a redemptive effect on America at large, and beyond. But who will be the Joshua to lead us in? “We may enter into the Promised Land with dignity and surefootedness if we enter with Jesus—if we let His Spirit lead us in righteousness” (192).

An extensive glossary of important people, dates, and events, completes the

book. It would be of greater value, I believe, if it had an index, particularly a subject index. Nevertheless, this book realizes Ellis' prayer "that the principles contained . . . will play a role in building bridges of understanding and facilitating reconciliation where there has been alienation" (16).

Ellis is clear that African-Americans are not free as long as me-ism, materialism, libertarianism, secularism, humanism, or Islam, dominate the agenda. The Bible is our basis for freedom and dignity. We are free only in God.

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Feldman, Louis H., and Meyer Reinhold. *Jewish Life and Thought among Greeks and Romans*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996. 436 pp. \$48.00.

This ambitious collection of primary readings will prove extremely helpful to anyone interested in how Jews and Jewish culture were regarded by the great classical civilizations of the Mediterranean world. The two editors, appropriately, also have feet in both worlds, and are scholars of vast erudition: Louis H. Feldman, the well-known authority on Josephus, is Professor of Classics at Yeshiva University, while Meyer Reinhold held a similar post at Boston University.

The original source material in these pages breathes life into the many occasions of congruence and clash between Jews and the world of antiquity during the approximate thousand years from Alexander the Great to Justinian. As the Jewish Diaspora penetrated the ancient world, both anti- and philo-Semitism characterized the attitudes of Gentiles toward their Jewish neighbors, who responded in a spectrum ranging from antagonism to assimilation.

The editors chose from a wide variety of sources, including the writings of ancient historians and literati, legal documents, government edicts, treaties, treatises, memoirs, inscriptions, letters, and rabbinical traditions. Any evidence illuminating Jewish-Gentile relations contained in ancient epigraphy, papyri, coinage, or literary documents was marshalled for this collection—the broadest I have seen in one volume.

Several excerpts from this anthology will illustrate the color and immediacy of these "living" documents from the dead past. They also demonstrate the editors' care in offering a fair and balanced presentation of the evidence, without glossing over or explaining away any of the attitudes in their sources. The great thoughts of a Philo are ventilated, for example, but also his misogyny:

The female is nothing more than an imperfect male. (*Questions on Exodus* 1.7)

Or:

A wife is a selfish creature, excessively jealous and adept at beguiling the morals of her husband. (*Hypothetica* 11.14)

Evidently, such an opinion was widespread among Jewish men of the time, since an earlier document, *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (c. 100 B.C.), claims:

For women are evil, my children, and by reason of their lacking authority or power over man, they scheme treacherously how they might entice him to themselves by means of their looks. (*Testament of Reuben* 5)