

phenomenon points to the fact that the ancient Hebrew language does not manifest that particular usage. I also find his explanation of God's "coming down" at Babel (Gen 11:5-7) and the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 18:2) somewhat lacking. He notes that these events are "best understood as anthropomorphic language that stresses the focusing of the divine intention on a special act" (110). While this may be true, there may also be more involved.

Issues such as I pointed out above, however, are minor. Pastors, teachers, and others seeking a rich study on the majesty of God will be amply rewarded by reading this book.

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Klingbeil, Gerald A. *Bridging the Gap: Ritual and Ritual Texts in the Bible*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007. xiv + 304 pp. Hardcover, \$37.53.

Gerald Klingbeil's *Bridging the Gap* is a courageous first attempt at comprehensively presenting the interface between study of biblical rituals and a wide variety of disciplines, especially including social sciences and ritual theory. Given the complexity of ritual and the wide range of approaches to this phenomenon, his task is a daunting one.

Following Klingbeil's Introduction in chapter 1, chapter 2 introduces and defines basic concepts and terms, chapter 3 provides a social-science perspective of ritual, and chapter 4 introduces the study of biblical ritual texts, including problems involved in their interpretation. Chapter 5 presents a unique and informative history of interpretation of biblical rituals and ritual texts, beginning with critique of ritual by the Hebrew prophets and continuing with interpretations of ritual in Second Temple period Judaism, early Christianity, medieval Christianity, the Protestant Reformation, theological thought after the French revolution, and the modern and postmodern age, with particular focus on evangelicalism. Chapter 6 outlines a strategy for reading ritual, and situations that can trigger the need for rituals. Chapters 7 and 8 demonstrate analysis of rituals in light of important ritual elements. Chapter 9 describes the polyvalence of ritual by looking at various dimensions and functions of ritual. Chapter 10 connects ritual study to other areas of biblical and theological research, and chapter 11 provides a brief summary with concluding comments. An appendix, which attempts to comprehensively list pentateuchal ritual texts and to categorize them in terms of his methodology, is followed by a bibliography and indices of authors, Scripture, and other ancient sources.

Aside from interacting with scholars of biblical ritual, Klingbeil aims to "introduce university and seminary students to the neglected field of ritual studies within the larger context of biblical and theological studies" (1). This implies the function of an introductory textbook. Indeed, the volume has several characteristics of a successful textbook, such as comprehensive scope; definitions of concepts; diagrams; summaries at the ends of chapters; writing that is often engaging; abundant references to resources for further study; historical reviews of relevant literature, containing many instructive critiques

and syntheses; and principles to guide valid methodology. Such principles include consideration of order and structure in rituals and ritual texts, priority of inner-ritual analysis before comparisons with other rituals, balance between comparison and contrast, and taking the final form of a ritual text as the starting point for interpretation.

To enhance the book's effectiveness and make it more accessible for beginning students of ritual in a future edition, Klingbeil could consider adding a subject index, translating a few German terms into English (e.g., 10, 123), and clarifying some diagrams containing elements that are not adequately explained (e.g., 13). He appropriately begins with definitions of key concepts, but perhaps he could think of immediately illustrating aspects of his definition with reference to one or more particular rituals. Then he could show how a basic methodology for identifying ritual meaning and function in rituals, as reflected in ritual texts, flows from his definition, again illustrating with specific examples (cf., e.g., my *Ritual Dynamic Structure*, Gorgias Dissertations 14, Religion 2 [Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2004], 60-93); idem, *Cult and Character: Purification Offerings, Day of Atonement, and Theodicy* [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005], 15-24). This way the reader would understand the basics of ritual and how to read a ritual text, at least according to Klingbeil, before moving on to further elucidation of ritual elements, dimensions, functions, history of the discipline, contributions from other disciplines, and so on.

As it is, the book succeeds in laying out the wonderful complexity of ritual study from various angles, but a student would be discouraged and hard-pressed to know how it all fits together in his or her investigation of a particular ritual or ritual text. Because Klingbeil regards cultural and religious context as the determinant of ritual meaning, and understanding such a context often requires "advanced studies and skills" (52), it is implied that only a specialist can ascertain the correct meaning of a biblical ritual.

If Klingbeil concentrated more on explaining and illustrating the relationship between ritual activity and attached meaning, as differentiated in ritual texts, he would simultaneously cut through a lot of "fat" and encourage students by showing where they can focus to reach solid basic interpretations of biblical rituals, even if they do not possess advanced skills in all the disciplines that can enhance one's understanding of ritual. Then students would be ready to supplement their perspective, without losing their bearings, by relating basic ritual meanings to the various other social dimensions and interpretive approaches that Klingbeil has outlined so well. Such an approach would greatly facilitate his laudable dream of expanding ritual study in the theological seminary curriculum (244), which would expand understanding of ritual theology in the church and help worship leaders "to devise creative modern ritual acts that will communicate effectively to a visual generation" (237).

It is impossible for Klingbeil to cover all aspects of ritual study, but he could more precisely explicate some key Hebrew terminology (e.g., *kipper*, "purge") involved in goal formulas of ritual texts, which are crucial for ascertaining ritual meanings/functions. Concerning accuracy in interpreting

biblical rituals, Klingbeil's book could profit from some other enhancements. For example:

1. Klingbeil suggests that in Lev 8, "the atypical *qtl* verb forms may actually indicate to the reader a pause in the sequential performance of the ritual or a rearrangement of the setting of the ritual. It may also point to a parallel execution of a particular subrite with subsequently (or previously) described rites" (153). This is interesting, but unnecessary because the *qtl* forms can better and more simply be explained as stylistic in the language of the description: they appear in disjunctive clauses that begin with, and thereby emphasize, direct objects that are contrasted with the objects of ritual action in preceding clauses. For example, v. 15 reads: "and the (rest of the) blood (by contrast with the blood daubed on the horns of the altar), he poured out (*qtl* verb) at the base of the altar." Similarly in v. 17, the rest of the bull, by contrast with the suet burned on the altar, is incinerated (*qtl* verb) outside the camp. In v. 20, the body of the ram, by contrast with its blood, is cut up (*qtl* verb), and in v. 21, Moses washes the entrails and shins, by contrast with the parts of the animal already burning on the altar. In v. 26, Moses took (*qtl* verb) various grain items from the basket of unleavened bread, by contrast with taking parts of the animal. I do not see any indication of ritual pause or parallel performance in these instances.

2. Klingbeil says that on the Day of Atonement, blowing the horn "seemed to mark the beginning of the ritual activities" (197). This horn blast on the Day of Atonement (Lev 25:9) only signaled commencement of the Jubilee year of release that occurred every half century. There is no indication that it was performed in other years or served to mark the beginning of ritual activities.

3. Klingbeil describes the sevenfold aspersion of blood in the inner sanctum on the Day of Atonement as going "on the ark of the covenant" (Lev 16:14-15) (55). Rather, it is in front of the ark, which means that the blood falls to the floor and purges the area of the inner sanctum.

4. I am happy to see that Klingbeil interprets purification offerings throughout the year as accomplishing purification of the guilty parties, pending a further stage of purging the same sins from the sanctuary on the Day of Atonement (141-142). However, I am disturbed by his concluding sentence regarding the Day of Atonement (Lev 16), immediately after he has described the ritual of Azazel's goat, which reads: "YHWH's forgiveness is practically illustrated" (142). There is no forgiveness in Lev 16 or any other text relating to purgation of the sanctuary and community on the Day of Atonement. Rather, this is a stage of atonement beyond forgiveness (see my *Cult and Character*, 233-235).

5. Regarding Lev 16:16, Klingbeil regards the "impurities" as comprising the "acts of rebellion and all their sins" (210). No, it is important to recognize that the physical ritual impurities are a separate category of evil (see my *Cult and Character*, 286-302).

Klingbeil's initiative and considerable effort have given us a major contribution to progress in biblical ritual studies. For intermediate and advanced students of biblical ritual, and even for specialists, the book

expands consciousness, bridges gaps, and stimulates reflection. For the benefit of subsequent offerings by scholars of ritual, it provides a starting point, a benchmark, and a target for constructive criticism, which is the purpose of the present review. We have needed such an introductory volume for a long time. Perhaps the prospect of criticisms, such as those that I have offered, has previously prevented anyone from taking on such a daunting task. But somebody had to begin somewhere, and Klingbeil should be heartily commended for sacrificially braving the fire for the benefit of all.

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Knoppers, Gary N., and Bernard M. Levinson, eds. *The Pentateuch as Torah: New Models for Understanding Its Promulgation and Acceptance*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007. 352 pages. Cloth, \$59.50.

As a result of the July 2-4, 2006, International Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature held in Edinburgh, a collection of some essays presented there now appears as *The Pentateuch as Torah: New Models for Understanding Its Promulgation and Acceptance*, ed. Gary N. Knoppers and Bernard M. Levinson. The focus of this volume is on examining the complex issues surrounding the development of the Pentateuchal law, its historicopolitical philosophy and socioreligious impetus in light of Achaemenid and Hellenistic imperial interests. In other words, these essays attempt to explore the composition of the Pentateuch, its promulgation, transnational or international significance, re/interpretation, translation, recognition and also acceptance and application. The question which lingers in anyone's mind is, how close does *The Pentateuch as Torah* bring us to the resolution of the recurrent problems cited by scholarship on the role of the Torah from the Persian period onwards?

The editors of *The Pentateuch as Torah* presented an introductory essay that not only surveys the development of the Pentateuch into Torah, but also highlights the contribution of each essay included in this book. Besides the introductory essay there are 14 essays by different scholars. These essays are appropriately grouped into four parts which address specific issues with regards how the Jewish Torah was viewed or tolerated by different colonial powers. The essays here evince a deliberate interdisciplinary approach to addressing questions on the promulgation and publication of the Hebrew Bible Torah in diverse historical settings. The Dead Sea Scrolls, Septuagint, Samaritan Pentateuch, Elephantine texts and other ancient Near Eastern legal texts are explored in light of the law collections of the Pentateuch. I will review the fifteen essays in the order they appear in *The Pentateuch as Torah*.

The introductory essay by editors Gary N. Knoppers and Bernard M. Levinson, "How, When, Where, and Why did the Pentateuch Become the Torah?" starts out by informing us on the developments which led to the compilation of the book *The Pentateuch as Torah*. Knoppers and Levinson raise distinct questions on the Pentateuch especially on its composition, promulgation, scope, provenance, transmission, authorization, interpretation, translation and application. These questions seem to be the focus on the