

## REVIEWS

Linda L. Belleville and B. J. Oropeza (Eds.), *Scripture, Texts, and Tracings in 1 Corinthians*. London: Lexington Books / Fortress Academic, 2019. (281 pp.) [ISBN: 9781978704688]

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This is the first in a planned four volume series on Paul's use of scripture. This series seeks to address the lack of scholarly consensus around Paul's use of scripture. In particular, as the title of this volume alludes, the contributors seek to not only compare Paul with the scriptural texts he employs, but also within the traditions of textual variation and interpretation which had developed around the Jewish Scriptures by the first century. It contains 12 essays, selected from a 6-year long *Society of Biblical Literature* (USA) annual seminar. Almost half the chapters deal with Paul's engagement with the scriptures around covenant and law. Other chapters cover a range of themes from mystery, scriptural narrative, prophecy, baptism of the dead, and resurrection. In addition, there is an introduction by Belleville and Oropeza and an extremely helpful afterword by Christopher Stanley. The book does not attempt to address every use of scripture by Paul in 1 Corinthians but rather it addresses the more perplexing or controversial instances of scripture interpretation therein. Likewise, this review will not attempt to discuss every chapter in detail, but will attempt to give a feel for the collection by highlighting the parts that this reader found most interesting.

The essays begin with Erik Waaler, "Paul's Recontextualization of the Prophets and Other texts in 1 Corinthians 1-2" (pp. 7-28). Waaler begins with a brief methodological note that rather than "the current vocabulary of citations, quotations, allusions, and echoes" he prefers to employ "the general category of recontextualized text and specific descriptions of differences" (p. 7). Additionally, he asserts that all recontextualization inevitably implies both continuity and change with the original text. Waaler then discusses the numerous cultic "recontextualizations" in Paul's greeting (1 Cor 1:1-9). 1 Corinthians 1:2 "the name of the Lord" utilizes Joel 3:5; 1:3 "grace and peace" employs the priestly blessing of Numbers 6:24-26 as developed in 2 Baruch 78:2, Sirach 50:22-24 and 1 Enoch 1:8; 3:4-9; 1 Cor 1:9 speaks of "God's faithfulness" using language from Deuteronomy 7:9 and 32:4 (texts related to Numbers 6 in Jewish tradition); and 1 Cor 1:8 employs the expression "the Day of the Lord" from OT prophetic texts (e.g. Amos 5:18-20; Isaiah 2:12). Waaler shows how these recontextualizations serve both to give a cultic feel to the beginning of Paul's letter (whether or not the letter was to be read aloud in a cultic setting) and how these scriptural uses prepare for later parts of the letter where Paul will return to those scriptures. For example, 1 Cor 10 returns to Deut 32 with its themes of "the rock" and "God's jealousy" (p. 11). This is, unfortunately, an unconvincing way for Waaler to begin, as what he describes in 1 Cor 1:1-9 are terse phrases, which are no doubt evocative uses of scriptural language, but the idea that they are uses of (a specific) scripture rather than just scriptural language cannot be demonstrated with so little data. Here I felt that Waaler's argument, ironically, would have been

better served by the more usual terminology of echoes and allusions. That said, Waaler's following discussion of Isaiah and Jeremiah is far more convincing. He clearly shows how Paul's quotations of the prophets in 1 Corinthians 1-2 operate with significant *metalepsis*. (*Metalepsis* describes how a quotation may bring not just its own words, but ideas, themes, and words from its original context into the new setting). He makes the surprising and surely significant observation that when Paul's quotations are lexically similar to the source he generally transforms the meaning of the text, but, at the same time, the verbally freer "contextualizations" are generally more consistent with the meaning of the scripture in its original context. The theological and exegetical ramifications of this insight surely need further discussion. Thus, this initial essay shows both what an exciting and rich study Paul's use of scripture can be, but also the way new approaches and terminology continue to multiply and cause confusion around this subject.

In "Paul's Mystery Thriller: The Use of Danielic Mystery in 1 Corinthians" (pp. 29-42), Benjamin Gladd argues that the frequently observed allusions to Daniel in 1 Cor 1:18-2:16 carry greater significance than is usually appreciated. He draws on earlier studies of Daniel as the source of the term "mystery", and its apocalyptic and eschatological connotations, in Second Temple Judaism. In a convincing treatment he outlines the allusive language used throughout 1 Corinthians 1-2 and then shows how Paul utilizes the Danielic concept of "mystery" to communicate both "the nature of God's revelation in the cross" and "the fulfilment of God's eschatological triumph" (pp. 33-34). Gladd also briefly discusses the use of "mystery" at Qumran, particularly in association with a wisdom polemic, and its use later in 1 Corinthians. Given the brevity of Gladd's essay (almost half the length of Waaler's) it was disappointing that more space was not given to discussion of the Qumran texts, as this would have considerably reinforced his thesis and may have illuminated further aspects of Paul's use of this conceptual sphere in 1 Corinthians. Likewise, the cursory discussion of mystery in 1 Cor 13:2; 14:2 was not convincing and undermined the force of his conclusion. It may be that with Gladd's reasoning explained, this reader would see how the word "mystery" in 1 Cor 13:2 and 14:3 functions as a "rallying cry for unity" (p. 37), but it is not presently apparent. In fact, many of the essays in the volume are much shorter than I would expect and do not seem to have been developed much beyond the manuscript for a twenty-minute presentation.

The third chapter is by Craig Keener, a most formidable scholar, who asks "Overrealized Eschatology or Lack of Eschatology in Corinth?" This is another short chapter with only nine pages of main text (pp. 43-52), but fourteen of notes and bibliography (pp. 52-66). Keener deals not so much with the text of 1 Corinthians as with the most likely background for Paul's emphasis on eschatology in 1 Corinthians. Keener shows how some strands of Hellenized Judaism had abandoned traditional Jewish eschatology under the influence of Stoic philosophy. He argues that the simpler, and therefore preferable, solution is that the Corinthian Christians simply struggled to grasp any kind of eschatology, rather than that they had overrealized it in the present.

Kathy Barrett Dawson, brings us back to the subject of scripture in "The Incestuous Man of 1 Corinthians 5, Septuagint Banishment Texts and Eating with Sinners" (pp. 67-80). This is an original and convincing argument that Paul's references to judging the offending member and to being present in the spirit (1 Cor 5:3) reflect Deuteronomy 17 and that Paul's references to the power of Jesus and destruction

(1 Cor 5:4-5) reflect the Passover instructions in Exodus 12. She shows how Jewish interpretation of these texts informed Paul's application of community banishment to the offender in 1 Corinthians 5. Following Dawson, Guy Prentis Waters takes a closer look at 1 Cor 5:13 and its Deuteronomic background (pp. 81-98). In particular, he uses the allusion to Deuteronomy to argue for Paul's understanding of what excommunication entailed theologically for the offender, with particular reference to 1 Cor 5:5. Waters argues that in 1 Corinthians Christ is "the eschatological Passover sacrifice" (p. 86, cf. 1 Cor 5:7) and so removal from the community "entails placement under covenant curse" (p. 85) but is not necessarily final and may work as a remedial process (p.90). While Dawson and Waters largely cover the same texts, their differing approaches avoid redundancy.

Brian Rosner tackles "the apparent contradictions in Paul's dealings with the law" (p. 99) in his essay "Paul and the Law in 1 Corinthians" (pp. 99-109). This paper treats 1 Corinthians as a test case for the thesis of his larger work, *Paul and the Law: Keeping the Commandments of God* (NSBT 31, Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2013). He argues that Paul "repudiates" the law as law-code and covenant, but re-appropriates it as wisdom for Christian ethics and prophecy about Christ and the Gospel community (pp. 100, 106).

In his second essay of the volume, Erik Waaler discusses "Loyalty to Christ in 1 Corinthians and Loyalty to YHWH in Deuteronomy" (pp. 111-28). He makes the useful observation that the unity of 1 Corinthians is undergirded by "numerous Deuteronomic covenantal references", seventy-five in all (p. 111). Unfortunately, the following figure showing their distribution (p. 112) is unclear and there is no table listing the seventy-five parallels. His following discussion of individual sections is, however, illuminating and he demonstrates how Deuteronomic themes underlie a number of key arguments in 1 Corinthians. For example 1 Cor 6:16-17 uses *kallao* ("cleave"), clearly referencing LXX Genesis 2:24. What is less well noted is that similar cleaving language occurs in Deuteronomy in reference to God; thus Paul's language in 1 Cor 6:16-17 evokes both marriage covenant and the Deuteronomic covenant and shows Paul "redirecting a vital element of the covenant language of [Deuteronomy] to Christ" (p. 114). Waaler shows that throughout 1 Corinthians Paul uses "covenant language lifted from Deuteronomy" and combines it with a "high Christology" in a way that (according to Waaler), "conflicts with his Jewish background" and is "highly innovative" (p.122-23).

With Linda Belleville's chapter, "Paul's Christological Use of the Exodus-Wilderness Rock Tradition in 1 Corinthians 10:4" (pp. 129-39), the book turns away from covenant and law to address some of the more unique moments in 1 Corinthians. Building on Francis Watson's suggestion that 1 Corinthians 10:1-11 is an "extended commentary on the exodus-wilderness narrative" (p. 130), Belleville explains the development of the travelling rock tradition from Exod 17:6 and Num 20:8-11, through Psalm 78:15-16 (and its translations in LXX and Targum) and Wisdom 11:4, into the mobile rock tradition found prior to Paul, in Philo and the *Liber Biblicarum Antiquitatum*, and after Paul, in rabbinic material and *Targum Onqelos* on Numbers 21. Paul's novel addition to the tradition then is to interpret the rock as Christ (1 Cor 10:4). Belleville then expands on Richard Hay's suggestion that Paul is here rereading "the Exodus narrative in the light of Christology" (p. 135) and on Oscar Cullman's suggestion that John 7:38 also alludes to this rock

tradition and that possibly Paul and the Gospel of John are drawing on a pre-existing Christian tradition of Christ as the wilderness rock (p. 136).

In chapter nine, “Prophecy in Corinth and Paul’s Use of Isaiah’s Prophecy in 1 Corinthians 14:21-25” (pp.141-59), Roy Ciampa argues that Paul’s use of Isaiah 28:11-12 reflects “Paul’s missiological imperative” and “his emphasis on other-regard” (p.154).

David Stark aims to reanimate an old but now out-of-favour interpretation of 1 Corinthians 15:29 in “Baptism on Behalf of the Dead at Corinth—and in the Pentateuch?” (ch. 10, pp.161-77). For Stark, 1 Cor 15:29 “may be read as an allusion to Pentateuchal regulations for resolving corpse contamination (Lev 21:1-4; 22:4-6; Num 6:6-12; 19:11-22)” (pp. 161). This interpretation sees the baptism for the dead as ceremonial washing to address corpse impurity contracted through a burial. After a thorough discussion of arguments against and for this interpretation, Stark hones in on the coherence of such a background with Paul’s wider argument *vis-à-vis* the resurrection. How is it that the baptism for the dead would be nullified without resurrection (p. 172)? He discusses how 2 Maccabees 12 “implicitly describes . . . benefits that accrues to the living from actions they take in behalf of the dead”; that is, they avoid guilt for the sins of the dead and their care in burial is considered piety which qualifies them to be resurrected (p.173). Stark then seeks to integrate this allusion to washing for corpse impurity with Paul’s description of himself as a “dead” apostle in 1 Cor 15:30. Thus the baptism for the dead in 15:29 is a metaphor for the Corinthians’ baptism in response to the ministry of the dead apostles (pp. 174-75). Up to this point the essay had been largely convincing. Stark is right that this interpretation needs reconsidering but his last integrative move seems too convoluted when it would be so much simpler to take it literally as a reference to a ceremonial practice that in some way anticipates resurrection. If contextual factors render that unlikely then the argument may fall at that hurdle.

Chapter 11 contains an even more original thesis, David Burnett’s “A Neglected Deuteronomic Scriptural Matrix for the nature of the Resurrection Body in 1 Corinthians 15:39-42” (pp. 187-211). Burnett starts with the critical observation that the creature list in 1 Cor 15:39-42 follows the same order and similar vocabulary as the creature list in Deuteronomy 4:15-19; this is contrary to the usual suggestion of either Genesis 1 or popular Greek cosmology (pp. 187-89). This allows Burnett to examine the Deuteronomic concept of heavenly bodies as the gods or angels of the gentile nations (pp. 190-191) and its reception in early Jewish texts, such as Philo, Sirach and LXX Psalm 81[82] and its reception at Qumran. He then shows how this Deuteronomic “matrix” appears to inform Paul’s rhetoric at several points in 1 Corinthians (i.e., 1 Cor 8:4-6; 10:20-21; 12:2; 15:20-28, pp. 196-200). Finally, he makes the argument that the reference to celestial bodies in 1 Corinthians 15 clarifies the nature of the resurrection body in terms of the Deuteronomic creaturely matrix and an anticipated eschatological reversal where heavenly powers become mortal and those in Christ receive glorious heavenly (celestial) bodies themselves. Burnett thus makes a significant, original, and to my mind, compelling contribution to the understanding of the scriptural background of 1 Corinthians 15 and to Pauline theology, anthropology, and eschatology.

The final essay is B. J. Oropeza’s “Corinthians Diversity, Mythological Beliefs, and Bodily Immortality Related to the Resurrection (1 Corinthians 15)” (ch. 12, pp. 213-47). Oropeza carefully outlines the various interpretive options regarding the Corinthians denial of the resurrection as well as the ways in

which Greco-Roman belief in a “survival of the inner-self after death could nullify belief in the resurrection” (p.216). He then further explores Greco-Roman myths around bodily immortality finding that while there may have been popular belief in the (bodily) immortalization of great heroes, “the general assumption is that normal humans are not of the same status as heroes” (p. 223). Thus, the Corinthians might not see their own resurrection as a corollary of Jesus’ resurrection. Oropeza then presents the reader with a “fresh reading” of 1 Corinthians 15 to demonstrate that rather than a single viewpoint, “more than one type of denial [of the resurrection] is at stake” (p. 224). This is a thorough and convincing argument; however, it is frustrating that he does not appear to be aware of the two chapters in the volume that connect most closely with his work, namely the chapters by Keener and Burnett. This is an example of a wider issue with the volume as a whole. There is little sense of being a seminar, that the authors have been working together and engaging with each other’s ideas and wrestling with the same concerns. Perhaps most pertinently, this issue is reflected in the diversity of method, terminology, and criteria utilised between the different essays.

This book represents an important stride forward in appreciation of Paul’s use of scripture in 1 Corinthians, even as it leaves room for further investigation in a number of areas. I would expect to see engagement with many of these essays in any future commentaries on the letter. In particular the importance of Deuteronomy to 1 Corinthians, and perhaps Paul in general, suggests itself as a suitable topic for a substantial research project. There is an unevenness to the volume in terminology, method, length and thoroughness of treatment. Equally, some topics are covered repeatedly while other possible questions, e.g. Gen 2:24 in 1 Cor 6:16, are given only minimal treatment. Thus, the book presents as a snapshot-in-time of scholarly conversation rather than a cohesive reference work. As Christopher Stanley states in the afterword, “Taken together, these essays elucidate hidden resonances between the language of 1 Corinthians and the text of Scripture that show the extent to which Paul was indebted to his ancestral Scriptures even in a letter where biblical references are less apparent” (p.250).

This book is less suitable for the non-specialist as it uses biblical Greek and German without translation in the main body of the text (although the German is present mainly in the first essay). Despite this technical orientation, notes are presented at the end of each chapter, instead of more helpful footnotes. On the other hand, a subject index (including modern authors), and an ancient source index considerably facilitate the use of the volume for research. The book is an attractive hardback, well printed on thick paper in a readable font.