

thesis of Luke's apologetic portrait of Rome's military (p. 3), she not uncommonly overreaches evidentially. A case in point is the Roman soldier of Acts 28:16, whom she places in category two rather than one. She suggests in the light of 28:31 that "the presence of a Roman soldier [of 28:16] may have actually emboldened Paul" (p. 122). This is highly doubtful.

The study raises other methodological and interpretive questions. Methodologically there is at points an overreliance on mirror reading various textual details of Luke-Acts in a quest to provide a composite portrait of its authorial audience (e.g., pp. 24, 175). From an interpretive point of view, moreover, her views regarding the parabolic exemplum role of soldiers to Luke's audience (chap. 6) and Luke's larger interest in promoting a positive view of the Empire (e.g., p. 175) are both debatable. With regard to the parabolic exemplum role of Roman soldiers, Brink concedes that the majority of Luke's soldiers do not become disciples. Indeed, it is only two centurions in Luke-Acts who exhibit faith: the unnamed centurion of Capernaum (Luke 7:9, whose faith Jesus commends) and Cornelius, who embraces the gospel along with those present (Acts 10). With regard to Luke's larger interest in promoting a positive view of the Empire with his optimistic expectation of Imperial benevolence, she concedes that this was not realized until the edict of Milan of A.D. 313 (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 8.17), which raises the question of its relevance vis-à-vis the alleged interests of the author of Luke-Acts. While Brink's study exhibits some weaknesses, it is nonetheless a serious and sustained attempt to address a much-neglected topic and is recommended for those working in the Gospels and Acts, particularly Luke-Acts.

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Karl Weyer-Menkhoff. *Die Ethik des Johannesevangeliums im sprachlichen Feld des Handelns*. WUNT 2/359. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014. Pp. xiv + 306. ISBN 978-3-16-152792-0. \$100.00 paper.

This is a slightly revised version of the author's dissertation completed in 2012/13 at the University of Mainz under Ruben Zimmermann. The author endeavors to unearth the ethic of John's Gospel by performing a semantic field study. Weyer-Menkhoff plausibly contends that John does have an ethic over against those who claim John is devoid of ethics because he does not adjudicate specific ethical questions or provide general principles such as the "Golden Rule" or a catalog of virtues and rules of conduct such as the Sermon on the Mount. In fact, the author maintains that far from constituting a deficiency in John's ethical presentation, his broad outlook constitutes a remarkable achievement.

In essence, according to Weyer-Menkhoff, John's ethic revolves around the performance of "works of God" (*erga tou theou*). Such works are to be performed "in God" (John 3:21) and form the basis for divine judgment (John 3:19-21). God "gives" people works to do and expects them to perform these "works of God" (John 6:28), that is, works *assigned to them by God*. The author rightly

recognizes the uniqueness of the term “sign(s)” in John as referring to works exclusively performed by Jesus. At the heart of John’s ethic stands the incarnate Logos, who pursues God’s rather than people’s approval (*doxa*), ultimately at the cross (pp. 163–84). His followers, likewise, must pursue God’s rather than people’s approval. By following Jesus’ example, they share in his relationship with God (John 17:22). In particular, Jesus’ example (*hypodeigma*) is one of love (John 13:15). The author also notes the tensions between divine sovereignty and human responsibility and between the active and the passive nature of human conduct in John’s Gospel and stresses the importance of faith resulting in appropriate action.

By way of assessment, Weyer-Menkhoﬀ’s contribution has some value but is limited due to the following weaknesses.

(1) For the most part, the author’s conclusions are sound as far as they go, though hardly earth-shattering. On the whole, the work traverses well-known territory in Johannine studies.

(2) Weyer-Menkhoﬀ’s bibliographic control pertains primarily to German sources. He seems to take his primary cue from the work of his mentor (as well as Jan Van der Watt) but unfortunately misses important relevant English contributions. For example, he does not refer to Richard Hays’s standard text *The Moral Vision of the New Testament* (San Francisco: Harper, 1996), including his important discussion of Johannine ethics. He also shows no awareness of Miroslav Volf’s treatment of “Johannine Dualism and Contemporary Pluralism,” *Modern Theology* 21 (2005) 189–217, or of chapter 13 on “The Johannine Love Ethic” in my *Theology of John’s Gospel and Letters* (BTNT; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009).

(3) With regard to method, the author’s employment of a semantic field study approach is helpful. Yet problems arise when Weyer-Menkhoﬀ adds that his work is not historically oriented (p. 64) and thus intentionally disregards authorial intent and the Gospel’s first readers. Limitations such as these may seem imperative for dissertations, but in my view a text-only approach coupled with a complete disregard for the historical dimension of a given work constitutes a severe limitation. *Whose ethic are we seeking to discover? In what historical context was this ethic operative? What is the historical relationship between the ethic of Jesus (a historical person) and the ethic propagated by the author of John’s Gospel, especially because the latter claims to have been one of Jesus’ closest followers (e.g., 13:23; 21:24–25)?* Weyer-Menkhoﬀ extols the “immanence of the read text” in contrast to the “dead corner” of the historical-critical method, regarding the “death of the author” as a “literary virtue.” However, in my judgment it is improper to pit text against history in the hermeneutical process; both are inextricably intertwined and should be the object of investigation.

(4) While on the whole the inductive focus on the text of John’s Gospel is commendable, Meyer-Wenkhoﬀ’s work is characterized by a degree of “tunnel vision.” The author does little to compare and contrast John’s ethic to the ethic of the other canonical Gospels. Also, insufficient attention is given to the way in which the ethic promulgated in John’s Gospel relates to that found in John’s letters. A comparative study of John’s ethic and the ethic of the OT (especially with regard to love) would seem to be an essential ingredient of a full-fledged study of John’s ethic as well, especially since John demonstrably

takes his point of departure from OT theology at many other junctures in his theological formulations.

(5) Finally, on a related note, while the author rightly opposes reducing John's entire ethic to love, he may overreact and not give John's focus on love its proper due (devoting more than 70 pp. to *erga/sēmeia* but only a little more than 20 pp. to love). A close study of the narrative in John 13:1–30 and its place in John's Gospel as a whole would have been essential here. A comparison with the Matthean, Markan, and Lukan ethic would have further accentuated the unique way in which John makes love the centerpiece of his ethic.

For these and other reasons, Weyer-Menkhoff's contribution, while of some value, must be supplemented by other treatments of John's ethic, including those not referenced by Weyer-Menkhoff.

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Jonathan A. Linebaugh. *God, Grace, and Righteousness in Wisdom of Solomon and Paul's Letter to the Romans: Texts in Conversation*. NovTSup 152. Leiden: Brill, 2013. Pp. xii + 268. ISBN 978-90-04-25294-3. \$141.00 cloth.

In this revision of a doctoral thesis completed at the University of Durham under the supervision of John Barclay, the author brings into conversation the *Wisdom of Solomon* and Paul's letter to the Romans. Rather than working with abstracted and predetermined definitions of "grace" and "righteousness" and then moving to compare these two texts that both re-read Israel's Scriptures, Linebaugh treats each on its own terms in order to discern each text's distinct theological grammar.

In *Wisdom of Solomon*, Linebaugh argues that Wisdom orders the proto-logical order, providing symmetry and upholding creation's coherence. What to do, then, with the observation that often the wicked flourish and the righteous suffer? Eschatology is the answer here, for in the end, God saves the righteous. God saves them by his mercy and grace, though this is also seen to be fitting, for the righteous are "worthy" of this divine gift. It is not that the righteous "earn" their final salvation or deserve it. God's gift, rather, is one that fits the cosmic logic according to Wisdom's ordering of creation. It remains "gift," because it is unearned, but Wisdom guarantees a fit between gift and recipient. "In this theological context an act of grace or a divine gift is an *unearned*—non-contractual, voluntary—though explainable—fitting, congruous—benefaction" (p. 50). In this, *Wisdom* very much reflects "normative antique practices of gift exchange" whereby the wise see to it that there is a fitness between gift and the one to whom a gift is given.

The good news for Wisdom is that the godly will, in the end, be blessed and the ungodly judged. In fact, the godly will be delivered from the ungodly (p. 82). And the Jew / gentile distinction matches the distinction between godly / ungodly, righteous / unrighteous, non-idolater / idolater. For Linebaugh, it is precisely *Wisdom's* configuration that Paul challenges in Romans, in which he argues that there is no distinction between Jew and non-Jew. All humans