

Gospels, the synoptic problem, Acts, the general Epistles, Revelation, and the process of the formation of the New Testament canon.

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Provan, Iain. *Discovering Genesis: Content, Interpretation, Reception*. Discovering Biblical Texts. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015. ix + 214 pp. Softcover. USD 22.00.

Iain Provan's introduction to the first book of the Judeo-Christian canon is to be commended for some achievements, of which the most important is its selective—nevertheless wide—presentation of Genesis's reception history. As such, it is not alone in the contemporary scholarly panorama. It follows the same lines as the third section of Craig A. Evans, Joel N. Lohr, and David L. Petersen, eds., *The Book of Genesis: Composition, Reception, and Interpretation*, VTSup 152 (Leiden: Brill, 2012); and Peter Thacher Lanfer, *Remembering Eden: The Reception History of Genesis 3:22–24* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012). Unlike these authors, however, Provan seeks to introduce the reader to what he calls the “literal sense” of Genesis's text. In the process, Provan aligns his work with theoretical conventions accepted in some contemporaneous works. He is in line, for example, with John Walton's avoidance of reading Genesis as speaking to modern notions regarding history and historiographical causality in *The Lost World of Adam and Eve: Genesis 2–3 and the Human Origins Debate* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2015), and with Robert Alter's view of Genesis as representing a high level of literary artistry in *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 2nd ed. (New York: Basic Books, 2011).

The introduction of the book proposes a literary structure of twelve acts within Genesis, based on the *toledot* formulae, which serves as an outline for Provan's further exploration of Genesis. The next two chapters are dedicated to discussing the history of the interpretation of Genesis from the earliest stages of its reception to modern interpretation. These chapters show a selective approach to the data, betraying the author's project of demonstrating an interpretative concern with the literal sense of Genesis throughout the ages. The fourth chapter is designed to place Genesis in history and time. Chapters 5–11 unpack Provan's reading of Genesis's proposed twelve-act structure, and further display the reception history of specific passages.

The assessment of primary sources in regard to the reception of Genesis is an important feature of this book. I agree with the scholars who endorse the book on the back cover, that this characteristic is to be received as a real contribution. Provan extends his analysis to the visual arts, which allows the reader to assess the impact of Genesis—mainly—on Western culture. I find, however, that this is not the first impression for the unaware reader. The chapters dedicated to the discussion of the interpretation of Genesis are, rather, a presentation of the overall lines of interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in history and only somewhat focused on texts from Genesis. I was not able to see a real contribution in this area until I reached the chapters dealing with the textual commentary, where Provan discusses the reception history

in detail. This strategy would be more effective if it were made explicit in the introduction, allowing for a more efficacious plan of reading.

Although I did not find myself agreeing with all of his interpretations, Provan's reading of Genesis is insightful in various areas. He sets himself toward a more synchronic reading of the text, unpacking interesting intra-textual correlations and refined word studies. Synchrony for him, however, seems to operate within an intentional response of sixth-century BCE authors who reacted to religious notions that were present in the Exile, during what Karl Jaspers called the "Axial Age" ("The Axial Age of Human History: A Base for the Unity of Mankind," *Commentary* 6.5 [1948]: 430–435). The Axial Age comprises the deep religious innovations that happened between the eighth and the second centuries BCE in several cultures around the world. However, I find that this proposal operates more on a theoretical level than on an objective level regarding Genesis, since the linguistic patterns provided and/or resemblances with this innovative spirit are not distinctive to this alleged relation. They work well with the assumption of a much older setting, as Jacques B. Doukhan has just proposed in *Genesis, Seventh-day Adventist International Bible Commentary* 1 (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald, 2016), and Duane A. Garrett already postulated in *Rethinking Genesis: The Sources and Authorship of the First Book of the Pentateuch* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991).

The Axial Age concept allows Provan to solve direction-of-dependence issues between Genesis and other texts. For example, it offers the basis for claiming that Genesis used temple texts for its depiction of the Garden of Eden, and not the other way around (56–57). The concept does not, however, satisfactorily support Provan's literal reading of other texts, since it seems improbable that sixth-century authors would be reacting to old Egyptian forms of religion alongside "newer" Babylonian ones, even if they had received texts from a hypothetical older Mosaic Yahwistic tradition (56). If such is the case, as Provan suggests, against which background is the literal meaning to be seen? Is it to be read against the old setting, of which we cannot be sure the last authors were fully aware, or against the new setting in Exile? In other words, the reception of an old story does not necessarily implicate a full awareness of specific historical issues of older settings by the receiver, which potentially disrupts an attempt to assess Genesis's literal meaning.

The book offers an effective strategy for an introduction to the text of Genesis. It uses a topical approach, displaying the main issues regarding each of the individual passages. Each topic is presented in connection with a close reading of the given passage. I find Provan's reading insightful at several points: for example, his view of the extensive nature of YHWH's blessing over the Sabbath (67), his debate on the anachronistic nature of the hierarchical reading of the creation of Adam and Eve (87), and the demonstration of parallel language between the creation and the flood accounts (112). Furthermore, despite the analysis of Hebrew terms and sentences and his fine argumentation, the book is very accessible in language and content, making it a good introduction for the reader with some knowledge about other possibilities for

the milieu of Genesis. Nevertheless, the critical reader will benefit from the massive amount of information that Provan condenses into such a small space.

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Rodríguez, Ángel Manuel, ed. *Worship, Ministry, and the Authority of the Church*. Studies in Adventist Ecclesiology 3. Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2016. xiii + 429 pp. Softcover. USD 19.99.

*Worship, Ministry, and the Authority of the Church* is the third volume that the Biblical Research Institute (BRI) has produced in its series, Studies in Adventist Ecclesiology. The first volume, *Toward a Theology of the Remnant* Studies in Adventist Ecclesiology 1 (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2009), and the second, titled *Message, Mission, and Unity of the Church*, Studies in Adventist Ecclesiology 2 (Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 2013), were edited by Ángel Manuel Rodríguez, a Seventh-day Adventist theologian, who began his work for the BRI in 1992 and served as director from 2001 to 2011. Rodríguez explains that it is not the purpose of this series to formulate “an integrated ecclesiology,” but to provide “guidance and certain biblical and theological parameters within which such an Adventist ecclesiology could be formally developed” (1). As evident by its title, this third volume, which is herein reviewed, reflects on the topics of worship, ministry, and authority.

These three topics are analyzed historically, theologically, and exegetically throughout seventeen chapters. The first four cover the theology of worship in different moments in history. Sergio E. Becerra wrote the first two chapters, which focus on worship in relation to the Magisterial Reformers and sixteenth-century Anabaptist reformers, respectively. Becerra outlines aspects of worship that Adventists should emphasize and things that they should avoid. Theodore N. Leverov authored chapter three, which centers on worship in the Adventist Church from 1845 to the 1900s. He notes that Adventist worship has evolved over time and stresses that worship must remain flexible in Adventist churches around the world. Denis Fortin’s chapter emphasizes three key concepts that Ellen G. White used to articulate her understanding of worship and liturgy.

The next four chapters focus on the theology of worship. In chapter five, Daniel Oscar Plenc lays the groundwork for an Adventist theology of worship with eight key elements for a theology of worship and seven principles for liturgical practice. Rodríguez wrote the sixth chapter, which is focused on the theological significance of various elements of Adventist worship. Next, Sung Ik Kim argues that it is necessary to contextualize worship so that postmodernists will find it attractive, which requires a continual evaluation of liturgy, traditions, music, doctrine, fellowship, and the use of technology. In chapter eight, Norman Gulley focuses on baptism, foot washing, and the Lord’s Supper, stressing that these ordinances should not be viewed sacramentally, but should be “entered into within the context of the cosmic controversy” (209).

The last nine chapters are focused on the topic of authority in the church. Frank M. Hasel writes on apostolicity in chapter nine and Ekkehardt Mueller