

Nogalski, James D. *Introduction to the Hebrew Prophets*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2018. 288pp. Softcover. USD 29.99.

Abingdon Press's new introduction to the Hebrew prophets is written by James Nogalski, a leading expert on the twelve prophets (*dodekapropheton*). His expertise is evident throughout the book and particularly in his introductions to the Minor Prophets. This introduction was designed as a textbook for college students and should be evaluated as such. The structure of the book turns out as expected for an introduction to the Old Testament prophets. However, it is important to note that this introduction does not cover the prophets from the Masoretic collection, the *Nevi'im*, but focuses instead on the major prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel) and the book of the Twelve (Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi). Therefore, this introduction omits the discussion of the so-called earlier prophets in the Jewish Bible (Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings).

After a preface that clearly and concisely describes the most important introductory issues, Nogalski covers all the prophets in six chapters, covering 216 pages. Towards the end the book brings a helpful glossary, compiled by Will Briggs, explaining in four pages important terms like allusive, deuteronomist history, holiness code, and *vorlage*. The bibliography is "For Further Reading," thus, brief (1 ½ page). At the end of the book, sixty-five pages (223–288) of not infrequently detailed endnotes can be found for each chapter. This material is very helpful and shows that Nogalski is an expert in his field and has a good overview of the academic discussion. I, therefore, consider it inconvenient that these notes are processed as endnotes and not as footnotes by the publisher. It would be much easier for students to take along the important in-depth discussions in the reading and learning process without the cumbersome turning of pages. The book is introductory and, therefore, does not cover the various approaches to the prophetic books. This is evident in the section on redaction-history. For example, only the works of David Carr (*Writing on the Tablet of the Heart* [Oxford University Press, 2008]), Konrad Schmid (*The Old Testament: A Literary History* [Fortress Press, 2012]), and Van der Toorn (*Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible* [Harvard University Press, 2009]) are listed. There is no doubt that these three works must be considered standard reference works. But for a textbook, I expected that the author would also encourage the reader and college student to access the scholarly debate with its various approaches. For example, the work of John Van Seters (*The Edited Bible* [Eisenbrauns, 2006]) should equally be listed if a more broad debate on the matter of redaction-critique is to be opened. That Nogalski chooses a decidedly redaction-critical approach for his work is not problematic in itself, but unfortunately, the author chooses to exclude

other important interpretive approaches. Other important works on the prophets I found missing were the rich work of Brueggeman (*The Prophetic Imagination* [Fortress, 1979]), and the classic work of Abraham Heschel (*The Prophets* [Harper & Row, 1962]).

Each book of the prophets is generally discussed in four sections. The first includes an introduction and summary of the historical facts (“Historical Backdrops”). This is followed by “Introductory Issues,” where the research questions raised by each book are presented. Here the author concentrates primarily on questions of redaction-criticism and source-criticism. A description of the literary structure of each book follows under “The Structure and Contents.” An overview of the book’s composition is provided. Each of these sections is succinctly summarized in terms of its content. Fourth and last, under “Important Themes,” the author discusses the major themes contained in each book and traces the main line of thought for each book. It is noticeable that the emphasis is not on the theological-existential evaluation of the book’s contents. The one who expects content-extractions à la Walter Brueggemann or Georg Fischer must look elsewhere. That this publication is designed to be used as a textbook is visible through the helpful charts and summaries of important historical dates it contains. Questions are found at the end of each chapter discussion. These are designed to be used as assignments by teachers and learners.

Whether this introduction to the prophetic books is suitable as a workbook or textbook depends on several factors. If one is looking for an introductory work for the *Nevi'im*, Nogalski’s book is not recommended. However, if only the major and minor prophets are to be discussed, the book can be recommended under certain conditions. If one wants to approach the prophets primarily with questions of redaction-criticism and source-criticism, Nogalski’s work is a good introduction that represents well the current state of research. However, those who seek a canonical approach, or who wish to delve more deeply into the theological-existential and socio-critical aspects of these prophetic books, will have to choose other introductory works. This is sometimes also true where one looks for a dedicated historical-critical approach to the prophets, but wants to evaluate the redaction-critical conclusions theologically. For example, the influence of the early prophets (especially Proto-Isaiah and Amos) on the formation of the Book of the Covenant (Exod 20–23) and the Law of Holiness (Lev 17–26) is not discussed. This is especially striking since from the standpoint of redaction-criticism and compositional history—on which Nogalski focuses—historical-critical scholarship has largely reached an agreement (cf. Schmid, 101–104).

It should also be noted that the discussion of the *Dodekapropheton*, at 120 pages, receives more attention than the introduction to the major prophets (slightly under 100 pages). This is probably since Nogalski’s research has been

focused particularly on them. As described, the book has its clear strength in its redaction-critical approach. There is probably no better introduction available that addresses these issues properly and efficiently. Denomination-based seminars or readers and students looking for an introduction with a thematic and theological focus will make a different choice of literature.

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OLIVER GLANZ

Rice, Richard. *The Future of Open Theism: From Antecedents to Opportunities*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2020. Softcover. 254 pp. USD 26.00.

In *The Future of Open Theism*, Richard Rice surveys the history of a contemporary theological movement (in which he is a significant influence) and makes suggestions for the further development of its central contribution—that God and the world are “open” for “interchange” and “give-and-take” (1). Unfortunately, there has been “no smooth transition from the ‘traditional’ view” (4) to this “novel perspective” (2). Instead, there is a stark contrast reminiscent of the “radical ... incommensurability” described in Kuhn’s *Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (4).

Using words by Pears, Rice expresses regret about the resistance by many to open theism: “How is [it] that when a man of God shifts his opinion it proves the weakness of his views, and when a man of science does so it demonstrates the value of his method?” (6). In this review, I reflect on what Rice identifies as a “persistent” reason for resistance: open theism’s “revisionist view of divine foreknowledge” (76). (See also my “Review of Wm. Curtis Holtzen’s *The God who Trusts*” in *AUSS* 58.1 [Spr 2020]: 113–117).

In the first part of his book, Rice describes the history of open theism. Chapter 1 traces views of foreknowledge by Arminius, Clarke, McCabe, Lequyer, Olson, and Elseth (11–26). Chapter 2 surveys books (1980 to 2001) by Rice, Pinnock, Saunders, Hasker, Basinger, and Boyd (27–46); and briefly discusses Bible texts that appear problematic for open theism (46–48). Chapter 3 records how open theism triggered an intensely “dismaying” and “disillusioning” “firestorm” of “controversy” and “open hostility” (51). Fortunately, conflicts in the Evangelical Theological Society (52–58) and other criticisms (59–71) have softened into productive conversation (71–78).

Chapter 4 documents how—in the words of Rhoda—open theism is now “embraced by a sizable and growing” number of theistic philosophers and is “recognized as a major player” (79). Issues surveyed by Rice include foreknowledge (80–89), providence (89–96), and responsible risk (96–100). Chapter 5 points out how open theists disagree about the nature of the God-world interactions they affirm (101). For example, there are different views on evil (103–108), creation (108–110), and kenotic love (110–118).