

the loyalty of the cities' collectives. In the fifth chapter Russell shows how Hezekiah's organisation of the water system should be understood in the context of Near Eastern depictions of royal water projects. The shaping of Jerusalem's urban landscape evidences his success as a monarch.

There is much to commend about Russell's study. His readings are sensitive to the literary nature of the biblical text, though this is also combined with an awareness of textual unevenness and a willingness to present redaction-critical solutions when they are needed. Russell has read widely in the literature of the Ancient Near East and each chapter includes a number of important examples that give his book colour and shine significant light on the dynamics in the biblical text. The study is also well-documented: almost half the book consists of end-notes in a small typeface. Nevertheless, Russell has worked hard to ensure a readable text.

For readers unfamiliar with the contours of recent Old Testament scholarship, the most helpful discussion is perhaps his careful account of the relationship between the distributed collective politics of town and centralised royal power in his chapter on Absalom. Whilst scholarship in the 1960s and 1970s created romantic notions of a pre-monarchic egalitarianism subverted by the centralising tendencies of the Hebrew monarchies, Russell rightly paints a subtler picture of the interaction of town governance and centralised power. He insightfully describes the dynamics of power in Iron Age politics and the degree to which towns enjoyed a degree of self-governing independence. It is not only narratives in Samuel that will benefit from his insights, but also stories in Genesis, Joshua and Judges. If I had one disappointment with the book, it is that Russell concludes with just a summary of his findings. His careful study of cult, power and space has many potential implications for groups and individuals that value the Old Testament as scripture, it is a shame that Russell doesn't begin to indicate what some of those might be.

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Gregory Lee, *Today When You Hear His Voice: Scripture, the Covenants, and the People of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2016), pp. x + 314. \$30.00/£19.99.

The heart of this book is a constructive theological proposal concerning the authority of scripture. The Bible is authoritative, Lee contends, not chiefly

because it reliably reports what God said or did in the past, but rather because God uses such reports to speak directly to the people of God today. The meaning of a biblical text, therefore, is primarily a function of how God uses it to speak in the present, and not what it meant in its original historical or canonical setting.

Lee erects this account of biblical authority chiefly on the basis of his reading of the Letter to the Hebrews, and, in particular, on its method of handling citations from the Old Testament. The author of Hebrews describes the word of God as 'living and active' (4:12), and Lee demonstrates how this conviction informs the ancient writer's practices of interpreting scripture in light of Christ. For example, the author of Hebrews cites a passage from Psalm 95 that begins with the words, 'Today when you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts' (Heb 3:7–8). For the author of Hebrews, the admonition is a living word addressed directly by God to contemporary readers of his epistle; the original audience of the Psalm is scarcely in view. This contemporising perspective brings a host of consequences. It entails, for instance, a new understanding of the Psalm's reference to 'my rest' (Heb 3:11; cf. Ps 95:11), that is, the reward which God has promised his people. In its original context, the phrase refers to the Promised Land. For the author of Hebrews, in contrast, it refers to the inheritance of eternal life won by Christ, the mediator of the new covenant.

Setting aside the advisability of developing a model of scriptural authority on the basis of a single book, Lee is to be applauded for doing constructive theology in close conversation with biblical exegesis, and vice versa. That is not the limit of his ambition in this book, however. He also incorporates historical theology into his project. In fact, the whole first half of the book is given over to a detailed comparison of the views of Augustine and John Calvin on the relationship of the Old and New Testaments. Lee's chief interest in these chapters is announced by his book's subtitle, 'Scripture, the Covenants, and the People of God'. In two densely detailed chapters, Lee argues that on the topics in question, the similarities between Augustine and Calvin are outweighed in the end by their differences. For Augustine, the Christian Bible is a story about two fundamentally different covenants and two fundamentally different peoples, Israel and the Church, of which the former exists only in order to point to the superiority of the latter. For Calvin, in contrast, the Bible is a story about one covenant and one people, which exists in salvation-historical continuity, first as Israel and then as the Church.

Lee argues that the Letter to the Hebrews offers yet a third perspective that falls midway, as it were, between the views of Augustine and Calvin. With Calvin, Hebrews conceives the biblical narrative as a story about a

single people whose identity remains fundamentally constant from creation to new creation; with Augustine, Hebrews conceives God's history with this people as divided into two covenants of vastly different value. Thus Hebrews celebrates a single people in two radically asymmetric covenants, Old and New, and thereby offers an alternative to the views of both Augustine and Calvin. It is this distinctive vision of salvation history that undergirds the scriptural hermeneutics of Hebrews, and so, in turn, Lee's own proposal regarding the authority of scripture.

In the last two chapters of this six-chapter book, Lee develops the implications of his model of scriptural authority for a range of related topics. These include the necessity and limitations of interpretive freedom, the legitimacy of multiple senses of scripture, the place of historical criticism in the theological reading of scripture, the mode of God's self-revelation after the apostolic age and the relation of Scripture and tradition. Given the wide scope of topics addressed, it is not surprising that the level of discussion remains fairly abstract and concise.

In the end, this tantalising book would have accomplished more if it had attempted less. The organisation is unwieldy, and the central thesis strangely underdeveloped – indeed, hard to identify – amidst a proliferation of detail. Despite these shortcomings, the book gives ample evidence of a well-informed theologian with interesting things to say. It encourages us to hope for better things to come.

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Risto Sarrinen, *Recognition and Religion: A Historical and Systematic Survey* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 268. £55.00.

This year's Seeley lectures, hosted by the Cambridge Centre for Political Thought, were given by Axel Honneth, one of the leading proponents of using the concept of recognition to understand social and political formation. Honneth examined the role played by recognition in the three different philosophical contexts of Britain, France and Germany. Somewhat ironically, considering coincidental setting of the lectures in the Runcie Room in the Faculty of Divinity, there was almost no mention of the role of religion with respect to the concept of recognition. Christianity provided only a cursory negative foil in that, by the early modern period, it was increasing proving insufficient to foster social integration. It was in response