

2007

Book Review: 1 Chronicles

Jason K. Lee

Cedarville University, jasonlee@cedarville.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.cedarville.edu/biblical_and_ministry_studies_publications



Part of the [Biblical Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Lee, Jason K., "Book Review: 1 Chronicles" (2007). *Biblical and Theological Studies Faculty Publications*. 156.
http://digitalcommons.cedarville.edu/biblical_and_ministry_studies_publications/156

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@Cedarville, a service of the Centennial Library. It has been accepted for inclusion in Biblical and Theological Studies Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@Cedarville. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@cedarville.edu.

demeanor of the foreman, for she was at least permitted to glean until the owner arrived" (p. 211). Perhaps she did notice something. Another example, "Boaz's field was also likely not too large nor the workers and other gleaners too many for everyone to have been within earshot" (p. 217). Regarding the night scene when Ruth approaches Boaz, Wilch states, "Naturally, he will have conducted his interrogation in a whisper so as not to make matters embarrassing by arousing others through loud talk" (p. 285).

Most of the examples listed above and in the book are harmless, but in a few cases I begin to wonder what principles were guiding the author's path from interpretation to theology and application. For example, scholars have long noted the betrothal scene in chapter 2 and its importance for the book. Wilch describes the betrothal scene and then continues, "The whole book of Ruth may be termed a Christotelic betrothal scene" (p. 248). Apparently, his reason for labeling it "Christotelic" is that David, an ancestor of Christ, has no betrothal scene in Scripture. "Within the canon as a whole, it appears that the account of Boaz and Ruth is a substitute for what their greater descendant lacked" (p. 249). Following the comments about David, Wilch includes an entire paragraph on Jesus turning the makings of a betrothal scene with the Samaritan woman "into an evangelistic opportunity" (p. 249). The paragraph has no connection with the book of Ruth except for the topic of marriage, and I am left wondering what "Christotelic" entails. Is any random connection between different people in the lineage of Jesus "Christotelic?"

John Wilch does a thorough job of interpreting the book of Ruth—so thorough that it leaves almost nothing for the reader to ponder. There is a wealth of homiletical material for pastors. It is rich with data on the Hebrew text for beginning students. There are lengthy theological discussions for those who share the evangelical Lutheran perspective of the author. Despite the book's strengths, the lack of clear principles of interpretation somewhat undermines its value.

Kent A. Reynolds
University of Wisconsin, Madison, WI

1 Chronicles. By Ralph W. Klein. Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006, xxi + 562 pp., \$55.00.

1 Chronicles is a valuable addition to the Hermeneia series. The series intends to be a critical and historical commentary on the Bible. This volume demonstrates these concerns with attention given to textual criticism and literary matters along with the anticipated historical-critical remarks and careful reconstructions of the historical setting. Klein's comments reflect his careful study of *1 Chronicles* over the past several years.

The side-by-side column format of the volume (familiar to readers of other Hermeneia volumes) not only looks more attractive, but also provides the best layout for presenting the careful textual notes that accompany Klein's translation. The textual notes are a veritable treasure of variant word forms, alternate readings, and comments on the comparative manuscripts from the Septuagint or 4QSam or the Masoretic text. After the section on translation and textual notes, Klein provides a section on "Structure," which serves as an overview for the focus passage. He then includes "Detailed Commentary" to provide his particular insights on a given passage. This section follows the outline of the "Structure" section and provides a verse-by-verse exposition of the text. Klein typically groups key phrases for his comments, providing fluidity for his narrative while still allowing close comments on the text. The detailed commentary is comple-

mented by footnotes replete with thorough secondary references. Klein also places his detailed interactions with the secondary material in the footnotes, preserving the narrative flow of the main body. The formatting of the commentary allows a place for the components of a scholarly commentary while achieving a readability that surpasses many of its literary peers.

Klein's attention to the historical details of the biblical text is demonstrated in his 230 pages dedicated to the genealogical material of 1 Chronicles 1–9. An example of how he deals with textual and historical questions can be drawn from his comments on chapter 1. Klein notes that many scholars attribute all or parts of 1 Chronicles 1 to secondary sources, i.e. later additions. Klein ascribes the entire chapter to the Chronicler because of the close similarities of the materials with the *Vorlage* of Genesis with alternating pattern of linear and segmented genealogies. In addition, he changes the Chronicler makes to his Genesis *Vorlage* relate to making a theological point; for example, the reversal of the order of the sons of Ishmael and Keturah occurs because the Chronicler intends to prioritize the descendants of Abraham. Then, in an attempt to address historical questions, Klein provides historical and geographical information on the various tribes of the descendants of Ishmael and Keturah. He also provides helpful overview flow charts and tables throughout the genealogical material.

Roughly half the commentary is dedicated to the material of 1 Chronicles 10–29. The primary literary form of this material is narrative, and Klein provides less in the way of historical reconstruction and more in the way of theological insight. However, the differences between the first half and second half of the commentary can be described as a differing emphasis based on the biblical material rather than as a direct contrast within the author's approach. Chapter 14 provides a prime example of how Klein manages the narrative material of 1 Chronicles.

In his comments on chapter 14, Klein demonstrates his insights into the differences between the Chronicler's text and his *Vorlage* of Samuel. Klein notes that in the presentation of the events the Chronicler is motivated by "literary or theological reasons" not presenting "historical reality." According to Klein, the Chronicler intends to contrast Saul (not seeking the ark) and David ("the ark seeker") and to show the blessings of David's faithfulness. Klein continues, "The new literary position for the two battles against Philistines" focuses attention on Jerusalem and allows for the ark's peaceful entry into Jerusalem (p. 339). Klein's comments conclude with some final observations about the theological and literary purposes of the Chronicler depicted in word revisions, reordering of the narrative events, and the additions of narration to the Samuel text such as in 1 Chr 14:15–17.

Klein provides some insight on the enigmatic statement of 1 Chr 21:1 of Satan inciting David to number the people of Israel. Klein, contra Sailhamer and Wright, proposes that the Chronicler uses "Satan" as the spiritual archenemy, not simply a human adversary. The Chronicler thus provides further reasoning for David's digression from his typical practice of trusting the Lord for military achievement. Klein also indicates that David puts the entire nation at risk by not relying on the Lord.

Klein holds that the Chronicler's interest in 1 Chronicles 17 (the Davidic promise) is clearly on Solomon. He argues that the omission of the statement about committing iniquity in 2 Sam 7:14b from the Chronicles narrative is an effort to present Solomon as the recipient of the divine promise. Solomon will be the recipient of the divine kingdom and will be the son of the Lord based on the "adoption formula" (p. 381).

Some readers may find it puzzling that with all of Klein's interaction with secondary sources that he does not interact more with the messianic interpretations of 1 Chronicles 17 that have been offered by Christian interpreters throughout history. Even if Klein's interpretation limits the Chronicler's focus to Solomon, one would still anticipate some indication of the rich discussion of this text with a view to messianic themes.

As Klein does not comment on any messianic images in chapter 17, the reader should not be surprised that messianic themes do not figure prominently in Klein's proposals for the main purposes of 1 Chronicles. Klein gives little room for the Messiah as an abiding interest for the Chronicler. In fact, he even wonders if the Chronicler retains a more subdued hope in a restoration of the monarchy (p. 48).

Klein's thorough work clarifies the various verbal and literary techniques that the Chronicler uses to reveal his interests in Israel, the temple cult, and the Davidic kingship. Through reordering the source material, careful choice of synonyms, and inserting key phrases and observations, the Chronicler has given insightful commentary on the books of the Hebrew Bible from Genesis to Kings. Klein's commentary alerts the reader to many of these devices and provides a cogent assessment of how the Chronicler constructs his intended meaning.

Jason K. Lee

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Ft. Worth, TX

Septuagint Research: Issues and Challenges in the Study of the Greek Jewish Scriptures. By Wolfgang Kraus and R. Glenn Wodden, eds. SBLSCS 53. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006, xv + 414 pp., \$49.95 paper.

The field of Septuagint studies has been growing over the last few decades, as several new issues have arisen. This edited volume, then, is a much needed work that addresses many of these recent issues. The book comprises twenty-one essays written by Septuagint scholars from around the world, many from Continental Europe and North America. Most of the authors are involved in the two major LXX translation projects: the *New English Translation of the Septuagint* (NETS) and *Septuaginta-deutsch* (LXX.D). All the essays were originally presented as papers at a Septuagint studies conference in September 2002 at Bangor Theological Seminary. The volume is structured in four parts: (1) "Prolegomena concerning the LXX as Translation and/or Interpretation"; (2) "Issues concerning Individual LXX Books" (including articles on Genesis, OG Joshua, 2 Esdras, OG Job 1:8b, Amos, and OG/LXX Zech 1-6); (3) "Comprehensive Issues and Problems concerning Several LXX Books"; and (4) "Reception History of the LXX in Early Judaism and Christianity." While many of the articles are written very clearly, much clearer than I had expected, the topic itself is complex, making the volume suitable only for those who are fairly acquainted with the issues and technical language of Septuagint studies. (I would not recommend this book to someone with very little or no prior knowledge of the subject.)

Instead of commenting briefly on each essay, I will say a general word about each of the four sections in the book. The first section, "Prolegomena," was to my mind the most helpful. The four essays written here explore the nature of the Septuagint translation, namely, whether the LXX was intended to be an independent literary work or a translation always dependant and subservient to the original Hebrew (see esp. pp. 22-25, 64-70). The debate is well known, and the authors give an astute analysis. The articles by Boyd-Taylor ("In a Mirror Dimly") and Pietersma ("Exegesis in the Septuagint") give a good overview of the issue. Ben Wright ("Translation as Scripture") argues that based on Philo and the *Letter of Aristeas*, the Septuagint began as a translation but later functioned as an independent literary work (esp. pp. 53-57). Overall, the essays in this section were very clear and could benefit someone who wants to go beyond what is said in the standard introductions concerning the nature of Septuagint translation.