

without overwhelming the reader. Her sensitive delineation of antinomian thought, as well as her careful rendering of a historical narrative sensitive to context, meticulously makes a compelling case to see the response to antinomianism as the primary theological concern of the Westminster Assembly. Indeed, this novel thesis certainly ‘contributes to a deeper understanding of the formation, nature, and growth of Reformed theology as well as a greater appreciation for the diversity within the Reformed tradition’ (p. 155). Gamble’s work opens the door to explore more about how the Westminster Assembly and its debates related to broader European Reformed thought and controversies, such as the antinomian controversy at the end of the seventeenth century that, as Gamble alludes to, ‘engulfed England, Scotland, and the Netherlands’ (p. 43). Future monographs may well address this broader context; but Gamble’s work signals a compelling and eloquent retrieval of the importance of the Westminster Assembly.

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## **John and J. Harvey Walton, *The Lost World of the Israelite Conquest: Covenant, Retribution, and the Fate of the Canaanites***

**(Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2018), pp. xiv + 269. \$20.00.**

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This volume is the latest offering in the ‘Lost World’ series. Co-authored by John Walton and his son, J. Harvey Walton, it engages the so-called conquest accounts, and the specific charge that the record reveals a harsh, demanding and genocidal God (p. xv). The authors seek to provide a ‘better reading of the biblical text’ and a ‘better understanding of the ancient world in which the biblical Israelites were embedded’ with the end-goal of ‘understand[ing the text’s] theological meaning ... for today’ (p. 3). As with other ‘Lost World’ volumes, its engagement with the ancient Near Eastern (ANE) context shows the value of contextualised reading. It also places the warfare accounts within the larger context of Israel’s covenant, and forwards (at times provocative) readings of key texts.

The volume proceeds in six parts, and twenty-one propositions (one per chapter) that slowly build a cohesive argument. Occasional excurses succinctly address related topics and particular biblical texts (e.g. Numbers 31 and Deuteronomy 7), although the reason for relegating these discussions to excurses is not especially apparent. Subject and scripture indices are present, as is modest engagement with secondary literature in footnotes. Three downloadable appendices are available which could have been better included in the volume. One assumes the online format reflects page constraints or marketing concerns.

The six parts work through (1) the hermeneutical challenges of translating a culturally embedded text, and the concomitant challenge of doing so within an appropriate understanding of the purposes of an authoritative biblical text; (2) the biblical principle

of retribution, and the lack of textual indicators of divine retribution in the case of the Canaanites. This includes a provocative alternate reading of Genesis 15:16 that argues for *deferral* of Amorite destruction due to Abraham's alliance with them, rather than *future retribution* for Amorite sin; (3) the role of the covenant within the context of ancient law codes, and demonstration that the covenant neither indicts the Canaanites nor intends to convert them; (4) exploration of the appropriation of ANE imagery within the conquest accounts; (5) a thorough exploration of the Hebrew word *herem* (translated as 'removal from human use') which when applied to communities refers to the destruction of identity; and (6) tracing the conquest account as a template for interpreting the New Testament whereby the *herem* applies to putting off the identity of the 'old self' under the lordship of Christ.

The volume's propositional structure builds its argument in logical increments. This approach does emphasise the complexity of interpreting the conquest account and the *herem*, but also frustratingly raises questions only to have discussion deferred to later propositions. Discussion of translational and ANE issues is generally clearly presented, although non-technicians may find the translational discussion challenging.

The volume's hermeneutical preface is strong, as is its treatment of the ANE context and imagery. In this regard the propositions regarding the Umman-manda (people existing outside the bounds of order; Proposition 12) and the conquest as recapitulation of the creation account (Proposition 14) are especially helpful for a contextualised reading. Likewise strong is the application of the authors' understanding of *herem* to today's context, an application that (while by very different means) interestingly engages similar concerns to those found in premodern interpreters.

The volume provides a coherent reading and forwards helpful new engagement with the question. Its tone is irenic, although at times the views of 'many interpreters' (without citation) are described as a starting point for discussion; these can feel overdrawn, acting as a foil to the authors' views (see the introduction to Proposition 8; p. 75).

The volume will also raise several questions and ongoing discussion. For instance, its rather unique reading of Genesis 15:16 (a pivotal verse that underlies any conquest-as-punishment scenario) must be further tested. Likewise, while the authors clearly show the covenant does not set moral requirements upon the Canaanites, their understanding of instructions such as those found in Leviticus 18–20 as 'hypothetical examples designed to communicate abstract principles, not commands to be obeyed' (p. 93) does not reckon with the narrative portrayal. Israel is held to account by these laws; surely they are more than 'abstract principles'?

Arising out of apologetic and pastoral concerns (p. ix), this volume introduces a new paradigm into the conversation. Whether one adopts the new paradigm in whole or in part, it will contribute positively to the ongoing conversation.

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