

commentaries that are somewhat less detailed than Davies and Allison (ICC), Nolland (NIGTC), and Hagner (WBC).

In summary, Osborne's commentary deals with the Greek text but is accessible to readers whose primary point of reference is the English Bible. His treatment of each passage is concise (if 1100 pages can be considered "concise") but appropriately detailed. He interacts with the world of scholarship in a balanced way but does not let that interaction overshadow Matthew's text. His commentary does not introduce any novel interpretations or new methods but is a solid evangelical work using the time-tested grammatical-historical method. It provides a special service in its attention to application and biblical theology and, therefore, is a solid contribution to the world of Matthean scholarship.

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The Gospel of John. By J. Ramsey Michaels. NICNT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010, xxvi + 1094 pp., \$65.00.

J. Ramsey Michaels finds himself in the difficult position of contributing a volume to the NICNT series that replaces the much-loved commentary on the Gospel of John by Leon Morris, first published in 1971 and then revised in 1995. Morris's work in Johannine studies represented not merely the best of conservative Australian Anglicanism, but the best of international evangelical scholarship. His reputation as an internationally respected evangelical NT scholar was perhaps surpassed only by F. F. Bruce in the late twentieth century. Many of the so-called younger evangelical scholars and pastors cut their proverbial Johannine teeth on Morris's fine commentary, and then continued to return to it time and again because of its wealth of observation. Morris's death in 2006 brought an end to a long, respectable career, and more importantly, a long life of service for the kingdom. It is clear, however, that no matter how much loved Morris's commentary is, at some point there is need for a replacement commentary that brings the reader up to date with the scholarly conversation.

A major variable that ought to drive this review of Michaels's *The Gospel of John* replacement volume is the degree to which it updates the scholarly conversation that has taken place since the publication of its predecessor volume in 1995. It is on just this point that some deficiencies in Michaels's commentary come to light.

Michaels confesses that his commentary does not interact closely with recent scholarly developments. As he states in the "Author's Preface," "I have not begun to monitor all the publications on the Gospel in the seventeen years that have passed since I first signed the contract with Eerdmans" (p. x). Rather than monitoring "all the publications on the Gospel in the seventeen years," Michaels instead suggests that he has tried to immerse himself in the actual text "while interacting repeatedly with the major commentators, past and present" (p. x).

Because of this approach, Michaels has missed the opportunity to interact with some of the significant, recent studies that have illuminated key aspects of the Gospel of John. For example, it is a hard pill to swallow that not one of the scholarly contributions of Andreas Köstenberger to the study of the Fourth Gospel is cited in the commentary—a significant *faux pas* given that Köstenberger is perhaps one of the most significant younger evangelical Johannine scholars of our day. Likewise, it is hard to imagine a commentary on the Fourth Gospel discussing the temple theme without interacting with

Paul M. Hoskins's excellent *Jesus as the Fulfillment of the Temple in the Gospel of John* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2007). It is also hard to imagine a commentary on John's Gospel discussing the significance of Moses in John's Gospel without some interaction with John Lierman's *New Testament Moses: Christian Perceptions of Moses & Israel in the Setting of Jewish Religion* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2004).

Other recent trends in Johannine studies are not drawn into the discussion either. For example, there is a growing shift away from viewing the Fourth Gospel as the product of a Johannine community struggling to maintain its identity in the midst of the *birkat ha-minim* (i.e. J. Louis Martyn, et al.) to a more nuanced "traditional" authorship view that places the writing of John's Gospel some ten years after the destruction of the temple as an apologetic for how Jesus fulfills all the hopes and dreams of a shattered first-century Judaism (i.e. Andreas Köstenberger, et al.). This growing shift in how scholarship views the setting and authorship of John's Gospel is documented in a volume of essays edited by John Lierman titled *Challenging Perspectives on the Gospel of John* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2006), which is another key source that Michaels could have used to bring an updated scholarly conversation to his commentary.

In addition, much work has been done over the last twenty years on the issue of the use of the OT in the Gospel of John. For example, Martin J. J. Menken has published a series of important journal articles focusing on technical analyses of the OT quotes in John's Gospel. None of these studies by Menken are drawn into Michaels's discussion. Not even E. D. Freed's classic 1965 study *Old Testament Quotations in the Gospel of John* (Leiden: Brill, 1965) makes Michaels's bibliography.

A somewhat troubling set of decisions made by Michaels also diminishes what has been a fairly conservative NICNT commentary series. Michaels made his mark in the 1970s and 1980s with his use of redaction-critical method in Synoptic studies (see, for example, his book titled *Servant and Son: Jesus in Parable and Gospel* [Atlanta: John Knox, 1981]). One dubious redaction analysis made by Michaels in his commentary on *The Gospel of John* begins with his equating the tradition of the healing of the paralytic at the pool of Bethesda in John 5 with the healing of the paralytic in Mark 2 (p. 298). While arguments have been made to differentiate these two healings as separate events—one in Jerusalem and one in Capernaum—Michaels simply assumes that they are one and, unfortunately, does not survey the possibilities posited by other scholars.

On the question of authorship, Michaels chooses to adopt the view, contrary to the traditional view, that the author of John's Gospel is unknown. Michaels concludes, "At the end of the day 'the disciple whom Jesus loved' remains anonymous" (p. 24), and again, "The modern reader can only guess as to who he [the author of the Fourth Gospel] was" (p. 20).

On a positive note, Michaels proves himself to be very adept at explaining the meaning of the Greek text. As has been stated earlier in this review, Michaels set out in this commentary to immerse himself in the actual text of John's Gospel (p. x). In this regard, he passes with flying colors. Most of the footnotes in the commentary are helpful elaborations of key aspects of the Greek. One example of Michaels's lucid explanation of the Greek text is his discussion of the difficult interaction between Jesus and his mother Mary in the marriage of Cana episode (John 2:1–11). His discussion of the difficult passage John 2:4 is perhaps the most lucid of any commentary that I have encountered. In addition, Michaels clearly demonstrates that he is a master of the text-critical issues in the Gospel of John. Again, the footnotes contain helpful discussion of key issues when variant readings demand analysis.

J. Ramsey Michaels's *The Gospel of John* is a tome at 1094 pages in length. The front matter includes a nice, but limited, twelve-page bibliography of primary sources,

commentaries, and other secondary sources cited in the commentary. The introductory section of the commentary is forty-two pages in length—a bit shorter than what one might expect in a major commentary—and includes some of the expected topics, such as authorship, structure, and Synoptic relationships. Unlike many commentaries, there is no extended discussion of the major theological themes found in John's Gospel. In fairness to Michaels, there is a four-page discussion of Christological themes that are prominent in the Fourth Gospel, but as one might expect, that discussion only scratches the surface. Helpful subject, author, Scripture, and extrabiblical indices follow the exposition of the text.

In conclusion, there is much to be disappointed with in this newest contribution to the NICNT series. If, indeed, the purpose of a replacement volume in a commentary series is to bring readers up to date with scholarly developments, Michaels's commentary misses the mark in its attempt to update Morris's volume. That said, Michaels's commentary may supersede Morris's in its wealth of exegetical observations on the Greek text as well as its contribution to text-critical issues in the study of John's Gospel.

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A Conclusion Unhindered: A Study of the Ending of Acts within Its Literary Environment. By Troy M. Troftgruben. WUNT 2/280. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010, xiii + 232 pp., €59.00 paper.

This excellent study focuses on the ending of Acts, particularly 28:16–31, and seeks to assess how far it brings closure to the narrative of Acts (or Luke-Acts) and how far it leaves openness. This revised doctoral thesis is limpidly clear, beautifully organized, and well written—and those are not always the features of revised doctoral theses. It is one of a string of excellent recently published Ph.D. theses supervised by Beverly R. Gaventa on Acts at Princeton Theological Seminary (those of David Downs and John B. F. Miller spring quickly to mind)—on this basis, may her tribe increase!

Troftgruben begins by laying out in the introduction the issue he will explore, identifying it as an exploration of the way in which the final scene of Acts (28:16–31) brings closure to the story of (Luke-)Acts. This is an issue to which a number of answers have been given, and they hinge on a proper understanding of the nature of closure and openness in the ending of a narrative. Thus the study is organized around these questions, and the latter part of the introduction lays out the shape of the monograph with model clarity. I shall certainly be referring my doctoral students to this study as an example of how to write and organize material well.

Chapter 1 then provides a masterly survey of scholarship on this topic, noticing that there has been a shift from understanding the ending of Acts as bringing closure to recognizing elements of openness. Troftgruben notes four main explanations of the ending of Acts: (1) that Luke knew no more than he wrote; (2) that Luke was prevented from finishing his projected longer work; (3) that Luke was deliberately rather abrupt in the way he ended Acts; and (4) that the ending provides a fitting and intentional conclusion. Each is explained clearly—and grouping them in this way itself provides considerable clarity of analysis. He then considers two recent areas of study of the ending of Acts. First, he gives good attention to the idea of narrative closure since the “literary turn” in biblical studies, focusing on the work of Dupont, Hauser, and Puskas. Second, he notes the value of considering other endings in ancient literature, noting the work of Moessner