Jipp, Joshua W. *Pauline Theology as a Way of Life: A Vision of Human Flourishing in Christ*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2023. Pp. x + 278. Paperback $28.84, Hardback $41.

In recent decades, there has been a noticeable surge in interest in participatory theology in the writings of Paul. Notable works such as Susan Eastman's *Paul and the Person* (2017) and *Oneself in Another* (2023), as well as Michael Gorman's *Participating in Christ* (2019), have emerged as prominent voices advocating for the inclusion of participation in Paul's theological framework. While these scholars converge on the recognition of participation within Pauline theology, they diverge in their articulations of how participation manifests in Paul's perspective. In this monograph, Jipp presents a compelling perspective, seemingly aligning with participatory theology as he explores *Pauline Theology as a Way of Life* and its implications for understanding the divine life. However, Jipp chooses to characterize this concept not merely as participation but as a profound sharing in the very life and character of God.

Jipp introduces his thesis at the outset, positing that Paul's theological assertions serve the overarching purpose of delineating what it means for humanity to achieve flourishing, a state of living well and experiencing genuine happiness. Engaging in dialogue with both ancient philosophy and contemporary positive psychology, he offers nuanced perspectives on human flourishing, not only from Paul's viewpoint but also in comparison to and contrast with these intellectual traditions. Central to this argument is the notion that the ultimate goal bestowed upon individuals by Christ is participation in the divine life. However, Jipp contends that such participation necessitates a fundamental transformation, involving the abandonment of sin and the adoption of a moral framework reflective of Christ's character, thereby enabling individuals to partake in the eschatological resurrection life (p. 1). Furthermore, Jipp asserts that Paul's theological framework is rooted in the premise that the ultimate fulfillment of human existence lies in the person of Jesus Christ, who embodies God's revelation and enables humanity's participation in the life of God (pp. 6–9). While it is not difficult to acknowledge that God envisions that humans will eventually share in the life of God in the eschaton, which ancient philosophy and positive psychology align with the notion of human flourishing and the good life, in my estimation, it is still debatable whether this aspect constitutes a foundational pillar of Paul's theology or merely a facet of his broader theological schema.

Jipp structures his work into two distinct parts following the introduction. The first part delves into the perspectives of ancient philosophy (ch. 2)

and positive psychology on human flourishing (ch. 3). These two disciplines are considered relevant conversation partners because they both seek to provide insights into how humans can live well. Ancient philosophy pursues the question of what constitutes a good life through reasoning for humanity's *telos* or supreme good. It posits that the pursuit of wisdom serves to facilitate humanity in living a particular way of life (pp. 21–22). Positive psychology, which may be defined as the scientific study of the strengths and practices that enable individuals and communities to thrive, is committed to providing empirical data demonstrating how humans can achieve well-being and happiness (p. 55).

In ch. 2, his examination of human flourishing in ancient philosophy, which encompasses both Greek and Roman philosophical thoughts, Jipp focuses his analysis on key figures such as Socrates, Aristotle, the Epicureans, and the Stoics (p. 22). Through this exploration, he presents five central theses, summarizing that human flourishing entails a robust understanding of humanity's supreme good, the cultivation of virtue and character, the nurturing of positive relationships, the wise response to adversity, and the provision of guidance for good practices (p. 53). Jipp claims that Paul's concept of human flourishing intersects with that of ancient philosophy in certain ways. However, it is crucial to note that such convergence does not necessarily indicate a direct influence of ancient philosophy on Paul's anthropology. In ch. 3, on the other hand, Jipp's analysis of positive psychology on human flourishing is limited to contemporary moralists whose scholarly work revolves around the pursuit of happiness and flourishing. These include notable figures such as Martin Seligman, Jonathan Haidt, Ed Deiner, Robert Biswas-Deiner, and Christopher Peterson (p. 57). From their contributions, Jipp extracts five theses, elucidating that according to positive psychology, humans can flourish by utilizing and actualizing their character strengths, fostering meaningful relationships, navigating adversity and setbacks with wisdom, and adhering to principles conducive to living a virtuous life (p. 81). Noticeably, the foregoing findings show that ancient philosophy and positive psychology have almost the same perspectives on human flourishing. Such a convergence is not surprising, as many positive psychologists engage in dialogue with the wisdom of the good life provided by ancient philosophical traditions (p. 57).

The second part of Jipp's work addresses Paul's theology of the good life. He asserts that human flourishing necessitates divine transcendence in order to share in Christ's resurrection life (ch. 4), a transformed moral agency enabling individuals to think and feel in Christ's manner (ch. 5), love for the body of Christ (ch. 6), and spiritual practices that cultivate Christ's

character (ch. 7). Each of these elements constitutes a separate chapter discussion.

In ch. 4, Jipp argues that Paul's theology of human flourishing necessitates divine transcendence. Here he presents three thesis statements. Central to the first thesis is the assertion that "relation to the person of Christ is the singular way to achieve humanity's supreme good of sharing in the life of God" (p. 85, cf. p. 88). This finds support in Phil 3:2–16, where Paul emphasizes Christ's exclusive goodness, the pursuit of knowing Him, and the ultimate fulfillment of humanity's supreme good in the resurrection life with Christ. The second thesis focuses on death as humanity's fundamental predicament, with Jipp contending that it not only signifies ceasing to exist but also reverses God's intended purpose, threatening fellowship with God (e.g., Rom 5:12–14; 1 Cor 15:50–58; Eph 2:1–5). The third thesis asserts that Christ shares divine life with His people, explaining why He is considered humanity's sole supreme good; through His death, Christ eradicates humanity's inclination to sin, enabling individuals to experience life (1 Thess 5:10), while His resurrection life enables participation in the life of God (Rom 6:5, 8; 1 Cor 15:20–25). Jipp argues that while Paul, ancient philosophy, and positive psychology agree on humanity's pursuit of the good life, Paul diverges in two significant aspects. Firstly, human flourishing, for Paul, requires divine transcendence, with relation to Christ as humanity's supreme good. Secondly, this flourishing remains unattainable in its fullness within the present world, awaiting its ultimate realization in the eschaton (p. 109).

In ch. 5, Jipp elaborates on the concept of human flourishing in Paul's perspective, focusing on the necessity of a transformed moral agency. The chapter unfolds with the presentation of three thesis statements, each reinforcing the argument. Firstly, Jipp asserts that a debased mind signifies living death, contrasting with a transformed mind that signifies participation in the life of God (p. 123). He supports this assertion by citing Paul's use of φρόνησις language in his letters (e.g., Rom 8:5–7). Secondly, he posits that those in Christ possess an integrated moral agency tailored for participating in the divine life (p. 128). Here Jipp cites φρόνησις language again (e.g., Rom 12:3; Phil 2:4–5) to underscore a transformed moral agency. Lastly, he highlights Christ as the cornerstone for a new epistemology among believers. While Paul's notion of moral agency agrees with ancient philosophy and positive psychology on the supreme good—requiring aligning one's reasoning and desires with that supreme good—Jipp distinguishes his view. He argues that for Paul, sin has corrupted humanity and enslaved our desires and thinking, making transformation impossible apart from God's work to instill love for God and cultivate Christ-like desires, habits, and thinking (p.

145). And yet, while this transformation is a reality in the present, its perfected state awaits in the future (p. 147).

In ch. 6, Jipp underscores Paul's concept of human flourishing, emphasizing its dependency on harmonious relationships within the body of Christ. He presents three central theses: believers are a community related to Christ and to each other (p. 159), one unified people regardless of societal distinctions (p. 166), and the communal life of the church as an expression of Christ's love and hospitality (p. 181). Jipp notes that ancient philosophy and positive psychology align with Paul's view on this aspect of human flourishing, recognizing humans as socially constructed for good relationships with others (pp. 92–93). This agreement is evident in Christopher Peterson's claim that "other people matter" and Aristotle's emphasis on friendship as essential for flourishing. The best tangible demonstration of this is love among believers, anticipating their eventual sharing in God's full love (p. 200). However, Jipp remarks that Paul departs from both in that, for Paul, believers "only flourish together in the body of Christ" (p. 93).

In ch. 7, Jipp argues that spiritual practices occupy a pivotal role in Paul's concept of human flourishing, believing that these practices are instrumental in fostering the character of Christ within believers, thus facilitating their participation in the life of God (p. 201). Jipp outlines four key theses: the importance of actively pursuing Christ-like character (p. 202), the significance of sharing resources generously (p. 214), the necessity of enduring suffering faithfully and patiently (p. 219), and the value of worshiping God (p. 224). He underscores that these practices are essential in light of the eschatological transformation, wherein believers are destined to participate in the life of God (Rom 8:18–25). Following an exploration of these theses, Jipp draws parallels between Paul's perspective and views of ancient philosophy and positive psychology, particularly regarding resilience in the face of suffering and the practice of gratitude. However, he clarifies that, for Paul, patient endurance in suffering and gratitude, as well as the attitude of worship, stem directly from one's relationship with Christ (pp. 230–38).

In the concluding postscript, Jipp emphasizes once more that Paul's theology can be approached through careful consideration of Paul's concept of humanity's ultimate good: sharing in the life of God. This involves the essential steps of death to sin and transformation to align with the life and character of God, and ultimately participating in the eschatological resurrection life (p. 239).

Jipp's book offers a valuable and creative contribution to Pauline studies. His integrative approach, placing Paul in conversation with both an-

cient philosophy and positive psychology, succeeds in showing the perennial relevance to Paul's vision of life in Christ. At the same time, the work raises important questions regarding method and theological emphasis.

One strength of the book lies in its accessibility and clarity. Jipp's exposition of ancient philosophy and contemporary positive psychology is concise and lucid, enabling readers unfamiliar with these fields to appreciate their insights. His engagement with these perspectives demonstrates that Paul's theology cannot be reduced to an abstract system but addresses fundamental questions of human existence. Moreover, the pastoral orientation of the book makes it valuable not only for scholars but also for clergy and students.

A potential limitation of Jipp's work is its inclusion of contemporary positive psychology as part of the dialogue partners. Although this comparison generates fresh insights and makes the book interdisciplinary, it risks anachronism, importing secular categories of well-being into Paul's theological discourse. Such categories may unintentionally recast Paul's apocalyptic and Christocentric vision in therapeutic rather than eschatological terms. If so, the book's constructive synthesis, though valuable, should be read with caution to preserve the distinctiveness of Paul's thought.

In comparison with Michael Gorman, the difference becomes clear. Gorman argues that cruciformity—participation in Christ's self-giving death and resurrection—is the heart of Paul's theology. Whereas Gorman places the cross at the center, Jipp emphasizes flourishing as the telos. Jipp acknowledges suffering, but it appears primarily as a means toward the end of flourishing, whereas for Gorman, suffering and weakness are constitutive of participation itself. Susan Eastman likewise provides a different emphasis. Her work highlights the intersubjective and relational aspects of Pauline participation, showing how believers' identity is constituted "in Christ" and "in one another." Compared to Eastman, Jipp's flourishing framework may appear more teleological and less attentive to the dynamics of relational personhood in Paul's letters.

In my estimation, Jipp's work constitutes a valuable contribution to Pauline studies by reframing participation in Christ through the lens of human flourishing. This constructive approach provides a fresh angle that has not been fully explored and complements existing emphases on cruciformity and relational identity. While the study's methodological inclusion of contemporary psychology invites debate, its strength lies in showing how Paul's theology addresses fundamental questions of human existence with both theological depth and pastoral sensitivity. For this reason, the book will be of interest not only to scholars of Paul but also to theologians and

practitioners seeking to relate Pauline theology to contemporary concerns. Therefore, regardless of their academic or church status, any Christian can derive benefit from this work.

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Anderson, Gary A. *That I May Dwell among Them: Incarnation and Atonement in the Tabernacle Narrative*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2023. Pp. xvi + 254. Hardcover $27.05.

Gary A. Anderson, Professor of OT Theology at the University of Notre Dame, is one of the most renowned voices in contemporary biblical scholarship, especially when it comes to questions of atonement, incarnation, and cultic theology. In his latest work, *That I May Dwell among Them*, Anderson aims to reinterpret the biblical and theological foundations of the OT tabernacle model as a system that is not merely priestly functional, but profoundly incarnational. With this, Anderson positions himself against a long tradition of historical-critical interpretations that view the priestly law as a late, demythologized cult text (e.g., Julius Wellhausen). Instead, he shows that the priesthood of Israel reveals not only a cultic order, but also theological depths concerning incarnation and reconciliation (the contrast does not include the dating of Torah). This work is aimed at both exegetes and systematic theologians who are interested in a spiritually condensed reading of the Torah.

Central to Anderson's work is the assertion that the biblical cultic texts do not need to be externally overlaid with theological categories, but that these are already implicitly contained within them. The tabernacle, according to Anderson, is not merely a place of ritual purity, but a bearer of theological meaning: God makes Himself "dwelling" in a sanctuary built by humans—a theme that is profoundly incarnational for Anderson. In doing so, he bridges the gap between OT cultic theology and the Christological claim about the incarnation. Methodologically, Anderson works with a mixture of synchronic text analysis, typological interpretation, and patristic reception history. His confident access to the early Jewish as well as Christian interpretations is striking; he understands them not as later developments, but as theologically productive continuations of the Torah.