larger story of Christian scripture – for ethics, belief and human flourishing. Several refrains emerge, including the need to consider 'the whole biblical Story', the caution that we must 'begin at the beginning' (especially in Genesis 1–2) rather than reading from the New Testament backwards, the difference between description and prescription in narrative and the respective roles of church and state in the application of biblical teaching. While in some cases the discussion leads to particular conclusions about the issue at hand (e.g. slavery is wrong, no biblical warrant exists for viewing women as subordinate to men), more often Provan leads us to particular dilemmas thoughtful Christians must engage in light of scripture's unfolding narrative and the realities of life in a fallen world (e.g. the restraint of violence by way of violence *may* be warranted biblically, but what roles do the state, church and individual Christians have in this restraint?). Provan's purpose is 'to develop a consistent paradigm for interpreting Scripture ethically that will enable us to live the good life *now* – and indeed in the future, when facing moral challenges that we cannot yet envisage' (p. 288).

Provan's intent that this book should, to borrow the idiom he uses, 'teach *how* to fish' rather than simply '*give* fish' to Christian readers is a valuable contribution to the field of Old Testament interpretation and Christian ethics. The book's length (almost 400 pages, excluding notes) and scope (concurrently introductory, interdisciplinary and Old Testament-focused) might be prohibitive with regards to serving as a textbook for more general Old Testament, ethics or church history classes. At the same time, the writing is accessible and the subject matter important. Provan has provided excellent discussion questions at the end of each chapter, and one could easily utilise selections from the book as course readings if one were hesitant to use the whole. One great pedagogical strength of the book is its clear illustration of why and how Christian scripture and its right interpretation matters for life broadly – even for those outside the church. Readers (even Christian readers) will not agree with every conclusion or assumption Provan articulates, particularly regarding the 'hot button' issues with which he concludes the book. Nevertheless, *Seeking What is Right* offers an excellent starting point for thoughtful study and conversation about what 'the good life' God desires for God's people really is.

doi:10.1017/S0036930621000594

Reinhard Feldmeier and Hermann Spieckermann, *God Becoming Human: Incarnation in the Christian Bible*

trans. Brian McNeil (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2021), pp. xix + 457. $79.99.

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This book sets forth one primary claim, namely, that the theological centre of the Christian scriptures is the event whereby God becomes human for the purpose of drawing humans into a loving relationship with the triune God.

The first half of the book ('The Prehistory of the Incarnation') is devoted to a detailed study from the Jewish scriptures of 'why and how God makes use of particular human beings in order to proclaim his will and his acts' (p. 3). Genesis narrates the story of the conflict between God's creative purposes and love for his people and humanity's propensity for a self-determining autonomy that moves the creature away from God. But God's covenantal love and commitment to humanity provide the basis for God's continuing to send mediators who reflect God's love and will to make Godself known and experienced by his creation. The portrait of God's mediators does not provide evidence for a direct and explicit doctrine of the incarnation, though they do offer 'traces that pave the way' for God's incarnation in Jesus Christ as witnessed in the New Testament writings. What follows is a readable and yet fairly detailed study of how God reveals Godself and implements his will to draw people into a divine loving relationship through institutions and figures such as kings, priests, prophets, Spirit, Wisdom, servants and more. The Babylonian exile in the early sixth century BCE presents a massive challenge, however, to the plausibility of God acting to reveal and save through mediators, and, as a result, one witnesses an increased emphasis upon God alone as the one who can save (e.g. Deutero-Isaiah and books 4 and 5 of the Psalter). One also begins to find an increased emphasis on figures whose rejection and suffering, even to the point of death, provide new hopeful possibilities for life with God. For example, the Servant Songs of Isaiah, the personified Lady Zion, and the righteous suffering anointed king of the Psalter testify to a dynamic whereby 'out of suffering and death comes God's new beginning with those who are his' (p. 215).

The second part of the book moves from 'prehistory' to 'Conceptions of the Incarnation'. The structure is reminiscent of historical-critical studies of early Christian christology beginning, at least, with Wilhelm Bousset's *Kyrios Christ*. Thus, there are five lengthy chapters on: the historical Jesus and the Christ of faith (chapter 1), Paul's christology (chapter 2), the Synoptic tradition (chapter 3), the Johannine tradition' (chapter 4) and the testimony of Acts, the Deutero-Pauline epistles, Hebrews, 1 Peter and the Apocalypse of John (chapter 5). Whereas the latter four chapters are all unified in their belief that God is present in the person of Jesus, the first aims to provide a historically robust portrait of the relationship between the historical Jesus and the Christ of faith. The historical Jesus, it can be discerned, is one who taught with unparalleled authority and gave humanity a new understanding of God's character and immediacy. The texts that speak of the historical Jesus having a divine status or carrying out divine functions testify to the early Christian attempt, 'in the light of the Easter experiences, to put into words and to interpret the experiences of transcendence that had already been made in the encounter with the human being Jesus' (p. 244). Paul's notion of God's incarnation in Christ is deeply wedded to his understanding of how humanity is saved. In brief, God's incarnation has as its telos the participation of humans in the incorruptible life of God by virtue of receiving the Spirit of the Messiah (e.g. 1 Cor 15:20–58). Paul sets forth a view of God's revelation in Christ

> as creative energy and as a will that can be experienced in a personal manner, a will that draws his creatures, precisely where they have turned away and become his enemies, back into the sphere of the power of race, transforming the 'slaves' into 'children' by giving them a share in his own righteousness, holiness, and power. (p. 266)

In the Synoptic tradition one can discern the influence of personified Wisdom when Jesus speaks of himself as God's emissary who reveals the Father to humanity (e.g.

Matt 11:25–30; Luke 7:35). Mark and John occupy different sides of the pole between transcendence and immanence. Whereas in Mark the story of Jesus moves inexorably to the shame and wretchedness of Jesus's death on the cross, in John Jesus becomes the pre-existent one who is equal with God (John 1:1–2, 14, 18). John's Gospel and the Johannine epistles witness most explicitly to how God's incarnation in the person of Jesus has as its goal the sharing of divine transformational love with God's creation.

The authors conclude with the primary claim that encapsulates their exploration of the Christian Bible: 'Becoming human is the definitive deed of love on the part of the God who created in his creation, and especially in his most beloved creature, the human being who is God's likeness, the vis-à-vis without which he does not wish to be God' (p. 367). The book is successful in that it presents a coherent and wide-ranging argument for the centrality of the doctrine of the incarnation to both the Christian Bible and to its inextricable connection to the entire grammar of the Christian faith. In less than 400 pages it provides a readable and yet exegetically and historically sophisticated analysis of a remarkable amount of biblical texts which are directly relevant to the doctrine of the incarnation. As such, the book functions as an excellent reference work, even as the overall argument is often necessarily quite broad and somewhat general.

doi:10.1017/S0036930621000600

David L. Stubbs, *Table and Temple: The Christian Eucharist and its Jewish Roots*

(Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2020), pp. xvii + 403. $40.00.

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'This is my blood of the *new* covenant.' So go the words of institution regarding the wine in the Christian practice of the eucharist. But if this rite engages with a *new* covenant, it stands to reason that one would look to the *old* covenant to understand the contours of the new. David Stubbs' excellent book offers a retrieval of typological conceptual frameworks from temple worship for deepening Christian engagement with its central act of worship. As Stubbs puts it, 'Drawing bold lines of connection from the Lord's Supper back to the temple and its worship sparks our imaginations and guides our understanding of the Eucharist' (p. 339).

Stubbs probes five domains of investigation: (1) the temple itself, (2) the daily, weekly and monthly sacrifices, and the three pilgrim feasts of (3) *Pesach*/Passover, (4) *Shavuot*/Pentecost and (5) *Sukkoth*/Booths. These five domains, in turn, yield five theological conceptual 'pressures' (think of the pressure a potter applies to the clay on the wheel) that can shape eucharistic theology and practice: (1) God and God's kingdom are here, (2) we give thanks for God's creation and providence, (3) we remember Christ's sacrificial life and death, (4) we recommit ourselves to the New Covenant and (5) we celebrate with hope the feast to come. It is not as though these practices *only* and