Douglas W. Kennard, *Epistemology and Logic in the New Testament: Early Jewish Context and Biblical Theology Mechanism that Fit Within Some Contemporary Ways of Knowing*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2016. (vii + 270 pp.) [ISBN 9781532608155]

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Douglas Kennard is a professor at the Houston Graduate School of Theology and has written several books within the subjects of biblical studies, epistemology and theology. This book comes at a time when the study of the epistemology of the biblical authors is at an early stage and promises to contribute much to scholarly debate around issues like genre, Christology, apocalyptic and hermeneutics. Kennard writes in order to introduce philosophers to the riches of New Testament epistemology. One would also expect such a book to contribute to, or at least introduce the current scholarship on New Testament epistemology.

The first chapter introduces the author and his approach, situating Kennard as an evangelical New Testament scholar and philosopher of religion. He argues that previous works in this area have emphasised either "exegetical or philosophical awareness but do not show the [sic] familiarity or interact with the other discipline sufficiently" (p. 3). The chapter lacks any systematic introduction to the key epistemological terms that Kennard uses or their definitions. It is thus unclear how Kennard expects terms such as "language games", "the thought forms of William Alston", "mystical", "Wittgensteinian communal language", "Plantinga properly basic communal faith system", "non-foundational realism", or "Lockean epistemology" to be understood. These terms reoccur throughout the book, and are not always used consistently.

Chapter two argues that Matthew's Jesus reflects early Jewish rabbinic teaching. At 75 pages long (pp. 10–85) it is the longest chapter of the book. The chapter is generally a fair introduction to the Jewish background of Matthew's Gospel. Kennard argues that Jesus is distinctive against the background of early rabbinic teaching in his emphasis on, "Himself as the authoritative scribe to settle all kingdom ethical and spiritual issues" (p. 10). Periodically sentences in italics alert the reader to a statement about epistemology. Although the chapter focusses on Matthew, use is made of the other canonical Gospels to round out a picture of Jesus' teaching and its epistemological underpinnings.

Chapter three (pp. 86–127) argues that Luke-Acts used Greco-Roman rhetoric to engage its audience and present virtues to imitate. This is not a controversial conclusion. However, on p. 88 Kennard discusses the manuscript tradition of Acts and states that the differences between the Western and Alexandrian texts of Acts "corroborate the historical events through textual criticism as substantially providing multiple attestation." This argument is hard to follow. It would normally be understood that the two text forms only attest to the text of Acts not the events Acts describe.

On the next page Kennard categorically states that "Greco-Roman historical narrative did not permit the use of mythology" citing Dionysius, *Thucydides*. Then he states, "Greco-Roman historical accounts utilized supernatural miracles as an apologetic role demonstrating the hero's superiority" (p. 99). Kennard argues that because one Greco-Roman historian said he rejected myths therefore all Greco-Roman

historiography, including the accounts of the supernatural, are reliable reports of events. For Kennard this argument supports the historical veracity of Luke-Acts. For this reader the logic of such an argument is problematic at several points and leads to an unnecessarily naïve approach to the claims of ancient texts.

A similar problem is apparent in his approach to the (now outdated) form criticism of Rudolf Bultmann. Kennard clearly feels challenged by Bultmann and returns to him several times in order to argue that Bultmann's theories about the influence of Hellenistic mythology on the New Testament are disproven by 1 Tim 1:4 and 2 Pet 1:6 and their repudiation of "myth" (e.g. pp. 99, 124, 131). If Bultmann, or one of his followers, was suspicious of the historical claims of the New Testament texts why would he be convinced by the fact they claim to be reliable? Bultmann's theories were overturned decades ago in biblical scholarship, so Kennard's rebuttal seems unnecessary even as it is otherwise unconvincing.

Subsequent chapters discuss 1 & 2 Peter (p. 121), Paul's letters (p. 128), Johannine literature including Revelation (p. 163), James (p. 200), and Hebrews (p. 215). A highlight, for this reader, was the chapter on James which contains an enjoyable discussion of James' relationship to the wisdom literature of the Jewish scriptures and their Ancient Near Eastern context.

In both the chapters on Paul and on Johanine literature Kennard discusses the role of the Spirit in illuminating exegesis (pp. 133–37, 177–81). This is a legitimate question both in regard to the historical epistemology of the New Testament and the present day understanding of the church. Kennard observes "that rather repeatedly *godly commentators disagree* with features which other godly commentators may say are within the meaning of a text" (pp. 135 & 180, emphasis original). Again, the term "godly commentator" is not defined although some examples are given. However, he adds another observation to his argument, "*sometimes non-Christians have produced the best commentaries on a book of the Bible*" (pp. 137 & 180, emphasis original). He goes on to state that the prime example of this is Jacob Milgrom, a Jew, and his commentary on Leviticus. This is confusing to me for several reasons. Firstly, what exactly is "ungodly" about being a Jew? At the least, this is an unfortunate and careless choice of words. Secondly, Daniel Boyarin, also a Jew, was listed among the godly commentators (p. 136). How did Kennard decide one Jew was godly and the other was not? Thirdly, with what criteria did he decide Milgrom's commentary was "best"? Fourthly, the question pertinent to this book is surely the New Testament authors' understanding of inspiration. Thus whoever wrote the "best" modern commentary on Leviticus or the disagreements of contemporary scholars has absolutely no bearing.

The book is generally well referenced with both secondary and primary literature. The book contains an extensive, possibly comprehensive, bibliography and this is very useful for those wishing to study New Testament epistemology. However, the reader may find it frustrating when Kennard references his own unpublished conference papers and amusing when he recounts conversations had with various scholars at those conferences. Don Carson may be surprised to learn that off the cuff comments he made in 2003 at the Southeast (USA) *Evangelical Theological Society* are being refuted in a book 13 years later (p. 172). While a biblical scholar will appreciate the extensive references to Rabbinic sources, Pseudapigrapha, and the Dead Sea Scrolls I do wonder what the book's intended audience (philosophical epistemologists) will be able to

make of them as there is no list of abbreviations and often no explanation as to how those texts substantiate the point referenced.

Sentences are frequently incomplete, use strange and imprecise verbs, and are often unclear in meaning. The quality of prose does vary and some passages are easier to read than others. However, the reader is frequently required to supply meaning or nuance that is not present in the text in order to make sense of the argument. One indication of the unpolished nature of the book is that at several points entire paragraphs are reproduced verbatim (e.g. pp. 86 & 120, 134 & 177, 137 & 180) as well as sentences on the same page (p. 77). The conclusion of the book (pp. 222–24) is mostly identical to the last few pages of the introduction (p. 5–9).

This book represents a huge amount of work and learning. It may be useful to the specialist scholar who wishes to use its bibliography or to help locate important parallels in the rabbinic literature. While its discussion of NT epistemology is not always clear or compelling it may also provide a useful starting point for further studies as long as the reader is highly discerning. The numerous lapses in logical and methodological rigour (examples detailed above) prevent this book from being recommended beyond such limits.

Philip G. Ziegler, *Militant Grace: The Apocalyptic Turn and the Future of Christian Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018. (238 pp.) [ISBN: 9780801098536]

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The title of this book instantly piqued my interest. The word 'apocalyptic' conjures up such images as the stars falling from heaven and the Son of Man coming on the clouds. *Militant Grace*, though, is not about such things. Indeed, it does not even treat the end times or the Bible's apocalyptic literature. For Ziegler, apocalyptic is a theological method and, in his words, "a discursive idiom uniquely suited to articulate the radicality, sovereignty, and militancy of adventitious divine grace" (p. xvii).

The book harks back to the golden age of eschatology in the last century, when this theological locus became the 'medium of Christian faith' (Moltmann) and the 'mother of all theology' (Käsemann). The author believes that this repositioning of eschatology was ingredient in that century's great theological articulations of the gospel, but he is afraid that this theological progress is under threat now from a return of nineteenth-century historicism. "All is history," is the new motto. With this book, he hopes to stem this new tide and to recover the salutary influence of eschatology on theology. Ziegler is co-chair of the Theology and Apocalyptic Network, which he co-founded in 2009. The book is the fruit of his involvement with this research group.

Militant Grace is an exquisite monograph, but it does not lend itself to a facile review, since it is actually a collection of revised articles that were previously published over a ten-year span. There is naturally a lack of cohesion here, but the author of course tries to persuade us of the book's unity. "The overarching