



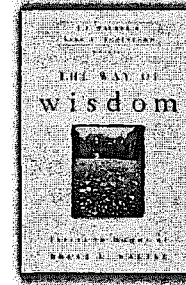
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BOOK REVIEWS



***THE WAY OF WISDOM:
ESSAYS IN HONOR
OF BRUCE K. WALTKE.***

J. I. Packer and Sven K. Soderlund, editors
Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000
332 pages, cloth, \$29.99.

Attainment of a seventieth birthday is a happy event, and when it is a scholar's birthday, the blessings often spill over to all who will avail themselves of them in published *Festschriften*. *The Way of Wisdom* celebrates Bruce Waltke's productive career as professor, author, and pastor, whose academic trail has led him to his present role as Professor Emeritus while chairing the Old Testament department at Reformed Theological seminary, Orlando, Florida.

A delightful quality of a *Festschrift* is the variety of essay topics that appeal to many interests. This tribute to Waltke offers several essays that will find use in any pastor's library. It consists of nineteen essays by prominent evangelicals, each scholars in their own right. Each essay, many fewer than twenty pages, includes endnotes attached at the close of the essay.

J. I. Packer provides a fitting introductory essay, "Theology and Wisdom," that examines the significance of uniting scholarly discipline and wisdom. John Sailhamer, always stimulating, does not disappoint with his essay ("A Wisdom Composition of the Pentateuch?"). He shows how the Pentateuch's present shape reveals that poetic seams link large narrative portions within the book, spanning the whole Pentateuch.

In honor of Waltke, it is fitting that the editors retained Hebrew and Greek script instead of transliteration in essays where authors appealed to the languages. Two essays that frequently provide the Hebrew texts they discuss are Walter E.

Brown's "Noah: Sot or Saint? Genesis 9:20-27" and David J. Montgomery's "A Bribe Is a Charm."

Before commenting upon selected essays, it is fitting to identify a few others of note. Elmer A. Martens' rich Mennonite heritage exudes from his essay, "The Way of Wisdom: Conflict Resolution in Biblical Narrative." William J. Dumbrell is confident that "The Purpose of the Book of Job" is to be found in God's speeches, especially in 42:7-9, though his essay does not presume to offer the definitive solution. Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. and Roger R. Nicole contribute essays that address wisdom and marriage. Ian W. Provan contributes his "The Terrors of the Night: Love, Sex, and Power in Song of Songs 3." Ronald Youngblood's "The Fall of Lucifer" corrects "folk theology" that derives a doctrine of Satan directly from Isaiah 14:12-14.

Though other essays could be mentioned and all deserve attention, three essays attracted my close scrutiny as one whose field of study is New Testament and Theology. Two essays carefully critique contemporary beliefs concerning Wisdom and Christology. Karen H. Jobes and Gordon D. Fee contribute significant statements challenging two entrenched theological assumptions. Jobes exposes the exegetical and methodological flaws modern feminism employs to construct its Sophia Christology. Fee points out the tenuous textual support and the flawed logic that has led renowned scholars to embrace the notion that Paul advocates a "Wisdom Christology."

Jobes scrutinizes Elizabeth A. Johnson's work as she demonstrates the many flawed assumptions, assertions, and exegetical miscues that lead to Sophia Christology. She shows that Sophia in Proverbs 8:30 does not have a creative role as feminists argue. Jobes demonstrates that Jewish Hellenistic literature has no monolithic concept of Sophia. Instead, modern feminists have forged a construct by gluing together imagery from disparate texts. They have also committed the basic fallacy of equating the grammatical feminine gender of the Hebrew (*hokmâ*) and Greek (*sophia*) nouns with human female sexuality.

Fee methodically demonstrates that Paul's alleged "Wisdom" texts (1 Corinthians 1:24, 30; 8:6; & Colossians 1:15-

17) hardly supports J. D. G. Dunn's case for "Wisdom Christology." Instead, these passages, understood within their contexts, lead to opposite conclusions. At issue is Dunn's interpretation of what Paul means when he expressly calls Christ "the Wisdom of God" (1 Corinthians 1:24) and identifies him as the agent of creation (1 Corinthians 8:6).

Not the first essay in the book but first to catch my eye because of the title is "Historical Contingencies and Biblical Predictions" by Richard L. Pratt, Jr. I expected biblical interaction with open theism, but there is none. Perhaps the fact that he wrote the essay in 1993 as his inaugural address at Reformed Theological Seminary explains interaction with process theism but not open theism. Yet, in view of the meteoric rise of open theism since that year, it is somewhat surprising that Pratt did not rewrite portions to avoid the appearance of aiding and abetting open theism. Consider the following: "Instead of looking at biblical predictions as statements of what *must* be coming, one should view them as announcements of what *might* be coming. As has been seen, with rare exception, OT prophets did not speak of a fixed future but of a potential future" (195). Later he states, "Instead of looking for how actions today fit within a fixed future, we should explore how actions today *affect* the future. In a word, we should be less concerned with *foreknowledge* of the future and more concerned with the *formation* of the future" (196).

Despite such statements, part 2 of the essay is particularly intriguing as it shows that prophetic predictions are of three types: (1) qualified by conditions; (2) qualified by assurances; and (3) without qualifications. Yet, is *prediction* the best category? For example, is prediction the best way to categorize Isaiah's words to Hezekiah (Isaiah 38:1)? It is true that Isaiah's prophetic words grammatically have the form of prediction. However, because prophecy has varying *functions*, would not the semantic function provide a better category to guide Pratt's discussion.

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**AMERICA'S REAL WAR:
AN ORTHODOX RABBI INSISTS
THAT JUDEO-CHRISTIAN VALUES
ARE VITAL FOR OUR NATION'S SURVIVAL**

Rabbi Daniel Lapin

Sisters, Oregon: Multnomah Publishers, 1999

362 pages, cloth, \$20.00

Daniel Lapin is an Orthodox rabbi; author and host of a syndicated talk show. He was born in South Africa in 1947 and studied theology, physics, and mathematics in London and Jerusalem. Rabbi Lapin immigrated to this country in 1974. He founded Kerem College, a traditional Jewish men's school in Santa Clara, California. In 1978, with the assistance of noted author and film critic Michael Medved, Lapin established the Pacific Jewish Center, a now legendary Orthodox synagogue in Venice, California.

In addition to the aforementioned Michael Medved, Rabbi Lapin has appeared and cooperated with a number of Jews, of various degrees of religious observance. These would include: David Horowitz, who during the sixties was a leader of the New Left, became disillusioned, and now is a well-known conservative cultural activist; Dennis Prager, host of one of the highest-rated talk shows in Southern California; and Barry Farber, who is called the "father of talk radio," speaks eighteen languages and has covered news events in trouble spots around the world. Daniel Lapin and his colleagues are dedicated to strengthening the conservative movement by linking it to its Judeo-Christian roots and by building a political alliance between Jewish and Christian conservatives. The book under review is a building block toward that effort.

In chapter 1, "Why Would a Rabbi Ally with Religious Christians?" Lapin clearly disavows "any notion of theological compatibility between Judaism and Christianity." However, "a weakened Christianity in America threatens all Americans, including Jews" (12). Rabbi Lapin describes the extent that

the secular left and the cultural elite has influenced our society. To the charge that "the religious Right is trying to force its values down our throats," he responds that liberals "demand that the concerns and sensitivities of every group in America must be taken into account—with the sole exception of the concerns of America's Christians" (36).

Chapter 8, "Origins and Destiny," touches on a subject most evangelicals are currently familiar—evolution. Rabbi Lapin's study of physics in his early years gives him special insight into the extent that scientism has impacted our culture. "The presumptuous teaching of materialistic evolution is one of the proofs that there is indeed a war going on in America" (53). Mentioned is Phillip Johnson, who teaches law at the University of California Berkeley.

Johnson became interested in the creation/evolution debate when he discovered the defenders of Darwinism to be lacking a sound philosophical base. The "Intelligent Design" movement, which has been closely identified with Johnson, has attracted support from a diverse group of faith communities—biochemist Michael Behe, who is Roman Catholic; Eastern Orthodox philosopher John Mark Reynolds; and mathematician David Berlinski, who is Jewish. Lapin makes it clear that the debate is not between religion and science. It is "between two competing and incompatible belief systems, one religious and Judeo-Christian, the other secular and materialistic" (54). If accepted by a majority of Americans, either system would produce completely different societies.

In part two, "Reaffirming Our Roots," the point is made that Jews should take pride in the fact that many cities and towns across this nation bears names taken from the Old Testament. Lapin does a better job of identifying the Judeo-Christian roots of this country than do most secular historians. In chapter 17, "America: A Unique Haven for Jews," the point is made that "nowhere else in the world . . . have Jews lived in such comfort and safety for such an extended period of time" (113-14). Although anti-Semitic discrimination still occurs (Ku Klux Klaners, "skin heads"), it happens at the fringes and does not represent the country as a whole.

In part three, "Rebuilding Our Foundation," Lapin examines what observant Jews and traditional Christians have in common and where we disagree. Concerning the latter, "there is no such thing as a Judeo-Christian theology. The two theologies are quite separate, distinct, and in many ways incompatible" (141). Both groups do share a common moral heritage, however. On such issues as abortion, euthanasia, homosexuality, and school choice, Jews of Daniel Lapin's persuasion are more comfortable with orthodox Christians than with liberal, secular Jews. The "common moral heritage" that orthodox Christians and observant Jews share has as its epistemological basis "natural law" (Reformed Protestants read "General Revelation"). Natural law can be found throughout the founding documents of our republic and informs the thinking of such public figures as Supreme Court Justices Clarence Thomas and Robert Bork. (This legal tradition, with its impact on philosophy, theology, and political science is treated by J. Budziszewski in *Written on the Heart: The Case for Natural Law*.)

Part four, "Recognizing Our Dilemma" looks at the makeup of the American Jewish community. Questions such as who is a Jew and differences between Orthodox, Conservative and Reform Judaism are addressed. Rabbi Lapin examines Jewish guilt and discusses why many American Jews are attracted to, and work with such liberal groups as the ACLU and the radical feminist National Organization of Women. The whole issue of the holocaust and its impact on history and the Jewish people is discussed. There is a very moving treatment of Corrie ten Boom and her books, *The Hiding Place* and *In My Father's House*. Lapin states that the ten Boom family's efforts to save Jews "were directly motivated by their belief in Jesus." In her words, "Lord Jesus, I offer myself for Your people. In any way. Any place. Any time" (330). In part five, "The Road Back," Rabbi Lapin offers some observations as to how we can restore the moral balance upon which this country was founded.

This book is not an effort to blur theological differences between Jews and Christians; no mushy, minimalist ecu-

menicity here. However, Lapin and his Jewish colleagues are quick to make common cause with Christians with whom they share the same moral values. (In fact, Daniel Lapin has appeared at many events with evangelicals and was affectionately dubbed the "Christian Coalition Rabbi.")

I would have preferred more endnotes indicating sources for topics discussed. Also, an index of persons and subjects would have been helpful. These criticisms, however, do not detract from the overall worth of this book. Rabbi Daniel Lapin has produced a significant work. He and his observant Jewish associates should be welcomed by evangelicals as allies in the battle for values in our country. May their tribe increase.

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