

through its clear data explication, and the reader will be inspired to reevaluate his or her own position with regard to the relationship between GT and MT.

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Ross, Allen P. *A Commentary on the Psalms: 90–150*. Kregel Exegetical Library. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2016. 1024 pp. Hardcover. USD 32.48.

Compared to their undermined standing in biblical scholarship a century ago, the Psalms have finally taken their rightful place in the mainstream of biblical studies. The increased interest in the history, poetry, and message of the Psalms has produced numerous books and commentaries on the Psalms in recent years. This book is the last of the three-volume commentary on the Psalms by Allen P. Ross in the Kregel Exegetical Library series. The book completes the author's splendid contribution of almost three thousand pages dedicated to the study of the Psalms. Yet, Ross frankly admits that "no work on the Psalter can be said to be complete" (11). This commentary is written for those who may not have expertise in biblical languages and scholarship (*ibid.*). The author does not discuss certain subjects in detail and sometimes avoids them altogether (for example, form-critical questions and historical-critical questions). Nevertheless, when it is indispensable, Ross surveys the works of some critical scholars or addresses differing scholarly views, such as introducing Mowinckel's cultic interpretations (79–81), or the dates when certain psalms and psalm superscriptions were written.

A commendable feature of this book is the author's personal translation of the Psalms, which is supported by elaborate explanations in the footnotes. Ross attempts to preserve and highlight the dynamic nature of Hebrew poetry, rather than to wrap it with more theologically accurate language. For example, he renders Ps 90:2b as "or you gave birth to the earth and the world." Most people would agree that it is unusual to say that God gave birth to the world, but the special appeal of poetry lies in its freedom of expression. Ross does not want to undermine the fact that "in poetry it is not impossible to use such language to describe God as the source of all life" (29). Ross engages both the Hebrew Masoretic Text and the Septuagint in the study of various textual variations and emendations (textual criticism). He often discusses alternate translations (early translations like Syriac and Latin, and modern translations), and the differences between the Hebrew Masoretic Text and the Septuagint. The book thus makes use of scholarly work to enhance biblical exposition of the message of the Psalms. Ross approaches them as Scripture rather than merely ancient poetic texts. He does not speak much about them; instead, he seeks to elucidate the message of the Psalms and let them speak for themselves. Many readers will praise this approach. A three-page index of Hebrew word studies and a forty-one-page selected bibliography are given at the end of the book to provide helpful and practical resources for anyone studying the Psalms.

Since Ross's method is expository, the study of each psalm follows these steps: First, the introduction; second the commentary in expository form (the main part of the study of the psalm); and third, the message and

application. The introduction to each psalm begins with the author's own English translation, is clarified with extensive notes on textual variations and lexical issues, and followed up by a discussion about the composition and context of the psalm. It concludes with an exegetical analysis that consists of a short summary and a detailed outline of the psalm. The Commentary, in expository form, follows the outline of the psalm given in the section about exegetical analysis. The exposition of each psalm focuses on the study of key Hebrew words and phrases in the light of the psalm's context and of other biblical texts, delineating the message of the psalm in its historical context and highlighting the theological message of the psalm. This model of study is both simple and gratifying so that many readers can adopt it for their reading of other biblical texts. In the last section, the author discusses the message and application of the text, demonstrating his pastoral side by seeking to draw practical lessons for his readers.

This commentary is written from a conservative perspective. Ross thus takes the psalm superscriptions seriously in his survey of the Psalms. Perhaps the most obvious instance is Ps 90. This psalm is believed by many to be post-exilic, and so the psalm superscription that ascribes the psalm to Moses is taken to imply that the psalm is written in the style of Moses or that the state of Israel in exile is evocative of the past hardships of Israel in the wilderness. Ross finds these and similar explanations "unnecessarily contrived" (27). Instead, he views the psalm as one that was written originally by Moses and has found use in later periods of Israel's history. Ross's survey of the Messianic aspects of Psalms 110 and 118 as an addendum or mention them briefly in the comments about the New Testament use of the Psalms in the conclusion. Ross, on the other hand, identifies the Messianic connotations of the Psalms as their valid and intended meaning in the main section of his commentary. He demonstrates how certain Psalms "point to the resurrection and the beginning of the new covenant" in Jesus Christ (454, also 354). While some Psalms, such as Ps 104, display some features that are similar to certain ANE texts, Ross argues that there is insufficient evidence to prove direct borrowing. Ross seeks to demonstrate that these Psalms reflect Israel's theology of creation that was unique to the ancient world (245).

The author's special contribution is his 136-page study of Ps 119, which is probably the lengthiest survey of Ps 119 to be found in the commentaries on the Psalms thus far. Ross treats each stanza of Ps 119 separately, evaluating them, as before, by including an introduction with an English translation and exegetical analysis, the commentary in expository form, and the message and application of the stanza. This approach is both effective and practical, because it allows readers to "use one stanza for a lesson or a sermon in its own rights" (463). However, a potential downside of this approach is a tendency to treat Ps 119 as twenty-two separate psalms, overlooking or underestimating the psalm's unified message.

There is not much to say in terms of critique of this profound commentary. The book could be enriched by a study of possible literary, historical, and

theological connections between the Psalms in the present Psalter. Each psalm is analyzed in its own merits, and little effort is made to see the message of a particular psalm in the light of other Psalms and of the whole Psalter. The author often refers to earlier commentaries, such as those by Dahood, Delitzsch, and Kirkpatrick, but in a book of this magnitude some readers will expect to see more engaging surveys of the works by other renowned psalm scholars, like Mays and Brueggemann. It would also be helpful to include dialogue with the perspectives of later writers, such as deClaisse-Walford and Jacobson, and of more recent trends in psalmic studies, including linguistic approaches and canonical criticism. Transliteration of Hebrew and Greek words with English letters would make this book more reader-friendly, particularly for readers who have no knowledge of biblical languages. After all, they are mentioned as the author's primary audience. The index of Hebrew word studies at the end of the book present a challenge for people who do not read Hebrew. In addition, a glossary would be a helpful feature for a book written with pastors and students in mind, since it is almost impossible to avoid using technical terms in the book (for example, *hithpalpel*, [479]; preterite with *waw* consecutive, [601]; asseverative particle, [703]). Some psalm outlines seem to be overly detailed, making it quite difficult to grasp the overall structure of these psalms (e.g., 27–28, 97–98, 212–213, 246–247).

The above minor critique is, by far, surpassed by the praise that this book should receive. Perhaps the most appealing feature of this book is the mastery with which the author combines scholarly, linguistic, historical, theological, and devotional insights. Pastors will find this book to be an excellent homiletical resource. Readers will be immensely enriched by its theological and spiritual depth. This book is thus highly recommended to pastors, teachers, students, and readers with a genuine love for the Psalms.

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Sampley, J. Paul. *Walking in Love: Moral Progress and Spiritual Growth with the Apostle Paul*. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2016. 444 pp. Hardcover. USD 79.00.

Paul Sampley's book, *Walking in Love*, is written not for the scholarly guild, but for inquiring persons who are interested in the Christian walk. Focusing upon the seven undisputed letters of the Pauline literature—Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, and Philemon—Sampley wants “to understand, on the basis of the evidence from his letters, how Paul thought believers should discern and do the will of God and walk in love with God, with Christ, and with one another” (xi).

Chapter one, “After His Call, Paul Sets Out,” lays the groundwork for Sampley's study with some basics: God called Paul to be the apostle to the Gentiles to proclaim a message of “Christ and him crucified” throughout the large cities of the Mediterranean world. The apostle's missionary activity created predominately Gentile assemblies which gathered in house churches; the organizational structure of these house churches was fairly open-ended,