

groundwork and has challenged scholars to utilize this sourcebook for further study.

The overall importance of this book cannot be dismissed. Höschele has prepared a seminal contribution to the Seventh-day Adventist Church and Christian and religious world as a whole. This book is a must-have for those interested in the topic, and it receives my full recommendation.

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Kessler, John. *Old Testament Theology: Divine Call and Human Response*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2013. ix + 623 pp. Paper, \$59.95.

Kessler has been professor of Old Testament at Tyndale University College and Seminary in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, since 1992. His other publications include a monograph entitled *The Book of Haggai: Prophecy and Society in Early Persian Yehud* (Brill, 2002) and a *Festschrift for Donald Leggett, Teach Me Your Paths* (Clements, 2000), coedited with Jeffrey Greenman. He also has published articles in various journals, including the *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, *Transeuphratène*, *Vetus Testamentum*, *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, and the *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*.

Old Testament Theology: Divine Call and Human Response developed from two factors: first, from the author's own journey of studying the subject of Old Testament theology, and second, from being asked to prepare curricula and teach on this particular subject. The final content, structure, methodology, and purpose of this book were synthesized during his master's and doctoral studies. John Kessler's interest in Old Testament theology is directed toward the theological tradition of the Old Testament text. Several scholars, such as Eichrodt, John Bright, and John Goldingay, further developed his interest in OT theology. Perhaps the scholar with the most influence on Kessler's theology is Odil Hannes Steck, who established the "Theological Streams of Tradition." Kessler himself states, "One particular area of interest for me was the way in which, during the late Babylonian and early Persian period (sixth through fourth centuries B.C.E.), earlier traditions and texts were transformed and reconceptualized to meet the needs of later generations facing new and unforeseen contexts" (xi).

Kessler is persuaded that the key to understanding OT theology is found in "the ability to identify the theological traditions used in a given passage and to understand the kinds of responses to God that were generally associated with those traditions" (xi). Kessler calls these theological traditions "theological streams" and delineates six of them: Sinai Covenant Theology, Promise Theology, Priestly Theology, Theology of Divine Accessibility, Creation Theology, and Wisdom Theology. The theological traditions focus "specifically upon distinct conceptualizations of the divine-human relationship within the OT canon" (xii).

Kessler's *Old Testament Theology* is comprised of eleven chapters. The first three chapters are "Reading the Old Testament Theologically," "Hearing

God's Voice in the Old Testament," and "The Old Testament's Portraits of Relationship with God." In the first chapter, Kessler addresses the challenges with OT theology that a modern reader faces. He also explores some views and hermeneutical concepts proposed by earlier scholars. Kessler believes that the church needs the New Testament views of the OT and that the stories of the OT also reveal a relational component vital to today's church. In chapter 2, the author focuses on historical views of OT theology and their implications for his study. He suggests that OT theology is done through six streams and not from only one theme. In the latter part of this chapter, Kessler begins to reveal his methodology, which he further develops in chapter 3.

He outlines in chapter 3 the focus of his book: "discerning the various patterns of response to which the people of God are called in the divine-human relationship" (68). He calls the "response to a relationship with Yahweh" a "relational-response" or "poly-systemic approach" (68), found in the six streams. Therefore, the methodology suggested is a theological "diversity of perspectives present within the biblical canon" (78) when individual texts are placed side by side. Thus, Kessler's concept of theology is to be aware of the extreme views of rigid unity versus random unrelatedness that could arise from a systemic reading of OT texts (see 97-98) and then to use the theological streams to bring clarity in the diverse passages, since, for him, theological streams "manifest both unity and diversity within themselves" (100).

In chapter 4, the author begins to implement his theological methodology. In each following chapter, chapters 4-10, the author uses theological streams, or theological traditions, to develop his OT theology. Kessler introduces in chapter 4 the first stream: "Creation Theology: The Relationship of Knowing God as Creator and God's Purpose for Creation." As suggested by the title, Kessler reveals how creation theology is first found in the Ancient Near Eastern context. From there, creation theology is developed, starting from Gen 1-3, while looking at the structure, portrait of God, human person, and creation. He also traces creation theology through selected Psalms, Job, and Isaiah passages. Finally, theological reflections, foundational relational responses, and New Testament resonances conclude the creation theology.

Chapter 5 focuses on the "Covenants and Covenantal Relationships in Israel and the Ancient Near East: An Overview." Again, the author bridges the Ancient Near Eastern covenant understanding to the OT and demonstrates similarities. He shows the covenant metaphor and key covenant patterns in the OT, which lead him to conclude that the covenant in the OT is a "Promise Theology," the pattern being made with Abraham and David. In other words, this covenant stream stresses the "*gracious nature* of the covenant and its gifts and often places great emphasis on the *future fulfillment* of the promised gifts and upon the *stability* and *certainty* of the relationship" (189, emphasis Kessler's). Chapter 6 addresses "Sinai Covenant Theology," the focus being on the law and obedience as well as grace and forgiveness. However, Kessler's emphasis is on the covenant of obedience. "Grace is not without demand" (271). "Sinai Covenant Theology" demands Israel's loyalty;

their worship must be undivided. This theology also recognizes the reality of sin and justice, although God is always willing to restore relationships and is resistant to destroying his people. This covenant calls for a response to the demands of God, but from a sincere heart (see 272).

In chapter 7, the author continues by exploring the stream of “Promise Theology,” which Kessler defines as “the solemn commitment by one person to do something for another” (277). For him, “Promise Theology” is a theological counterpoint to “Sinai Covenant Theology,” directed to the future and highlighting humans’ trust toward God. He includes many examples in Genesis, such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David. He further makes a link with the prophet Isaiah and the Psalms and concludes with theological reflections.

Chapter 8 addresses the “Priestly Theology” stream, and it is here that Kessler first points out that the biblical terminology encompasses two parallel worlds, the seen world and the unseen world. These two realms are associated with the temple and festivities related to it as well as with the holy and the unholy. Kessler’s main focus in this chapter is Leviticus and Ezekiel, but he also refers to other biblical passages scattered throughout the OT. Chapter 9, “The Theology of Divine Accessibility,” is about human speech to God and God listening and responding in return. This theology “lies at the core of the expression of Israelite piety” (384). The Psalms are the primary text where this theology is found. Chapter 10 focuses on the last theological stream, “Wisdom Theology,” where Kessler finds two main tones or foundational perspectives: the righteous and the unrighteous. The books of Proverbs and Deuteronomy especially reveal these moral perspectives. While the author looks at many components of wisdom theology, he also shows that this theology is rooted, for example, in creation, which he calls proverbial wisdom.

Finally, the last chapter summarizes all his previous chapters and outlines how the six theological streams can influence a modern reading of the OT. Kessler shares techniques to evaluate what he has done and concludes that this is the only correct way to come to a clearer understanding of OT theology. Although he acknowledges the limitations of his study, he remains confident that his approach will help both critical and traditional scholars.

Kessler’s outline is the strength of his book, particularly chapters 4-10, which closely follow the same structure. He is particular about developing his methodology and informing the reader about it. He gives modern illustrations to prove his points and all the while challenges the reader to weigh the evidence that he is providing. His expertise is also revealed through his comprehensive treatment of the subject, a result of his years of study. The author is well acquainted with a variety of theological methods found among scholars and tries to be sensitive to all these views. His extensive research and knowledge of the topic of OT theology are also demonstrated through the extensive footnotes and 43 pages of bibliography.

However, Kessler’s book has theological weaknesses that cannot be overlooked. First, Kessler undermines the primary aspect of Scripture: its inspiration. Because of the methodology outlined above, even though

he claims that he accepts the traditional Christian approach, Kessler has presupposed Scripture as mainly a human composition. Second, he has done a disservice by separating the theological streams into six categories. He himself acknowledges that some of these streams overlap at times; however, his primary purposes weaken OT theology. For example, he sees Gen 15:7-21 as different from Gen 17 (see 190-191), but in reality they are not different streams; these two passages are a continuation of the covenant theme. Kessler tries too hard to dissect the biblical text, using source criticism to do OT theology (see 517). Finally, Kessler's OT theology is based too heavily on the "Divine Call and Human Response." I was not convinced that this theology is found in all of the author's theological streams; in some streams, perhaps, but definitely not in all of them.

In spite of the book's weaknesses, readers will find great value in reading this book. It could be appropriately used as a textbook for graduate-level students. Kessler's book has challenged my thinking, and his contribution to OT theology will likely make a deep impact in the scholarly world.

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STEPHANE BEAULIEU

Knoppers, Gary N. *The Jews and Samaritans: The Origin and History of Their Early Relations*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013. 352 pp. Hardcover, \$55.00.

North and south provide an important divide not only in the United States history. This geographical partition, with the power struggles, invasions, destructions and reconstructions connected to it, is also a hallmark of the history of Israel. In both cases the divide and its consequences shaped deeply the identity of its heirs and their conscience as a nation. Identity, in the case of biblical Israel, has been marred and/or highly neglected by biblical scholars, and Gary Knoppers desires to set it straight. For him the Samari(t)ans are legitimate Israelites with a long history of interaction with their southern Israelite siblings. The implications for the study of Israel's identity in the biblical texts are challenging, but not without basis.

Gary Knoppers is well acquainted with the history of ancient Israel during the monarchy and after it. For a decade being the head of the department of Classics and Ancient Mediterranean Studies at Pennsylvania State University, and since the summer 2014 Professor of Hebrew Bible at Notre Dame University, Indiana, his masterpiece is the two-volume commentary on Chronicles for the Anchor Bible series. Interested in the development of the divided monarchy and the Samari(t)ans' identity, especially after the demise of Israel as a nation at the hand of the Assyrians, Knoppers has written extensively about it, which makes him well qualified to guide the reader in a fascinating search for identity. As the title suggests, it is not the purpose of the book to set a full history of the relationship between southern and northern Israelites, but to focus on the most important period, its origins. Starting from the divided monarchy with the sons of Solomon till the Roman