

First, does Paul refer to the Decalogue when he speaks of the "law" in Romans as a whole, and in 7:1-6 in particular? Burton's argument, it seems to me, does not succeed in establishing the point. Though he correctly notes that several quotations from the "law" are taken from the Decalogue, the same quotations are also (necessarily) found in the Mosaic "Torah" that *contains* the Decalogue. On what basis, then, are we to conclude that Paul intends the more narrow rather than the broader referent? None is suggested. In fact, it is clear from Galatians that when Paul says that the "law" and its "works" do not justify (see, e.g., Gal 2:16; also Rom 3:28, 28), circumcision and the observance of "days, months, seasons, and years" (Gal 4:10) were included in "the law's" demands. Indeed, the issue of whether Gentiles should be subjected to the distinctively Jewish observance of the "Torah" was what provoked Paul's discussions about the "law," its purpose, and its relation to the believer in Galatians; presumably the same issue lies behind the discussion in Romans as well. There appears, then, to be no reason to limit the "law" to the Decalogue.

Second, does Paul mean that believers were *temporarily* freed from the law, then became its subjects again (albeit in a new kind of relationship) through their union with the resurrected Christ? This may seem a logical reading of the analogy in Rom 7:2-3. Should the widow remarry, she would in effect become subject again to the law forbidding adultery. But such a conclusion, however logical, presses the analogy beyond Paul's point. The apostle *ends* the analogy with the widow's freedom to remarry, saying nothing of any subsequent relationship to the law should she do so. In the same passage, Paul says of Christians that they have "died to the law" in order that they might belong to "another" (7:4). Here Christ appears to be an alternative not simply to life in the "flesh" (the "flesh" is not even mentioned before 7:5), but *to the law itself*. To use Paul's analogy, a fresh relation with the law would entail marriage to two husbands! In Rom 7:6, Paul repeats that Christians have been released from the law—with no hint that the discharge was enjoyed only during a brief period of transition. How Paul's various statements of Christian freedom from the law are to be combined with his claims of their continuing moral obligations remains a perennial problem for his interpreters. But nowhere does he suggest a resolution by which the purported freedom is momentary, nor the continuing obligation the result of a *reconstituted* subjection to the law.

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Carroll, James. *Constantine's Sword: The Church and the Jews: A History*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2001. xii + 756 pp. Hardcover, \$28.00.

Constantine's Sword is a history of the Christian cross interlaced with personal vignettes from James Carroll's own life, a mixture of personal confession, personal anguish over the contempt for Jews, which he witnessed since early childhood, and a history of the church's sins. A former Catholic priest and the son of an American general of Irish descent and a devout Catholic mother, Carroll is deeply tormented by the cross planted at Auschwitz. It was the cross, he says, which caused him to become a priest, but it was the cross at Auschwitz that caused him to leave the priesthood. Though he claims to be Catholic and a Christian, many will question

that claim. He is uncomfortable with Christianity, condemning it in general and the Catholic church in particular. For him almost everything the church teaches and does is wrong.

The greatest value of *Constantine's Sword* is the author's ability to patiently present one question after another and to expose problems in Christian teachings and practice. He takes the reader to new heights of understanding regarding the history of Christian contempt for the Jews. Not lacking in knowledge of church and European history, he questions not only Christianity, but Western civilization as well. The reader will benefit by *thoroughly* reading *Constantine's Sword* not only for factual information, but also for insight, stimulus, and the spiritual challenge the work poses. Carroll forces the reader to be unsatisfied with *what* happened, to ask *why* it happened. This is truly a book of questions—either penned by Carroll or raised in the reader's mind—many of which the reader will hardly be able to answer.

Carroll begins by stating the problems in the church and society that relate to Jewish-Christian relations. The narrative exposes the forces behind anti-Semitism, against which few will argue. Loyal Christians will, however, challenge Part 2 and certainly disagree with Part 8, where Carroll sets forth five proposals for the agenda of a possible Vatican III. The new council is to correct the shortcomings of the previous church councils in general, and Vatican II in particular. He expects it to desanctify those parts of the church's sacred texts that promote anti-Judaism—the primary culprit is the Gospel of John; to curtail the church's political power to make it less imperial; to articulate a new Christology in which Jesus is demoted from his divine status, in order to set the focus on “the God of Jesus Christ, and therefore the Church, [who] is the God of Israel” (566), and to proclaim that Jesus is “the expressive Being of God” (587); to set forth a policy of “holiness of democracy”—that is, religious pluralism; and to publicly and openly articulate the church's repentance. Carroll argues that only after the church has officially acted on these five items can it ask for forgiveness for its crimes against the Jews.

Carroll blames the early Christians for conjuring up stories which, according to him, turned the tide against the Jews for centuries to come. Their claim about Jesus' messiahship and divinity set the stage for the dogma of supersession, for the charge of deicide, and for the contempt of the Jews. He blames Constantine for making the cross the central focus of Christianity and for enslaving theology to imperial politics. Constantine is presented as a shrewd statesman, whose objective was unity of the church and the empire rather than theological purity. Constantine's forceful personality and heavy-handedness at Nicaea showed the Church Fathers how to force doctrinal unity and to act imperially. The Emperor turned the cross, that Roman instrument of torture, into a holy relic and endowed it with salvific powers. By making the cross holy, he decided the fate of the Jews and introduced the “dark ages” of continual discrimination, pogroms, persecutions, and death of the Jewish people. However, Carroll does not mention that the Catholic Fathers of Elvira (ca. 306) began to restrict the freedoms of the Jews years before Constantine came on the scene.

“Auschwitz is the climax of the story that begins at Golgotha,” says Carroll (22). “Once the crucifixion was made central to Christian piety, the Jews came to the forefront of Christian consciousness as the enactors of that crucifixion” (54).

Whereas the central tenet of Judaism is the *living* God, Christianity made the death of Jesus the central focus. By making the death of Jesus central to its theology and then blaming the Jews for killing Christ, the church made hatred of the Jews holy and lethal.

In spite of the author's wish, *Constantine's Sword* has little chance of bridging the gap between Christians and Jews. Like the work of John Dominic Crossan, Rosemary Radford Ruether, and others, this work also argues that the seeds of anti-Semitism were planted within the writings of the Apostles (which Christians unfortunately call the "NT"). Although Carroll tries to distance himself from The Jesus Seminar, Crossan, and Robert Funk, he nevertheless argues similarly. Certain parts of the NT are not holy, i.e., they are uninspired. That argument sits well in the halls of intellectual debate, but it will never make it in the leading circles of Christianity.

Carroll's work shows disappointment and tension. While he faults the Catholic church, disdains the Protestant Reformers, and professes to be a Christian, he also defends the right of the Catholic church to shape Christian theology, echoes the Protestant charges against the Papacy, and sounds like an agnostic. His stress on *love*—"the final revelation of Jesus is not about knowing but about loving"—does not seem to go beyond *tolerance*. He falls short in showing *how* one would express divine love to fellow human beings and to God. With his criticism of the church's emphasis on the death and suffering of Jesus, one would expect that Carroll would stress the resurrection of Christ, but he does not. He avoids the subject of the resurrection, but makes it clear that he does not take it to be a historical event. For him, it is a postcrucifixion figment of the imagination of Jesus' followers. The dispirited Christians created the resurrection "reality" on the basis of selected texts, which they appropriated for their dead Lord, supposedly predicting the death and resurrection of the Messiah. This argument is not new.

Few Christians are aware that the followers of Jesus were truly Jewish, that they observed the requirements of the Torah—such as the Sabbath, kosher diet, and Jewish festivals—and centered their lives around the temple. Reminding the reader of the Jewishness of Jesus and his disciples is timely and necessary, but Carroll fails to show *what* happened, and *why*, that caused the church to drift afar and lose its original Jewishness. Carroll expends much effort emphasizing the Jewishness of Jesus, but too little to call the church to recover something of what it has lost. Interestingly, the reconsideration of the Torah does not make it to the list of his proposals for Vatican III. Carroll fails to realize that at the core of Christian contempt for the Jews lay the church's contempt and hatred for what the Jews stood for—the *living* and transcendent God, and the Law of God, the same Law that Jesus himself affirmed and his disciples observed. Carroll's own historical narrative shows that the church sought imperial power rather than divine truth, and as Constantine usurped God's place, so did the church. Judaism was a thorn in the side, always reminding the church of its apostasy. The Jews may have had a problem in accepting the messiahship of Jesus, but it was the Christians who paganized themselves. No Jew in his right mind could accept Christianity and thereby openly trample on the Law of God, which served as the ultimate test of religious legitimacy and of loyalty to the living God.

Constantine's Sword is greatly weakened by the author's lack of primary sources; the work is based on secondary sources alone. The writing style is easy to read, and Carroll is a good storyteller. His work yields almost seventy pages of endnotes, supplemented by six pages of chronology and an extensive bibliography and index. His handling of historical documents, however, is fickle. He suspects the authenticity of the four Gospels and Acts because they were written decades after the fact, and likely not written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John. Yet, he takes the Jewish chronicles of the eleventh century, also written decades after the fact, without reserve. Much could be said about his use of the term "totalitarian" for the medieval church, rather than the more accurate "authoritarian" or "dictatorial." Finally, a knowledgeable reader may question the complete omission of the fate of the Jews in the seventh-century Visigothic Kingdom, an episode in the history of the Jewish people as dark as that of the year 1096.

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Crenshaw, James L. *The Psalms: An Introduction*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001. x + 187 pp. \$15.00.

Professor James Crenshaw has written an introduction to the book of Psalms that is evidently the product of years of studying and teaching. A lifetime of research and contemplation on psalmic wisdom and related OT concerns are brought to bear on this recent volume. *Evidence* of Crenshaw's lifelong work is *evident* in his publications, including *Old Testament Wisdom: An Introduction* (1981, 1998), *Ecclesiastes* (1987), *Story and Faith* (1992), *Urgent Advice and Probing Questions* (1995), and *Education in Ancient Israel* (1998).

Crenshaw's work has two principal aims: to engender a deeper appreciation of the "literary artistry and theological sensitivity" of the psalms and to encourage readers to study the book with a fresh perspective (169). To accomplish this, he divides his book into three parts—origins, approaches to the Psalms, and some readings.

In Part I, Crenshaw examines several issues of introduction. He explores the question of composition and collections in the Psalter and discusses their individual authorship and settings. He also compares them to other related materials inside and outside the Bible. In Part II, he discusses three approaches to the Psalter. The first highlights the Psalms as prayers and resources for devotional life. The second examines them as a resource for historical data. A final approach examines the literary classification of and social setting for the individual Psalms. In this section, Crenshaw also provides an evaluation of some recent literary and theological approaches and an excellent excursus on the wisdom psalms. In Part III, he offers detailed exposition of four specific Psalms (24, 71, 73, and 115).

Crenshaw succeeds admirably in accomplishing his stated aims. This is a needed volume and in spite of its brevity, it contains all the hallmarks of an introduction. His careful methodology makes the book a useful resource for any student. It will also be beneficial to those who teach entry-level exegesis of the Psalms. The rich bibliographical data are especially helpful for those seeking to conduct further research.

In my estimation, the outstanding contribution of this book is the exposition