

The Apocalypse of John is intended to be a community-shaping text, inspiring Christian communities not to accommodate to the dominant Roman culture, but to give ultimate allegiance to the Lamb of God and offer the sovereign God faithful worship and witness. Revelation reimages the world for believers, offering them a vision that contrasts sharply the deceptive imperial worldview of Rome over against the vision of God's restoration of the world.

In the Epilogue, Flemming addresses three issues. First, he gives a brief overview of the distinctive missional notes of the New Testament writings he examined. Second, he sketches a number of missional themes that run through the New Testament's testimony to God's mission and its call for Christian communities to embrace God's mission. Third, he appeals for Christian communities to read Scripture faithfully, actively participating in God's mission by contextualizing the missional intent of the New Testament for their own unique circumstances.

Flemming's interpretations of God's mission are exegetically informed and clearly written; they offer the reader accessible reflections of seven representative New Testament writings on the *missio Dei*. Aside from desiring Flemming to have engaged the Gospel of Mark, thereby giving the reader missional readings of the four canonical Gospels, I have one criticism: instead of sketching sixteen common missional themes of the New Testament in the Epilogue (132–134), it would have been helpful had Flemming wrestled with the divergent voices and offered a proposal for coherence among the various witnesses. Is there a theme(s) which comprehensively captures God's mission in the New Testament? Or, is there a unity of missional perspective within the diverse voices of the New Testament? Nonetheless, the book admirably fulfills its purpose for the Reframing New Testament Theology series stated at the outset: "intended for people interested in studying the New Testament and the nature of the Christian message and the Christian life, for classrooms, group interaction, and personal study, these volumes invite readers into a conversation with New Testament theology" (xi).

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Hafemann, Scott J. *Paul's Message and Ministry in Covenant Perspective: Selected Essays*. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2015. 226 pp. Softcover, US\$22.40.

Paul's Message and Ministry in Covenant Perspective by Scott J. Hafemann, reader in New Testament at St. Mary's College, School of Divinity, at the University of St. Andrews (Scotland), highlights the new covenant as the hermeneutical key to understanding Paul's thought and work. His helpful brief review of dominant nineteenth- and twentieth-century scholarly interpretations of Paul (ch. 1) sets the context for his own thesis that Paul's message and ministry cannot be rightly understood apart from his conviction that he was the apostle of "the new covenant of the new creation" which was inaugurated by the "substitutionary atonement of Christ's death on the cross" (61, 18). The evidence Paul advanced for his conviction, according to

Hafemann, was twofold: first, Paul's own voluntary suffering "confirmed that the new age had in fact dawned" (130), and second, the "the determinative role played by the Spirit" both in Paul's own ministry and in the lives of those he ministered to was the evidentiary "mark of the new covenant" (164). Hafemann grounds his paradigm primarily, though not exclusively, in 2 Corinthians, especially in 2:14–3:18, as the core "framework of Paul's thought" (49–52, 73) and in 4:1–18 as also the framework for Paul's ministry (53–61).

For Hafemann, Paul's suffering carried immense theological significance as "part of the divine plan for the spread of the gospel" (128). God's miraculous deliverances at times when Paul was near death, coupled with Paul's own attitude in the midst of his suffering, made Paul's suffering the "revelatory vehicle" through which God authenticated "the significance of the cross" and "the power of the resurrection" to Paul's audiences (69, 125–126, 128). I have gained much from the contribution Hafemann has made to the meaning of Paul's suffering (he has also written two previous books on the subject). Hafemann extrapolates by indicting modern ministers who portray "contemporary images of the 'Spirit-filled' Christian" through a "health-and-wealth gospel" (147), and contends that the modern minister is called to a unique role of suffering that s/he might thereby model a Christian response to suffering that when "replicated in the faith of his people in the midst of their own sufferings, is the primary way God grows his church" (148–149). While I resonate with that sentiment, I remain unconvinced that it represents God's primary way of growing His church.

Hafemann connects Paul's suffering to his theme of the new covenant by portraying it "as the means for mediating the transforming work of the Spirit" (147), who is "the mark of the new covenant" (164), and "whose presence among us is made possible by the cross" (173). He acknowledges that all of the Christian graces by which salvation is made accessible to the believer—"God's justifying and sanctifying work in the lives of his people," "bringing one to Christ for the forgiveness of sins that makes the new life of the 'new creation' possible," the ability to "swear allegiance to Christ and remain faithful to him" (159)—are "*brought about and guaranteed by the presence of power of the Spirit*" (159, all emphases within quotes are original with Hafemann). He makes no attempt to explain where this position would leave someone living in the OT era needing access to those same spiritual graces that they might be saved. Modern theology tends to discount that component of progressive revelation that affirms that spiritual truths do not suddenly spring into existence at the time in Scripture and history when they are first explicitly revealed. God was forgiving people long before His forgiving grace was first explicitly revealed in the law (Exod 34:6–7). "[Saving] grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus" (2 Tim 1:8–10). The same was true of all the spiritual graces administered by the Spirit for the purpose of salvation; they were being administered "from the beginning" of the post-fall era, else how could anyone have been saved before the NT era. If the Spirit is

“the mark of the new covenant,” then some dimensions of the new covenant, including the presence of the Spirit, must necessarily have preceded the death of Christ, a fact not acknowledged by Hafemann and most contemporary biblical scholars.

Hafemann further describes the new covenant by a series of similarities and contrasts it bears to the old Sinai covenant. Similarities include: both covenants are based on “the same law” (156), namely, the commandments of the Torah” (98); in both “the covenantal relationship between God and his people is maintained by keeping the law in response to God’s prior acts of redemption” (156); and in both “what ‘counts’ is . . . ‘keeping the commandments of God’ as a result of knowing him” (159).

Among Hafemann’s long list of contrasts, two warrant particular attention in this review: the role of the Spirit and the heart condition of the people in both covenants. In short, based on Hafemann’s interpretation of 2 Cor 3, “Moses was called to mediate the law to a stiff-necked people who could not obey it” (164), for “*sin* . . . [was] engraved upon the tablet of their heart’ (Jer 17:1)” (154), “so that, without the Spirit, the law remained merely a ‘letter’ that ‘kills’ as part of a ‘ministry of death’ and ‘condemnation’ (2 Cor 3:6–7, 9)” (49–50). The law of God was experienced in the OT era as simply “the ‘letter’—that is, the law without the Spirit—which brings death and condemnation” (111–112). “In stark contrast, under the ‘new covenant’ Paul has been called to mediate God’s will to a people whose hearts have been ‘given life’ by the Spirit as part of a ‘ministry of the Spirit’ and ‘righteousness’ (3:3, 6, 8–9)” (49–50). Hafemann, who assesses that Paul’s view of the law is “currently the most debated topic among Pauline scholars” (13), holds that 2 Cor 3 presents Paul’s view of the law, as experienced by those under the old covenant, as “the law *without the Spirit*,” in contrast to “the law *with the Spirit*, as now experienced by those under the new covenant brought about by (the) Christ” (164). Given these extreme contrasts, Hafemann’s exclusively historical perspective of the covenants—the old covenant operating exclusively in the OT era, and new covenant exclusively in the NT era—raises further questions of how anyone in the OT era could have been converted and saved. Until theologians grasp the experiential dimension of the old and new covenants, namely, that Paul treats human rejection or perversion of the gospel in any historical era as “old covenant,” and a response of faith and the obedience that issues from faith in any historical era as “new covenant,” a coherent theology of the covenants will continue to elude biblical scholarship.

Paul, says Hafemann, considered that the Spirit-generated transformed hearts of the Corinthians, compared to the hardened hearts of those who lived without the Spirit under the Sinai covenant (56–57), was a major evidence both that the new creation of the new covenant had dawned at the death of Christ, and that “the effects of the fall are now being reversed through Paul’s apostolic ministry” (61). “The saving power of the cross” is demonstrated in a tangible way through “the unity of the church in worship and love” (183). This can only happen if church members are experiencing “*continuing conversion*” (186, 192), “*increasing conformity to the image of Christ*” (104),

“and increasing obedience” (192)—evidences that reveal whether or not someone is among the truly elect (192). Writing from a Reformed perspective, Hafemann says these characteristics are not based on church members’ “own decision or fortitude, but [on] God’s self-generated eternal decree, which unleashes a chain of consequences that begins with God’s foreknowledge and predestination and climaxes with their glorification” (100), leaving “no excuse for . . . continuing, habitual disobedience” (159). One wishes Hafemann would have provided tangible examples of what “*continuing* conversion,” “*increasing* conformity to the image of Christ,” and “increasing obedience” look like in the real world—continually increased giving to charity, Bible reading, prayer, involvement in Matt 25:31–45-type activities? And if these same qualities were also evidence of election in the OT era, how could they have been manifested in one’s life apart from the presence of the Spirit who purportedly came after the cross?

Hafemann is to be commended for his well-argued insistence that Paul’s message and ministry are grounded in the new covenant, though it would have been an even more coherent defense had he integrated the experiential dimension of the covenants. He also includes many additional insights that this brief review could not explore but that readers will find valuable on themes that are tangentially related to his primary thesis—e.g., his exegesis of Exod 32–34 of the meaning of Moses’s “veil” as Paul used it in his argument on the covenants (2 Cor 3:13–18), his assessment that Paul’s assurance of the Second Coming of Christ formed “the foundation and motivation” for his “insistence on . . . ethical transformation” (189), and so forth. Scholars will appreciate this book, which attempts to integrate many of Hafemann’s written works on Paul into a unified covenant perspective.

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Jassen, Alex P. *Scripture and Law in the Dead Sea Scrolls*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014. xxii + 298 pp. Hardcover, US\$80.00.

In what way do the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS) adapt and expand the legal content of passages taken by them as authoritative Scripture? What constitutes authoritative Scripture for them? Do they see a difference in authority between various texts seen by them as Scripture? What hermeneutic strategies and exegetical techniques do they employ when they reuse scriptural legal passages? And how do the DSS fit into legal discussions in ancient Israel? These are key questions as Jassen develops his arguments in his rich and penetrating book, *Scripture and Law in the Dead Sea Scrolls*. The book provides a valuable contribution to the study of legal texts among the DSS, a study that only recently is beginning to receive the attention it deserves in scholarship.

The first third of the book gives a very valuable overview of research done on the legal discussions in the DSS and how the concept of authoritative Scripture developed. Over one hundred pages follow that are devoted to Isa 58:13 and the Sabbath restrictions against speech and thoughts of labor in the DSS and their contemporary Jewish milieu. Then some forty pages are