

quo in his view of Armageddon and the millennium. For him, contrary to popular views, the millennium reign is going to take place in heaven, not on earth (291), views all too familiar to Seventh-day Adventists, the affiliation of Tonstad. Similarly, the Armageddon is not a specific place in the Near East but a cosmic mount of assembly from Isa 14:12–13 (231). Although this idea is plausible, the author did not show linguistically how he arrived at “*har-mo’ed*” from “*har-magedon*.”

Yet perhaps the most unconventional but truly remarkable feature of the commentary is Tonstad’s main thesis to present God as non-violent and non-revengeful. God is represented in the Lamb which is the victim of violence (Rev 5:6) but He is non-retributive. His weapons are revelation and witness (xii, 57, 164). The word is superior to the sword (213). Jesus, the slain Lamb, is the Revealer who discloses what the other party wants to hide (128). Non-violence exposes and conquers Satan, the Deceiver (173). Tonstad questions the common view that God stands behind all actions in the Revelation (151, 213–214). Instead of accepting passive verbs as the “divine passive,” he introduces the “diabolic passive” and argues that Satan stands behind all the horrors in the Apocalypse (125; cf. 194). The key concept for Tonstad’s thesis is to view God as the Restrainer who gradually removes his protection, allowing the other side to operate without restraint. God’s wrath then is understood as the withdrawal of the divine protection (208). Satanic activity, thus, self-exposes its true nature all the way until the final battle when God’s enemies self-destroy themselves “outside of the city” (213–214).

All in all, the *Revelation* by Sigve Tonstad captivates by its originality. The commentary calls readers to a deeper analysis of the text seasoned with unconventional thinking. No doubt some may occasionally disagree with the author on particularities, yet his original thinking alone outweighs all possible shortcomings. This commentary is a valuable contribution to scholarship and it has the potential to guide its readers into new explorations. Any Bible student, be they scholars, pastors, teachers, or none of those, will benefit from its pages – it is a must-read.

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Wolter, Michael. *Der Brief an die Römer*. 2 vols. EKKNT 6. Ostfildern: Patmos; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014/2019. 559 pp./511 pp. Softcover. EUR 75.99/69.99.

Michael Wolter’s impressive professional career includes being a professor for Biblical Theology at the University of Bayreuth (Germany) from 1988–1993 and a Professor of New Testament at the University of Bonn (Germany) from 1993–2016. He also served as editor of the *Theologischen*

Realenzyklopädie (TRE) from 1983–1988 and as editor of the *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der Älteren Kirche (ZNW)* in 1998–2013. Besides, he was president of the *Colloquium Oecumenicum Paulinum* in Rome (Italy) from 2002–2004 and president of the *Society for New Testament Studies* in 2017–2018.

Wolter's list of publications justifies his impressive professional career. It includes, among many others, his dissertation, *Rechtfertigung und zukünftiges Heil: Untersuchungen zu Römer 5,1–11*, BZNW 43 (de Gruyter, 1978) and his habilitation, *Die Pastoralbriefe als Paulustradition*, FRLANT 164 (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1988). He authored commentaries on Colossians and Philemon (*Der Brief and die Kolosser. Der Brief and Philemon*, ÖTK 12 [Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1993]) on Luke (*Das Lukasevangelium*, HNT 5 [Mohr Siebeck, 2008]), and several books like *Paulus: Ein Grundriss seiner Theologie*. 3rd ed. (Neukirchener Verlag, 2019), and most recently *Jesus von Nazareth*, Theologische Bibliothek 6 (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2019). Some works by Wolter has recently been translated into English such as his commentary on Luke and his book on Pauline theology entitled *Paul: An Outline of his Theology* (Baylor, 2015).

Wolter published his two-volume commentary on Romans as the sixth volume of the German *Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament*. It adds to Ulrich Wilckens's three-volume Romans commentary that was published between 1978 and 1982. The commentaries appear in softcover. It is worthwhile to note that the quality of the binding has significantly improved compared to previous volumes of the series. Even after extensive use of the commentary, the binding remains solid and unbroken. The series editors claim that Michael Wolter provides the first German-speaking commentary on Romans, which interprets Romans on the one hand in the framework of the *New Perspective on Paul* and, on the other hand, as part of the separating process between Christians and Jews (back cover).

Wolter's commentary follows the typical format of the series. He first provides a short bibliography for the discussed paragraph, followed by the paragraph's translation in bold print. After the translation, Wolter discusses contextual, structural, and thematic issues related to the discussed paragraph in the analysis part. An explanation section follows in which Wolter interprets the text in a verse-by-verse exegesis. As part of this explanation section, Wolter occasionally pays special attention to debated phrases or theological concepts. A summary section concludes the discussion on each paragraph. For better orientation, the commentary layout has the parts, the references of the discussed verses, and the discussion on debated phrases and theological concepts indicated in the margin. This feature helps the reader to locate the relevant content quickly.

Among the hundreds of commentaries on Romans, Wolter's commentary is simply unrivaled. Wolter is very apt in unlocking Paul's text by

efficiently applying the exegetical set of keys. The grammatical, syntactical, and semantic discussions of the Greek are delivered in a comprehensible manner. The interpretative and theological implications he draws from the detailed linguistic analyses are impressive and in nature comparable to Cranfield's *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 6th ed. 2 vols., ICC 31 (T&T Clark, 1975/1979). The organization and the readability of the discussed material are outstanding. The historical analyses contain interactions with relevant non-Jewish Greco-Roman primary sources, canonical material, and extra-canonical material from the Second Temple period. Through these interactions, Wolter guides the reader through the cultural and social environment of the original recipients of Paul's epistle so that Paul's intentions with Romans become alive and understandable. The extensive footnotes reveal that Wolter's analysis is in dialog with the major contemporary interpreters and those of the past in German and English scholarship.

There is no way around Wolter's Romans commentary for serious scholarship on Romans. The quality of Wolter's commentary turns him into an inevitable dialog partner for any scholar seeking to make a contribution to the study of Romans. This fact raises the question about the accessibility of Wolter's material due to being published in German. Therefore, I hope that Wolter's commentary on Romans will be translated soon as has been the case with other publications by Wolter.

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