

also translates Jonah 4:11 not as a rhetorical question but as a negative indicative sentence that would represent God's ambivalence concerning the forgiveness of Nineveh. All these issues, including the main thesis, need closer attention in ongoing Jonah scholarship.

Finally, two concerns with Perry's work can be pointed out here. First, the method for intertextual considerations is neither clearly defined nor consistently applied in the analysis of the text. He often seems to downplay the literary context or multi-faceted possibilities in interpreting the precise meaning of a word from a particular text. Second, the overall order and the logical progression of the chapters in this work are somewhat difficult to follow. Despite these weaknesses, however, this monograph is an interesting addition to Jonah scholarship, in the sense that readers should benefit from engaging with its thought-provoking insights.

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Layton Talbert. *Beyond Suffering: Discovering the Message of Job*. Greenville, S.C.: Bob Jones University Press, 2007. 378 pp. \$17.95.

Talbert is a professor of theology and exposition at Bob Jones University Seminary and author of *Not By Chance: Learning to Trust a Sovereign God* (Greenville, S.C.: Bob Jones University Press, 2001). *Beyond Suffering* is neither a technical verse-by-verse commentary nor a fluffy devotional. It is a penetrating exposition of the book of Job written "on two levels—a lay-friendly text for the general reader, supplemented by technical, elaborative, or corroborative endnotes for the more advanced student of the Scripture" (p. x). Laypersons, pastors, and teachers will all find it helpful. The book divides into six parts.

Introduction: The kind of suffering Job addresses is not persecution, punishment, or chastisement, but affliction, "suffering that is not only undeserved but not even understood" (pp. 14-15). Job is not primarily about suffering, theodicy, maintaining faith, or discrediting retribution theology (pp. 17-19). The primary subject under discussion throughout the Book of Job is God. The concept of suffering is only a secondary subject, the catalyst for the discussion. The theme of Job is the nature and basis of the relationship between God and man—founded on faith in God's self-revelation as ultimate reality and God's Person as supremely worthy. The function of the book is to display the dynamics of the relationship between God and man—honesty, trust, and submission to a sovereign, wise, and good God. The thesis of the book is two-sided: (1) God is unquestionably sovereign, sometimes inscrutable, but always righteous, aware, compassionate, and good in all he does or allows; (2) man has the privilege and responsibility to know and to trust this one true God in an intimate and infinitely rewarding relationship (p. 22).

Prologue (Job 1-2): The story of Job unfolds before a celestial audience, a realm many believers seldom consider (pp. 41-45). God himself claims ultimate responsibility for Job's calamity (pp. 56-66).

Dialogue between Job and the three friends (Job 3-31): Talbert moves through this mass of dialogue swiftly and succinctly (pp. 79-159), summarizing the progression and core of each speech while parking occasionally to discuss important or well-known passages within their contexts. For example, Talbert's comments on 23:10 ("when he has tested

me, I will come forth as gold") are convincing, insightful, and divergent from most devotional and many exegetical treatments (pp. 137-41).

Elihu's monologue (Job 32-37): The three friends argue, "Job is suffering because of his sin," but Elihu observes, "Job is sinning because of his suffering" (p. 164). Although many interpret Elihu's words negatively as a reiteration of Job's three friends, Talbert argues that Elihu functions as a transitional, parallel, and positive foil to prepare the way for God, the book's central character. This positive interpretation is based on the narrator's depiction of Elihu, the content of Elihu's speech, and God's echo of Elihu's words (pp. 166-75; see esp. the chart on p. 174).

God's monologue and Job's response (Job 38:1-42:6): Talbert movingly summarizes God's magnificent, humbling speeches that pinpoint Job's own verbal and conceptual indiscretions (pp. 197-226). An appendix uses Leviathan as a case-study in hermeneutics, defending the crocodile as a literal interpretation that is the most contextually consistent (pp. 213, 269-82).

Epilogue (Job 42:7-17): "Job-like suffering is Christlike suffering" (pp. 235-36). "The end of the Lord" (Jas 5:11) teaches readers about God's sovereignty, benevolence, and reward (pp. 241-46).

The final chapter, "Learning Theology with Job" (pp. 249-68), underscores the importance of theological humility, the limitations of revelation and logic, and the infinitude of God.

Beyond Suffering has some relatively minor shortcomings, e.g., the use of endnotes rather than footnotes, no indexes, a handful of typos, and the use of the KJV as the primary English translation (though it routinely incorporates many other modern translations). Its strengths, however, far outweigh its weaknesses. First, its method is robustly expositional and contextual. Talbert does not hopscotch through Job from well-known text to text; he is preoccupied with explaining, illustrating, and applying the whole text. Second, its theology is integrated with the big picture of the book and canon. Third, its organization is easy to follow. The numerous section headings are especially helpful for tracing the argument, and Talbert highlights the controlling big picture with regular summary statements. For example, "The message of Job regarding our relationship with God is threefold: (1) reverent worship, with or without reward, because He is worthy; (2) confident faith, with or without evidence, because He has spoken; and (3) trusting submission, with or without understanding, because He is both sovereign and good" (p. 22; cf. p. 220). Fourth, its illustrations and applications are appropriate and practical. Illustrations illuminate the exegesis, and applications are thoughtfully rooted in the text. For example, Talbert presents practical and creative suggestions for reading Job (pp. 9-11, 193-94, 286-87 n. 35), inductive questions rather than only propositions (pp. 19-20), contemporary examples of suffering (p. 54), wise principles for helping those who are hurting (pp. 68-71), and vivid illustrations (pp. 146, 133-35, 163, 197, 208-9, 238-40, 246-50, 297 n. 29, 358 n. 36, 359 n. 38). Fifth, its writing style is colorfully expressive and engaging. Sixth, its tone is warm and passionate, not cold or sterile. It evidences Talbert's deep burden to glorify God by making the message of Job—which is often underappreciated and misunderstood—understandable and accessible to God's people.

I would be remiss not to mention my relationship to Talbert. He was my professor for six undergraduate courses and four seminary courses, one of my oral examiners for my doctoral comprehensive exams in 2005, a final

reader for my dissertation, and a groomsman in my wedding. He dedicates *Beyond Suffering* to two couples and in memory of two children. One of those couples is my parents, and one of those children is my youngest brother Michael, who was diagnosed with Stage IV Neuroblastoma cancer in 1998 at age three and died in 2002 at age six. God used Talbert to minister the message of Job to my family when we needed it most. With the publication of *Beyond Suffering*, Talbert can now minister the message of Job to a much wider audience.

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Reuben Swanson, ed. *1 Corinthians*. New Testament Greek Manuscripts: Variant Readings Arranged in Horizontal Lines Against Codex Vaticanus. Wheaton: Tyndale House, 2003. xliii + 503 pp. \$49.99.

Reuben Swanson, ed. *2 Corinthians*. New Testament Greek Manuscripts: Variant Readings Arranged in Horizontal Lines Against Codex Vaticanus. Wheaton: Tyndale House, 2005. xliii + 347 pp. \$40.99.

In the New Testament Greek Manuscripts series, Reuben Swanson provides a significant resource for scholars even though he falls considerably short of producing a Greek text that is complete and accurate. The volumes on 1 and 2 Corinthians, the eighth and ninth volumes in the series, provide textual readings for eighty-eight sources arranged in parallel lines against Codex Vaticanus. These sources include two papyri, sixteen uncials, sixty-five minuscules, one church father, and four editions.

Swanson provides full readings for each source by presenting the text in parallel lines. The entry for each verse begins with a phrase (not necessarily a sense phrase) from Vaticanus followed by a listing of the manuscripts which share the same reading. In succeeding lines, Swanson provides variant readings from all of the chosen sources, placing the most similar readings near the top of each entry and the most dissimilar readings further down the page (an improvement upon earlier editions). The readings begin on the left of each line, and the manuscript support follows on the right. When variants occur, they are placed in bold and underlined. As such, with just a glance, one may quickly determine the reading of a particular manuscript. This is, as Metzger affirms, a very user-friendly way to present an enormous amount of information. The reader must take caution, however, when seeing that only one source supports a line of text. This is not necessarily evidence of a singular reading, since it is often a combination of variants that the manuscript supports. For an example, see the reading of P (Codex Porphyrianus) in 1 Cor 4:6.

Swanson provides further information at the foot of each page as well as in multiple appendices, several of which are new for the volumes on 1 and 2 Corinthians. By listening to his critics, the volumes have improved with time. As an example, Swanson now includes an appendix of passages marked with an umlaut in Vaticanus (the scribe's indication that he was aware of a variant reading), further illustrating the truth of his conviction that every variant of every kind should be reported. A second new appendix lists errors and misleading readings in Tischendorf's 1869 edition. Due to the fact that sense phrases in the body of the work sometimes extend to a second line, Swanson provides an appendix which organizes the variants by sense