

use in this devotional, but given the proximity of the shared publisher and the same general editor it is probable that most, if not all, of them come from the commentary series. As such, this work shares both the strengths and weaknesses of the series. One is drawn in by the rich diversity of connections to fellow Christians throughout the ages, while at the same time frustrated by the lack of context of the sometimes cryptic quotes. Also, as in the commentary series, the vague method of referencing—giving only the title of the ancient work cited—makes it difficult to locate the quote in the original source for further investigation.

The first Christian commentary (the Gospel of Mark) to be published was not cited at all in this present work. This is, no doubt, following the patristic lead of giving Matthew priority, followed by John. As in the Lectionary and several florilegium Gospel commentaries of late antiquity, all gospel readings come from Matthew except when a pericope is found only in the other Gospels. Thus John, having the most independent material, is second most frequent in use. A Lukan passage is used only twice: the exclusive birth narrative in Luke 2 (35) and the road to Emmaus story of Luke 24 (113). This is the kind of awareness that allows one to visualize the biblical material from a perspective more similar to that of the early Fathers.

The reflections themselves read like a florilegium when taken together, allowing the reader to see some of the best of spiritual commentary that the early church has to offer. I used this devotional in personal worship last spring from Epiphany through Lent to Easter. The experience enabled me to see the spiritual side of many of the authors that I generally study from a theological and ecclesiological angle. Some authors who are cranky and downright ornery when in church political or theological battle become much more well-rounded characters when standing together with them before God in worship. Ambrose of Milan, for instance, seems much more human when overheard in the act of worship (82, 89) than when one is reading of his manipulations of the martyr cults to enhance the authority of the bishops. Novation, who is usually my least favorite author, reflects similarly to me when speaking of submission to the Holy Spirit for the purpose of being changed in sanctification (177). Scholars can benefit professionally from using such a devotional: to see those historical figures that are the objects of our study as being erring, yet worshiping, humans like ourselves.

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Grindheim, Sigurd. *The Crux of Election: Paul's Critique of the Jewish Confidence in the Election of Israel*, WUNT 202. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005. 280 pp. Paper, €49,00.

This book is remarkable for its broad coverage of secondary literature and fresh insights. The author's expertise in the OT and Second Temple Judaism is especially impressive.

The introduction sets forth the thesis of the book, which is, as the title suggests, that Paul critiques Jewish confidence in Israel's election based on

the principle that the author describes as a “reversal of values.” By reversal of values, Grindheim means the biblical concept of election that tends to contradict human expectations and preferences. He argues that Paul’s concept of reversal of values derives from the cross and that it is consistent with the OT. Chapter 1 investigates the OT concept of reversal of values from three standpoints: Israel was unworthy at the time of the election; Israel’s false security concerning its election led to its rejection and exile; and God’s promise is that Israel will be delivered from its rejected state. Grindheim concludes that on all three points divine election contradicts visible evidence.

Chapter 2 argues that Second Temple Judaism sharply deviates from both Paul and the OT in its conception of divine election. On the one hand, Second Temple Judaism generally understands election as being based on the ethical quality of the elect. On the other hand, it defines the ethical quality (i.e., righteousness) as obedience to the Law. In this chapter, Grindheim examines *Sirach*, *Enoch*, *Jubilees*, *Psalms of Solomon*, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, DSS (*The Treatise of the Two Spirits* [1QS 3:13–4:26], *The Thanksgiving Hymns*, and the *Damascus Document*), and the works of Philo. Grindheim’s discussion of these materials seems to turn on two Calvinistic axes: predestination and human free will. He argues that Second Temple Judaism misunderstood and misrepresented the gracious character of divine election because it was predicated on human initiative and performance of the law. Grindheim notes that Philo may have been somewhat of an exception to this rule.

The focus of chapter 3 is Paul’s discussion of his elect status in 2 Cor 11:16–12:10. Grindheim argues that Paul opposes his opponents’ election theology because their boast about their elect status places them outside of God’s mode of salvific operation. God’s mode of salvation is through weakness and suffering. The most interesting feature of this chapter is the discussion of 11:16–12:10 (88–100) against the backdrop of the Greco-Roman genre of the Fool’s Speech. This genre, particularly the street variety, employed the character of a fool to mimic and poke fun at the main character (89–90). According to Grindheim, Paul uses the genre of the Fool’s Speech in 11:16–12:10 to ridicule his opponents and to set suffering and weakness as the new standard of ministry. The chapter concludes by noting that Paul’s opponents focused on “a visible status claim” (106), an obsession with “that which appears impressive in the eyes of human beings” (108).

The basic argument in chapter 4 is that, in Phil 3:1–11, Paul rejects his credentials of covenant membership as credentials of the flesh and, instead, embraces the sufferings of Christ. Accordingly, Paul’s implied criticism of his opponents in this passage is that they fail to conform to the new standard of ministry established by the cross. The author concludes the chapter by reverting to the notion of visible versus invisible, as discussed in the previous chapters. Chapter 5 is a detailed study of the ways in which reversal of values is expressed in Rom 9–11. The main thrust of the author’s argument in this chapter is that God elects those who are unelectable. Grindheim sums up the reversal in Rom 9–11 as follows: “It is through judgment that all Israel will be saved” (139). Accordingly, the author argues that chapters 9–10 depict Israel under judgment

and chapter 11 depicts Israel saved. Grindheim rejects the scholarly opinion that there is conflict between chapters 9–10 and chapter 11. In the midst of its trespasses and hardening, Israel will be found in a position to receive divine mercy. Grindheim opines that the term “all Israel” in Rom 11:26 denotes a unified eschatological entity that no longer suffers from a division between the remnant (i.e., the believing) and the hardened (i.e., the unbelieving).

Chapter 6 argues that “the principle of reversal of values” (169) is attested in all Pauline letters, both disputed and undisputed. The chapter seems to break down Paul’s concept of “reversal of values” into three basic components: invisibility of divine election; rejection of Jewish confidence in Israel’s election; and suffering in conformity with Christ. Chapter 7 concludes the book by reiterating the points laid out in the introduction: Paul attacks the confidence of the Jews by reversing the values attached to election; Paul’s concept of election is consistent with that of the biblical prophets, but differs sharply from the law-based concepts of election found in Second Temple Judaism literature. In the final chapter, entitled “The New Perspective on Paul,” Grindheim attempts to distance himself from the so-called new perspective. Against Sanders, he argues that Paul’s theology of election “cannot be subsumed under the category of staying in” (198) because Paul defines covenant membership in terms of suffering and humiliation. In other words, Paul’s discussion of election cannot be characterized as a new variety of covenantal nomism. Against Dunn, he argues that, in attacking the false confidence of the Jews, Paul did not promote universalism, but a cruciform concept of election.

Grindheim’s book is a brilliant contribution to Pauline scholarship. This book, however, suffers from two weaknesses. First, Grindheim’s argument of “visible versus invisible” suffers from a lack of clarity. The notion that divine election occurs in contradiction to visible evidence pervades this book. Chapter 1 concludes on the note that the OT concept of election is contrary to the visible (32-33). In chapter 4, Grindheim describes “[the opponents] pedigree, their tradition, and their law observance” as “the visible realm of the flesh” (133). In chapter 6 (169-194), he argues that the theme of “visible versus invisible” is attested throughout Paul’s letters, particularly in Colossians (189). In the concluding chapter and the chapter on “The New Perspective,” he repeatedly states, without explaining, that reversal of values means rejection of the visible (195-200). In spite of the repeated use, the meaning of the term “visible” remains unclear throughout the book.

It appears that at times the author equates visible with advantageous (cf. 108). While I agree that there were sociopolitical differences between the status of Christianity and Judaism in the first-century Roman Empire, I disagree with the author’s insistence that the Jewish status claims were “visible” (196) and that Paul’s Christian status claims were “invisible” (196). It is difficult to imagine that a disadvantageous social status is somehow less visible or apparent or demonstrable (195) than its more advantageous counterpart. In fact, in some ways, the status of a homeless person wandering the streets is more visible or apparent than that of the president in the White House. Apparently, the author agrees; he writes: “The prophetic word regarding election contradicts

the *visible* reality of exile and *apparent* rejection” (22, emphasis supplied). There is little doubt that Grindheim is saying something of extreme importance with the word “visible,” but its exact meaning eludes the reader. It would have been helpful if the author had provided a crisp definition of the word “visible” in the introduction since it plays such a vital role in his book.

The second area of weakness is the definition of the term “values.” The author’s central thesis is that Paul’s election theology advocates a “reversal of values.” And this phrase—“reversal of values”—apparently means a critique or rejection of Jewish confidence. Grindheim states: “The aim of this study is to understand only one particular aspect of Paul’s thought: his critique of *Jewish confidence* in the election of God” (2, emphasis supplied; cf. 3, 167). This is an attractive and, in many ways, brilliant thesis. But as the book progresses, it becomes increasingly unclear what Grindheim precisely means by “reversal of values.” Does it mean a reversal of God’s election itself; mistaken values imposed on election by the Jews; or the basis upon which God elects his people? Grindheim dabbles with all three possibilities, which muddles his thesis.

For example, in n. 106 on p. 133, he writes: “[W]hat Paul rejects is not simply his own works; [but] also *membership in the elect people*” (emphasis supplied). This statement is confusing because it seems to imply that Paul rejected not simply the Jewish misunderstanding or confidence about covenant, but the value—therefore the *reality*—of the Jewish covenant. If the latter is what is meant by reversal of values, it clashes with the author’s own thesis and goes against his (and Paul’s own) affirmation of the reality and value of Jewish election (29-33, 159, 161, 200; cf. Rom 11:1, 28). Indeed, Grindheim vacillates when he equivocates: “Paul both denies and affirms the value of Israel’s election” (168). Grindheim needs to decide whether or not, in the mind of Paul, the election of the Jews has value in and of itself.

The meaning of the phrase “reversal of values” undergoes further mutation in chapter 5 when Grindheim associates it with God’s nature. He avers: “The reason for God’s inclusion of the Gentiles does not lie in their desirability but can *only* be explained as a manifestation of *God’s tendency* in his election to do the opposite” (164, emphasis supplied). Besides the fact that the word “only” in this sentence is an overstatement, this statement ties reversal of values to the nature or tendency of God to do the opposite of human expectations. In n. 36 on p. 145, Grindheim states: “God’s election runs *contrary to expectations* and manifests a *reversal of values*” (emphasis supplied). In other words, God consistently chooses contrary to whatever humans think is valuable (cf. 194). According to this view, reversal of values occurs, apparently, not because our values are mistaken or sinful (as on 133), but primarily because it is God’s nature or tendency to reverse whatever values we might hold about things. This raises several troubling questions. First, is God’s election really dictated by a mechanical “logic” (145, 161)? Second, would not, then, God’s election be dependent on our ethical quality? Grindheim asserts that “God’s election is unrelated to the ethical quality of the elect” (144, n. 33). But this point is neutralized by the statement that “there is a pattern in God’s freedom, the pattern of opposites” (145, n. 36). If it is God’s consistent *pattern* to choose

those that are ethically unacceptable, then his choice cannot be “unrelated” to the ethical quality of those whom he elects. Quite to the contrary, the notion of a divine pattern actually makes God’s election entirely dependent on the undesirability of the elect. Indeed, Grindheim implies such divine passivity when he states: “In his call, God *follows* the pattern of reversal of values” (157, emphasis supplied). It is highly doubtful that Paul’s point in Rom 9–11 is that God passively *follows* a particular pattern or logic of choice in his election.

In this book, Grindheim has certainly proven that some sort of reversal takes place in divine election. It would have been immensely helpful if he had explained with greater clarity what is being reversed.

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Heinz, Hans, and Daniel Heinz. *Das Christentum begegnet dem Islam: Eine religiöse Herausforderung*. Zürich, Switzerland: Advent-Verlag, 2007. 160 pp. Paper, €9,50.

The book *Das Christentum begegnet dem Islam: Eine religiöse Herausforderung* (“Christianity Encounters Islam: A Religious Challenge”) courageously delves into an array of subjects that a few decades ago were of concern primarily for missionaries in Islamic areas. The wave of Muslim “guest workers,” refugees, and immigrants in Europe in recent years has not only served as a catalyst to a certain Islamic renaissance and, on some occasions, aggressive fundamentalism, but also forced Europeans to reconsider their own democratic rights, social laws, and positions on religion and freedom of the press. This new climate has unleashed an array of critical debates in the public forum in the wake of severe tensions, confrontations, and even serious violence and killings. The authors (father and son) address this topical issue and suggest that a better understanding of Islam as a religion, its beliefs, and observable lifestyles, will be a step toward forging a more peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims.

It is amazing how much information and interpretation the authors have managed to cram into 120 pages of text, not to overlook the appendices that on their own offer another forty pages of well-researched material. There are more facts and knowledge pressed into this booklet than many other heftier books on the same subjects. *Das Christentum begegnet dem Islam* addresses the most important religious and cultural events that Islam and Christianity encountered in their more than 1,400-year history. A thorough exploration of Muslim tradition and history is coupled with meaningful references to contemporary church history. The book opens with the early pre-Islamic Church Fathers’ struggles on defining the nature of Christ and concludes by considering the often-resultless endeavors of Seventh-day Adventist approaches to Islamic people and the Islamic context.

Numerous issues are dealt with directly and make for interesting reading. Extensive references to the Bible and the Koran provide some fascinating and even surprising interpretations and conclusions. Confrontational issues are critically examined, matched by fair arguments that reveal the standpoint