

have further highlighted the uniqueness of John's particular emphasis. Among other things Koester has tried to appreciate specifically how John's Gospel understands the theological realities of this world (the atoning work of Christ being a case in point). By comparing and contrasting John with the synoptics this goal would have been achieved even more effectively.

The book is very readable, suitable for a popular audience, and contains a number of more practical comments and examples to help 'lay' readers come to a deeper understanding of John's Gospel. Also, ideas are often repeated in later chapters and helpfully explained again in connection to another theme in the Gospel. As such it is clear that Koester is not only trying to develop a scholarly argument, but is also keen to teach content to those less familiar with academic writing. Having said this, Koester does not skimp on theological depth and scholarly engagement, making this book useful for a wide audience. Scholars, students, pastors, preachers, small group leaders, and any other interested persons could benefit from reading this book.

Ian Goodman

Sally Lloyd-Jones. Illustrated by Jago. *The Jesus Storybook Bible*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007 (351 pp.) [ISBN: 978-0-31-708254]

Children's Bible's follow a pretty standard format – simple language and basic pictures. In addition they make one of two decisions; either they are simply a selection of Bible stories that are edited down to a level of comprehension for children minus the theology, or they take biblical stories and turn them into little moral vignettes. *The Jesus Storybook Bible* certainly uses language appropriate for children, but it neither merely repeats the biblical stories minus the theology or turns the stories into moralistic teachable moments.

In the acknowledgments, Lloyd-Jones mentions the formative impact the ministry of Timothy Keller has had on her, and it

certainly shows through in this work. What is unique and so compelling about *The Storybook Bible* is that over twenty-one Old Testament stories and twenty-three New Testament stories the metanarrative of Scripture is communicated by means of each micro-story. At the centre of each story is Jesus Christ, and the love of God for his creation revealed through and evident in Christ. In place of moralistic stories, Lloyd-Jones has opted to follow the Bible's own storyline and present the nature and character of God in his triune glory, centred on the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, and filled and empowered by the ongoing presence of God the Holy Spirit. This she manages to do in delightfully appropriate language and with a keen theological awareness of what in each story needs to be retained in order for it to actually constitute a *Bible* and not simply a storybook.

Any parent reading through Scripture with their children will know the difficulty faced when the violent texts of Scripture are encountered and how we have to either simply skip over those sections with our young children, or subtly retell them on the fly, skipping over the extreme violence inappropriate for children at this age. Lloyd-Jones is fully aware of this issue and in her selection of stories she doesn't mute significant parts of God's character by skipping over violent texts, but, rather, she softens some of the extreme violence and, importantly, puts the story once again into the larger picture of God's love, holiness, justice, and glory. She helps children (and their parents) make sense of the story in light of the rest of God's revelation. Many times she does this with a level of skill unrivalled by many preachers. One example, the day after reading the story of 'Daniel and the scary sleepover' (pp. 152-159) to my two children, I ran a preaching lab where the student preached the same text as a narrative sermon. Much of the presentation was very good, but I did recommend he reads the passage from *The Storybook Bible* and take notes on what the story really means and how it could be communicated better.

I am reading through *The Storybook Bible* with my two children, a two-year-old boy and a four-year-old girl, and a good test of the effectiveness of such a book is, I believe, to hear each of them ask me to read them a story out of it. My daughter loves the fact that

God gives us true stories of Queens and princesses, of love affairs and drama, and that God promises to send a great Prince one day to meet us in person. My son loves the soldiers and the battles, the horses and chariots, and that God is stronger than anyone and anything and that this God loves him. I love the fact that God's Word is living and active and can cut through the busy lives of little children as well as big adults and can, at the same time, speak to all of us afresh.

Illustrations in children's Bible's run two risks, they are either so magnificent they eclipse the text completely and children's attentions are drawn away from the story and to the images, or they are so poorly done they put children off the story altogether. Jago, the illustrator, has got the balance right in this book, if my two children are anything to go by. They love the illustrations – but not too much. While Reformed folk will not like the fact that Jesus is pictured throughout the book, Baptists will have no problems with such symbolic representation. The colours are bright, the format is creative, and the length of stories keeps the attention of little minds, stimulating further discussion based upon what was read.

One drawback mars the work throughout and it is this – it is too short and too many parts of Scripture are left out. One simply hopes and prays that a second volume will appear in due course that takes us through the Psalms and Proverbs, for instance, and the other parts of God's Word that still need to speak to us today. If you have young children and want to hear God speak to you through his Word as a family, then this is a God-given resource. Enjoy!

Myk Habets

The Early Preaching of Karl Barth: Fourteen Sermons with Commentary by William H. Willimon. Karl Barth and William H. Willimon. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009. (xvii + 171 pp.) [ISBN: 978-0-664-23367-9]

The Early Preaching of Karl Barth is concerned with the practice of preaching and is directed to church based preachers. It is comprised of fourteen sermons selected from Barth's parish