

a director of conscripted gangs that worked for the king as a levied form of taxation (138). This unpopular office functioned only during the time of the united monarchy. In general, Fox leans away from making connections between the titles for Israelite officials and similar officers in the courts of the ancient Near East outside of Israel. She is also skeptical about the authenticity of Israelite seals that have not come directly from excavations. In her methodological introduction, she relates several examples of notable forgeries and lists these unprovenanced materials in Table A.2.

For those interested in the functions of officials at the courts of the kings in Israel and Judah, this work will serve as a useful contribution and a convenient reference source. Thanks are due to Fox for the evaluation of these sometimes difficult materials and for the elucidation of them.

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Freedman, David Noel, ed. *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000. xxxiii + 1425 pp. Hardcover, \$45.00.

This one-volume comprehensive companion to the Bible was prepared by an editorial team consisting of editor-in-chief David Noel Freedman, Professor of Hebrew Biblical Studies at the University of California, assisted by Allen C. Myers (senior editor at Eerdmans) and Astrid B. Beck (University of Michigan) as associate and managing editors respectively, and twelve consulting editors. The volume contains nearly 5,000 alphabetically ordered articles written by about 600 authors, with 134 illustrations and charts and 16 color maps.

The dictionary is designed to provide a quick-response reference guide to the Bible. The articles feature a wide spectrum of topics, embracing all of the OT and NT books as well as the Deuterocanonical writings against their historical, cultural, geographical, and literary backgrounds. Topics include persons, places, and significant terms and concepts of the Bible, biblical theology, transmission of the biblical text, extracanonical writings, Near Eastern archaeology, and even early ecclesiastical history. Some articles deal with topics that go beyond the Bible and the Deuterocanonical writings, e.g., "Antigonus," "Christ and Abgar," "Decretum Gelasianum," "Dura-Europos," "Horns of Hattin," "Hippos," "India," "Manichaeism," "Mark Antony," and "Talmud."

The dictionary is generally well written and a pleasure to use. In general, the articles reflect up-to-date scholarly research. Since it is a dictionary, the book unavoidably duplicates other dictionaries to a certain extent. However, it contains new material that reflects recent scholarship, including archaeological discoveries, making it an excellent tool for informed readers, pastors, college and graduate students, as well as scholars.

In my view there are several weaknesses. First, while many brief articles (e.g., "Acacia," "Akeldama," "Alpha and Omega," "Ataroth-Addar," "Beer," "Dial of Ahaz," "Ebal," "Hadid," "Tob") are supplied with bibliographies, many major and lengthy articles discussing important topics lack bibliographies (e.g., "Abraham," "Baal," "Death," "Food," "Holiness/Holy," "Marriage," "Time," "Water").

Although the documentation is generally adequate and reflects the latest research, a number of articles show the imbalance of their authors, who fail to treat

work done in disciplines other than their own. For instance, the article exploring the topic "Angels" devotes only two short paragraphs to the OT, while five paragraphs focus on occurrences in the NT. Also, of fourteen paragraphs dealing with "Clean and Unclean," only a short paragraph deals with the concept in the NT. Articles on topics such as "Army," "East," "Israel," "Jewelry," "Lament," "Law," "Son of Man," "Trade and Commerce" are based totally on the Hebrew Bible, leaving the reader without valuable insight into early Christian understanding and background. Authors of such articles as "Dragon," "Locusts," "Many Waters," "Plague," and "Serpent" do not even mention their symbolic usage in the book of Revelation. A few articles, such as "Honor/Shame," do not refer to any biblical texts in support of their interpretations. The volume claims to be a dictionary of the Bible and, as such, the topics should be discussed in light of the Bible as whole.

Correspondingly, another major weakness, in my view, is that some authors show a substantial lack of homework. For instance, the author of "Armageddon" jumps to the conclusion that "no actual battle is described in Revelation; for the author, the battle in principle had already been won through the death and resurrection of Jesus." The author seems to be unaware that although the battle of Armageddon is introduced only in Rev 16:12-16, the real battle is described in Rev 19:11-21, as recognized by many scholars including Ladd [256-257], Fiorenza [940], and most recently by Aune [866-867] and Beale [834-835, 838]. Another example is the article titled "Descent Into Hell," where the author ignores 1Pet 3:19-20, one of the most difficult NT texts on the subject.

Finally, I would like to see the articles on the books of the Bible follow a standard form or outline dealing with, for instance, authorship and date, composition, contents, and major themes. It appears that each author follows his or her own outline.

In spite of the above criticisms, I find *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible* to be an excellent mine of information for a Bible student. Its quality speaks for itself. The dictionary does not claim to contain all the answers pertaining to the Bible, and it would be unrealistic to have such expectations of any one-volume dictionary on the Bible.

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Hastings, Adrian, ed. *A World History of Christianity*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000. x + 608 pp. Hardcover, \$35.00.

Most church-history texts are primarily Eurocentric and North American in their focus. This is natural, for the history of Europe and Christianity is so intimately intertwined that Christianity has come to be seen mainly as a Western religion. It is no wonder that when Western imperialists set out to subjugate the world, Christianity was perceived as a tool of colonialism and imperialism by many non-Europeans. Many people wrongly assume that there is hardly any noteworthy history of Christianity outside of the West. *A History of World Christianity* sets out to dispel this notion. It is obviously a monumental task.

This book is a welcome change from traditional church-history texts. It is a multi-authored book edited by Adrian Hastings, who himself contributed the