

The Bible as Political Artifact: On the Feminist Study of the Hebrew Bible. By Susanne Scholz. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2017. ix + 325 pages. \$39.00. doi: 10.1017/hor.2019.45

Creative, provocative, and meticulously researched, this study of the Hebrew Bible by feminist biblical scholar Susanne Scholz pushes the boundaries of traditional biblical scholarship. She dares to go where other academicians have never gone before—into the heart of the academy, the institution of higher education, and postbiblical societies as a whole. Scholz challenges cultural assumptions and pierces through the status quo thought of biblical scholars long considered to be “the giants” in the field. Instead of standing on the shoulders of her biblical predecessors, Scholz invites twenty-first-century biblical students and scholars to join her efforts to invigorate the field and redeem it from an untimely yet impending death.

Representative of Scholz’s work as a teacher, researcher, and writer for the past twenty years, the volume consists of three parts: “The Pedagogical Politics in Academia and Society,” “The Politics of Method,” and “The Politics of Hermeneutical and Cultural Alternatives.” The volume invites us to be aware of the shifting world around us, from the influences of the Christian Right to the contemporary debates involving Title IX. For Scholz, the Bible is not a book to be studied for knowledge about some ancient biblical world whose history is totally reconstructed. The Bible *is* a political artifact shaped by culture and capable of shaping culture today. It is a document that reminds us of who we were, how things may or may not have changed, where we need to go, and what needs to change if we want to live in a world that is “less out of sync, less violent, and less unjust ...” (xxi). For Scholz, the key is being able to interrogate critically one’s own position about “gender, misogyny, androcentrism, and heteronormativity in their various intersectional manifestations” (xxii). She is quick to point out that the Bible has everything to do with these issues even though many people remain unaware of this reality.

Drawing on the thought of Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, Scholz argues for a “radical-democratic” teaching model for biblical studies, one that “educates students toward an understanding of the complexities and challenges in our world. ...” (25). This model moves the field away from Schleiermacher’s nineteenth-century German historical critical model to bring the biblical text into dialogue with the political, social, intellectual, and religious struggles of the contemporary world. No longer can the once perceived “subversive” historical critical method be the method of choice because it now supports the political, cultural, and religious status quo. Scholz also critiques the *Wissenschaft* approach to the Old Testament and its adherence to modern

hermeneutical principles of objectivity, universality, and neutrality. For too long, German nineteenth-century scholarship has held captive twentieth- and twenty-first-century creative and challenging minds and has also kept the Bible in shackles itself.

Scholz's treatment of rape texts in the Bible is particularly compelling, especially because rape continues to be a major global issue. Scholz also addresses the corporate model that many institutions of higher education have adopted. She exposes the oppressive forces at work in this model, and emboldened by the Occupy movement, asserts that the time has come to "occupy" academic Bible teaching, institutions of higher education, and even society in general. She raises a game-changing question: "What ought the future of Bible and biblical studies to look like in Western societies, beyond Christian fundamentalist revival efforts?" (47).

Scholz presents and critiques the thought of biblical colleagues such as Ben Witherington, Carol Meyers, and Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza. She then delineates five reasons why feminist biblical studies is not the focal point of biblical studies, then argues that biblical studies is feminist studies, and vice versa. She unequivocally calls for the development of biblical studies as an international, interreligious, interracial, and intercultural intellectual field of research and "critical insight into the structures of domination as they pertain to biblical interpretation" (292).

Scholz's volume would have come to a more satisfying ending had she added a conclusion to pull together the golden threads of each chapter while pointing us to where the field still needs to go. But this criticism is minor compared to the breadth and depth of thought in the volume as a whole. I am delighted to say that this text is now required reading in all of my undergraduate Bible classes.

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Disarming the Church: Why Christians Must Forsake Violence to Follow Jesus and Change the World. By Eric A. Seibert. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2018. xix + 322 pages. \$40.00 (paper).
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In *Disarming the Church: Why Christians Must Forsake Violence to Follow Jesus and Change the World*, Eric A. Seibert makes a sustained case that followers of Jesus must reject violence, both in their personal conduct and in conduct by the state. Writing at a moment when some argue that teachers should be armed with guns to respond to school shootings and when