

the entirety of Scripture says about these messages or themes. For example, in Alexander's explanation of the seventh-day Sabbath of the Decalogue in the context of God's covenant, he states, "There is no reason to assume that the Sabbath obligation is binding upon those who are not under the Sinai covenant" (432). This statement seems to question, not only the role of the law in the context of the new covenant, but the eschatological nature of the Sabbath alluded to by the Old Testament prophets. I believe that the totality of Scripture must be consulted when these themes are discussed to ascertain their correct applications. Minute shortcomings such as this one still do not diminish the value that this section contributes to the purpose of the commentary.

In general, Alexander's recent contribution to the understanding of the book of Exodus is very appreciated. It is a work of high quality and a must-own commentary for every preacher, teacher, and student of the Bible who wants to remain faithful to the original text of God's Word in their theology.

Berrien Springs, Michigan

KOLIA AFAMASAGA

Bates, Matthew W. *Salvation by Allegiance Alone: Rethinking Faith, Works, and the Gospel of Jesus the King*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017. xvi + 234 pp. Softcover. USD 24.99.

Matthew W. Bates teaches theology at Quincy University (Quincy, IL). He has previously written books on a variety of biblical and theological topics. In this book, Bates argues that the English word "faith" is of limited value when discussing eternal salvation in our present cultural climate. "Belief" is also inadequate, he says, because in contemporary idiom it suggests that we are saved merely by having the right facts squeezed into our brains (213). Another incomplete presentation of the gospel message implies that Christian discipleship is optional.

According to the author, "faith" and "belief" in Christian discourse today serve as overarching terms to describe what brings about eternal salvation. But the two concepts have lost the qualities of the original Greek term πίστις, qualities such as reliability, confidence, assurance, fidelity, faithfulness, commitment, and pledged loyalty. This has a misleading effect, so Bates proposes that English-speaking Christians should cease to speak of "salvation by faith" or of "faith in Jesus" when summarizing Christian salvation (3).

All too often, faith and works are pitted against one another as opposite paths to salvation. One that is successful (faith), and one that fails (works). The two are considered to be mutually exclusive paths to salvation. This distorts the gospel in the light of many biblical statements (cf. Jas 2:26). Bates claims that Jesus's answer to the rich young ruler, "You know the commandments" (Mark 10:19) is something of an embarrassment for the contemporary church.

Much of today's scholarship is committed to a hard faith/law antithesis. Πίστις, says Bates, is not the polar opposite of works; rather πίστις, as ongoing allegiance, is the fundamental framework into which works must fit as part of our salvation (109). In Matt 7:21–23, Jesus contrasts the person who

does the will of the Father to workers of lawlessness, making it clear that allegiance includes obedient action.

In addition to identifying current problems in the church regarding salvation, the author also proposes some changes that he believes will provide a solution to those problems. The following five changes seem to be of most importance to Bates:

First, though πίστις in the Bible has a large semantic domain, faith in Jesus is best described as “allegiance” to him as king (77). Believing certain facts about Jesus is required only as a minimal starting point in the process of salvation. Giving intellectual assent to certain facts about Jesus’s story is a “necessary,” but not “sufficient” condition for salvation.

Second, the gospel is not self-centered because its core message is the story about Jesus. The full gospel keeps the focus squarely on Christ rather than on the self. The gospel story of Jesus integrates and serves as climax to a larger Christian metanarrative. A good story is more compelling than analyzing a list of propositions and beliefs.

Third, the gospel needs to be publicly announced and proclaimed as the good news about the enthronement of Jesus, the cosmic king. In Philippi, when Paul and Silas told the jailor, “Pisteuson upon the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved” (Acts 16:31), they exhorted the jailor to transfer his ultimate allegiance from the emperor to the enthroned Jesus (88–89).

Fourth, there is only one path to final salvation, the path of discipleship. Contemporary Christian culture tends to make a separation between personal salvation and discipleship. Allegiance is where these two qualities meet and embrace. Christ’s invitation to begin the journey of salvation can never be anything less than a call to discipleship, for nothing less will result in final salvation.

Fifth, a line must be drawn between a “salvation culture” and a “gospel culture.” In a salvation culture, Jesus’s cross is what saves us, not his resurrection or lordship. In a gospel culture, Christ is recognized as king, and allegiance to Jesus as king forges a union with him. The church must move away from a “salvation culture” toward a “gospel culture” that centers upon allegiance alone to Jesus, who is the enthroned king (213).

There are several insights found in Bates’s book that are worth mentioning in this review. The author notices that one ancient translation renders Hab 2:4 as, “But the righteous one will live by my *pistis*,” referring to God’s own faithfulness rather than human faith in God (42). Bates argues that there is one basic gospel. Originally, there was no gospel “of” Mark or Matthew, rather the Gospel “according to” Mark or Matthew (51). Commenting on the relationship between faith and law, the author says, “Far from being at loggerheads, the rendering of *pistis* ... and submission to the law of Christ amount to nearly the same thing—to give *pistis* means to enact allegiance to the king by obeying his law” (87). Moreover, to be allegiant to Jesus means “becoming the gospel” for the sake of others (109).

Some of the most insightful comments that the author makes have to do with the ultimate destiny of the saved. He says that, contrary to widespread

cultural assumptions and much popular Christian teaching, the final goal of salvation in the Christian story is not the individual soul reaching heaven. Heaven is discussed very little in the Bible and is best regarded as a temporary abode with God in anticipation of the more glorious next act in the divine drama: The second coming of Jesus the king, which will transform heaven and earth (143). Bates reasons that at the end of the salvation story we do not find humans in heaven; rather we discover they are city-dwellers still on earth. The original garden has become a magnificent city, so the progress of life and culture has somehow been taken up into God's redemptive work (132). He concludes that final salvation is not about the individual soul going to heaven after death; it is about resurrection into new creation (163).

Can Bates's work be improved? I would say yes. One would probably wish to learn more on this topic from the point of view of the Old Testament. While the Hebrew word אֱמוּנָה is mentioned in this book, it is definitely eclipsed by the repeated references to πίστις . Where the Greek word πίστις is discussed, I expected to find the word "trust" (3). Then, the author says that there is only one true gospel and this one gospel is attested by Paul, a statement that could lead to a narrow view of the topic of faith and works in the early church (101). With all due respect to Paul, is not Jesus the true founder of Christianity? What about the other prominent New Testament writers, like Peter, John, and Jude? We need to listen more to what they had to say on this vital topic. Bates does quote verses from James, but only sporadically.

The author mentions three Pauline passages that best summarize the concept of the "gospel" (30). They are Rom 1:1–5; 16–17; and 1 Cor 15:1–5. I believe that adding Titus 2:11–15 would greatly enhance the book's thesis. Lastly, the author says that God's new creation includes the elements of the old creation (133). If this is a correct observation (and I believe that it is!) then the word "renewed" would be preferable to the word "new."

In spite of my suggestions for improvement listed above, I would recommend this book to all who study and proclaim the messages of the Bible.

Adventist University of Health Sciences
Orlando, Florida

ZDRAVKO STEFANOVIC

Bieberstein, Klaus. *A Brief History of Jerusalem: From the Earliest Settlement to the Destruction of the City in AD 70*. ADPV 47. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2017. x + 181 pp. Hardcover. EUR 48.00.

To amend Qohelet's (12:12) timeless observation: "For the making of books on Jerusalem, there is no end." Indeed, Jerusalem's exceedingly complex archaeological history aptly reflects the city's exceptionally rich religious and frequently transitory geo-political legacy. Conducting informed archaeological research in Jerusalem requires understanding the minutiae in the context of the entire city and its environs; a most formidable task. Because the data bank is immense, the archaeology of Jerusalem comprises an entire sub-discipline of historical research that nearly demands specialization. Indeed, it would come as no surprise if the number of active scholars that display mastery over all of