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Scott Davison, *Petitionary Prayer: A Philosophical Investigation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. vi + 189. \$75.

Scott Davison has written the most meticulous, sustained and systematic philosophical investigation in print of petitionary prayer in the context of the theistic tradition. The bibliography alone, with almost 300 entries, is an impressive guide to work in philosophical theology (mostly contemporary analytic, but also classical sources) on petitionary prayer and related topics in metaphysics, epistemology and value theory. Davison knows this sub-field of philosophy of religion well (thirteen of the entries in the bibliography are works by Davison), and his expertise is evident in each of the ten chapters. The work is tentative in its conclusion (chapter 10), as well as in its preface. Davison reports setting out to establish that petitionary prayer is pointless, but concludes with the proposal that it has many benefits of different kinds and that, while one may be a devout, practising Christian who forgoes petitionary prayer, nonetheless the practice may be integral to a philosophically defensible practice of this form of prayer. It should be noted straightaway that Davison rightly notes that petitionary prayer is only one of many forms of prayer (confessional, meditative prayers and so on), so his focus is not prayer in general but a particular practice that involve beseeching God to ‘give us this day our daily bread’ or, more particularly, please cure our mother of cancer. In the course of his investigation, Davison does not leave a stone unturned when it comes to testing accounts with thought experiments, narrative and biblical accounts.

If the book has a fault, and I am not sure that it does, it is that in the course of Davison’s refining of the concept of petitionary prayer, he presents us with a virtual blizzard of examples and counter-examples in terms of narratives and counter-examples. Consider this version of what Davison describes as the Contrastive Reasons Account of petitionary prayer:

S’s petitionary prayer provided God with some reason to bring about E, but God had independent and conclusive reasons for bringing about E, God’s desire to bring about E just because S requested it did not play an essential role in any true contrastive explanation of God’s bringing about E. However, it could have easily been the case that God’s independent reasons for bringing about E were not conclusive, and if that had happened, then God’s desire to bring about E, just because S requested it would have ‘tipped the scales’ to make God’s total reasons in favor of bringing about E conclusive. (p. 41)

This analysis, along with a myriad of other cases, is the result of very careful testing with ostensibly real and hypothetical cases of petitionary prayer. There is a useful table in the Conclusion (p. 165) in which Davison outlines eight major positions on petitionary prayer and the challenge each faces.

This book is definitely a landmark work on petitionary prayers in analytic theology, philosophical theology and philosophy of religion. It would have been interesting if there were more attention to cross-cultural philosophy of religion, feminist theology and other relevant contemporary concerns, but this should not distract from the value of this contribution.

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Stephen C. Russell, *The King and the Land: A Geography of Royal Power in the Biblical World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. xii + 286. £64.00.

The emergence of monarchical polities in the Near East was accompanied by a shaping of political and ritual geography. The literary works from scribal authors, many of whom were closely bound to the monarchy, encode how space was shaped as a projection of royal power. In this elegant and careful book, Russell examines how space and power were related to one another in ancient Israel. The book consists of a number of studies drawn from Israel's historical books.

The first chapter provides a brief methodological introduction by way of Solomon's temple to Henri Lefebvre's theories about space as a social product and Anthony Giddens' and Richard Blanton's theories about social actors and power. The second chapter examines David's claim to piety through the purchase of Araunah's threshing floor for cultic use (2 Sam 24). If the second chapter examines a case of ritual space being commissioned, the following chapter examines an example of decommissioning or ritual desecration: the destruction of Baal's Temple by Jehu (2 Kings 10:18–28). Russell discerns two different strands: one more aligned with the priestly literature and one with deuteronomistic concerns. In the fourth chapter Russell considers Absalom's appearance at the city gates winning the hearts and minds of the Israelites as a precursor to his rebellion against David. He shows how the city gate was the locus of the distributed collective power of the male citizens, but also a place where kings might seek to assert their power. Absalom seeks to leverage the Near Eastern ideal of the just king for the purpose of securing