to remain open to the movement and operation of the Spirit and not feel bound to the presentation.

Two short chapters (17–18) encompass Part 4, "The Word Embodied in the Listeners." The author laments that some congregations are so quiet that "preaching feels like dropping words into a black hole in space" (p. 160). In order to counteract this so that people leave impelled to live what they have heard, Day suggests that the preacher actively create a culture of expectation and learn to interact, even celebrate, with the audience. Finally, the author deliberates on different responses once the sermon is finished. These include, but are not limited to, prayer, affirmations of faith, praise, communion, and what amounts to a call for commitment.

This volume has much to commend it. It is peppered with exercises dealing with pertinent points. This makes it very practical. It also challenges preachers to use the methods and at the same time, not neglect sound exegesis and balanced theology. Furthermore, it employs useful public speaking techniques without degenerating these into mere rehearsal; such freshness is to be appreciated. Finally, numerous excerpts from actual sermons enhance and illuminate the several points put forward in each chapter. Nevertheless, attention to certain factors will warrant a warmer embrace of this work: (1) both an index and bibliography will prove helpful. (2) While much emphasis is levied on the narratives, other genres are largely neglected. How do preachers embody those? (3) The examples provided are decidedly from the New Testament, and then overwhelmingly the Gospels. Referencing the Hebrew Bible will attain a wider, more in-depth scope, especially since so many preachers use that testament. (4) Finally, while it is important to understand modern culture I believe that Day overstates the claims for using soap operas and popular TV and the arts in preaching. This runs the risk of people perceiving the preacher as overindulging in the empty calories of moral junk food. The sermon does not have to become another form of entertainment. Indeed, one may respectfully agree with Day's disclaimer in preaching the visual arts, "I freely concede that I am not an expert and that this chapter may border on the impertinent" (p. 130).

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Who Were the Early Israelites and Where Did They Come From?, by William G. Dever. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003. Pp. xi + 257. ISBN 08028-4416-2. US$ 18.00.

In this book, Dever discusses the origin of Israel by comparing archeological evidence with data found in the biblical text. Standing midway between

the historicists and the skeptics, he examines his own findings and those of other scholars to evaluate biblical assertions and concludes that the cradle of early Israel is not Egypt but Canaan.

Dever divides his work into twelve chapters. In the first two chapters, he argues that, while archeology endeavored to save the Bible from 19th century criticism, it has resulted in more frustrating questions. He identifies Ramses II (1290–1224 B.C.) as the Pharaoh of the Exodus instead of Thutmosis III (1447 B.C.), and finds the Exodus story too long, too disjointed, and too detailed to fit in anything other than the composite authorship of J and E, to be dated to the seventh century B.C. He further asserts that the ten plagues and desert miracles were either natural phenomena or myth—"scarcely credible for the modern readers" (p. 15).

In chapters three and four, Dever argues that since the Philistines settled in Canaan around 1180 B.C., mentioning them as a threat (Exod 13:17–18) is unrealistic. Some of the Bible cities including Hormah (Tel Masos), Bethel (1 Sam 30:27), and Ziklag (1 Sam 27:6) were small villages whose artifacts date from around 1225 B.C. The conquest of Canaan and Arad, as well as the settlement of northern Edom before the Late Bronze Age is precarious. Incidents on the western side of the Jordan may be characterized as more or less genocidal. The destruction of Tanaach, Megiddo, Jokneam, Kadesh and Gezer in the 13th and 12th centuries B.C. was done by Pharaoh Merneptah (and thus not the Israelites). Hazor is the only city with signs of a violent destruction by the Israelites in the 13th century B.C.

In chapters five, six, and seven, the author discusses facts about the heartland of Israel. At Raddana (Beeroth), a 13th century B.C. potsherd with a reference to biblical Ahilu[d] (1 Kgs 4:3, 12) was recovered. Giloh (Josh 15:51) revealed Iron II defenses and collared-rim jars. At Izbeth Sartah (Ebenezer), a Bronze Age sherd with a Hebrew inscription was recovered. Shiloh—with a 17th–16th century B.C. city wall, abandoned in the Late Bronze Age, resettled in the 12th century B.C. and again destroyed in a huge fire around 1050 B.C.—evidenced collared-rim store-jars of the 12th century B.C. Regarding Mt. Ebal, Dever disagrees with Adam Zertal who sees evidence of its cultic function dated to the late 13th century B.C. Dever interprets the "numerous animal bones," "several store-jars," "ashes," and "burnt bones of several kinds of animals" as indicators of a picnic site. He says excavations done from the 1960s to the 1980s reveal occupation of strategic areas by Canaanites until the Iron Age II period. Furthermore, the excavations reveal that Israelites were sparsely settled on the ruins of Late Bronze Age sites (p. 99). His tabulation of the Iron Age II period assemblage portray a sedentarized Hebrew culture: village houses, long experience with the

problems of agriculture in Canaan, and (due to the absence of pig bones) adherence to biblical prohibitions.

In chapters 8–10, Dever summarizes the views of various schools. Yehezkiel Kaufmann suggested that "'Israelite religion was an original creation of the people of Israel'" (p. 129). The German archeologists (e.g., Alt and Noth) advocated a "peaceful infiltration" or favored the "amphictyony theory" (pp. 129–30). American "Biblicists" argue that Israel was a blend of exodus pastoralists and "other people from somewhere within Greater Canaan" (p. 132). Others stick to the revolt model of a rebellious "Apiru" and still others to a "much longer settlement-history of Palestine" (p. 133). European revisionists regard Israel's biblical history as a "misconception" (p. 137), "a social construct" (p. 138), "a piece of 'pious propaganda' (pp. 139–40), stemming from the identity crisis of Jews living in Hellenistic Palestine" (p. 140). Some Israeli scholars settle for "an amalgam of different ethnic groups" (p. 144), a protracted time span, a symbiosis within Canaan, and "a contingent of the Shashu Bedouin" (p. 150). Finally, Dever observes areas where archeologists agree (pp. 153–54), and where they disagree (pp. 154–55) and, furthermore, points out the similarity of the Hebrew language and culture to those of Canaan.

In chapters eleven and twelve the author proposes that "proto-Israel," the "direct progenitor" of the biblical Israel, lived among the northern people of the Iron Age I period (p. 194). He questions the historicity of the battle of Deborah against Sisera (Jdg 4; Josh 11) because of the lack of evidence. He admits that "the writers of the Hebrew Bible clearly knew something about the diverse population of Canaan in the early Iron Age I period, and even before that in the Bronze Age" (pp. 220–21). While he argues that newer evidence ought to be used to reconstruct the history of Israel, Dever observes that the writers were well-intentioned and their accounts contain some objective truth: promise, exodus, and the Promised Land. He maintains that authentic archeology is not anti-Semitic and argues that it is untenable to posit modern Palestinians as owners of the land, since both Israelites and Palestinians are descendants of the Bronze Age inhabitants. In spite of emotions over Israel, "the reality of ancient Israel is just such a fact," he admits (p. 241).

Dever's attempts at impartiality are not particularly convincing. Although he states that "ancient Israel were a real people, in a real time and place," for him "ancient Israel" is "proto-Israel," and the "real place" is Canaan. His objective—drawing sensible conclusions "in the modern sense" (p. x)—seems to be antithetical to his proposition to read the biblical text with "no 'preconception'" (p. x). Because of this objective he sometimes leans more towards a naturalistic explanation when facts seem to be in

harmony with the biblical text. Zertal, for instance, understands Mt. Ebal—in harmony with the biblical text—as a cultic site. Dever prefers another solution and interprets it to be a picnic site.

Second, Dever mentions the recovery of a Late Bronze Age pottery sherd from Izbeth Sartah with a Hebrew inscription, together with other epigraphic and historical data that points (at least) to the presence of Hebrews in the 13th century B.C., even though he negates the basic historicity of the biblical text. In the light of these apparent discrepancies, it appears too early to suggest that archeology may "be the primary source of new data for rewriting Israel's early history" (p. 167). Perhaps an "interdisciplinary approach" (James K. Hoffmeier, *Ancient Israel in Sinai. The Evidence for the Authenticity of the Wilderness Tradition* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2005], 24), including faith-based narratives, could be a reliable basis for establishing biblical facts.

Third, Dever admits that an attempt to find "rational explanations" may "miss the point of the biblical narrative" because biblical truth "is a matter of faith, not reason—nor archeology" (p. 16). Why, then, is he not in accord with Hoffmeier on the point that lack of evidence is not a plausible reason to dismiss the historicity of the exodus (Hoffmeier, *Ancient Israel in Sinai*, 2–8)? More reasonable to this reader is Hoffmeier's observation that the Bible, unlike other ancient texts, is sometimes unfairly approached with a postmodernist mind set (Hoffmeier, *Ancient Israel in Sinai*, 20). Furthermore, the absence of some Bronze Age Israelite artifacts may be attributed to the precarious nature of the materials (Hoffmeier, *Ancient Israel in Sinai*, 150). Finally, Israel's aniconism may ensue from prohibitions of the Israelite religion. Despite the above critical comments, Dever challenges the reader to keep abreast on issues surrounding the Bible and the material culture in which it was situated. As with most research, it is vital to compare his views with other archeological perspectives in order to develop a sustainable position.

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A Commentary on the Apocalypse of John, by Edmondo F. Lupieri. Translated from the Italian by Maria Poggi Johnson and Adam Kamesar. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006. Pp. xxx + 395. ISBN 978-0-8028-6073. US$ 36.00.

A Commentary on the Apocalypse of John is one among ten books authored by Edmondo F. Lupieri and is an English translation of the Italian edition *L'Apocalisse di Giovanni* (1999).