

about the Jewish roots of Christian faith. Also, it can be used as a secondary literature in theological schools, because parts of the book that deal with Jewish hermeneutics and mindset can be valuable for students of theology. This book is also recommendable for church ministers because it does not only give them material for study, teaching, and preaching, but also tools for addressing some contemporary negative tendencies of our time (for example, individualism) and the correction of them. This book is more than welcomed, and I hope that in the future this and similar books would be available in the Croatian language for all those who do not read English.

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Reading Moses Seeing Jesus: How the Torah Fulfils its Goal in Yeshua (Expanded Second Edition)

ONE FOR ISRAEL Ministry, Southlake, TX, USA, 2017, 128.

Encountering books written by Jewish believers in Christ can be remarkably interesting and enlightening. Without any epistemological infatuation, it is beneficial to hear them out and see if we can gain from their perspective. *Reading Moses, Seeing Jesus* is one of those books. It was written by three Israeli authors, who work for ONE FOR ISRAEL Ministry. They believe that they are able to offer a unique perspective on the understanding the Torah (Five books of Moses) and the Law found in the Torah. They disagree with the prevalent notion that the Torah is a law book (Loc. 249), as they believe that it is primarily “an historical narrative, whose purpose is to lead Israel *through* the broken Law and beyond, namely, *to* the Messiah” (Loc. 253).

Reading Moses, Seeing Jesus has two parts, and therefore two interconnected purposes. In the first part of the book, authors show that the purpose of Law is for it to be fulfilled in Christ while the second part of the book shows why believers in Christ, from both Jewish and Gentile backgrounds, do not need to obey the Old Testament Law, even if they will still read it and apply it as Scripture.

The backbone principle of the book is a literary feature “*ma’asei avot, siman l’banim*,” meaning “the deeds of the fathers are a sign to the sons” (Loc. 342). This principle means that we can find stories in the Torah written not only to tell us about the patriarchs, but also about their descendants in the future. Biblical scholars will be more familiar with this feature as “narrative typology or literary analogy” (Loc. 346). We should not confuse it with allegorical interpretation, because these come from authorial intent and can be identified by “tangible, identifiable features in the text itself,” namely “shared words and phrases (lexical

parallels)” and “shared plot (thematic parallels)” (Loc. 349). Authors give several convincing examples, such as the reiteration of Adam and Eve’s blessing and creation mandate in God’s promises to Abraham.

In the first chapter, we learn that the Torah points to something greater than the Law itself, as it anticipates lawbreaking. Through the aforementioned literary feature, it prepares Israel for its failure by pointing primarily to Adam’s failure to keep God’s commandment, and then by repeating the same result in the stories about Israel from the Exodus until the Exile. Likewise, it puts a great emphasis on *faith* as a desirable instrument of blessing, as we learn in the second chapter. Indeed, the Torah mentions faith strategically in terms of the structure of its six major time periods (Loc. 488). This is so despite the fact that Israel rarely exhibits faith, especially after the giving of the Law (Loc. 539). With the Law come severe punishments for previously overlooked sins, and therefore we should not view it as “the key to Israel’s righteousness” (Loc. 594). Instead, the reader should “question the effectiveness of the Law for bringing Israel (and the nations) into the fullness of the unconditional promises of the Abrahamic Covenant” (Loc. 600). One even finds a hint at the New Covenant when Moses looks for solution for Israel’s problem to “the giving of God’s Spirit ... (Num. 11:29)” (Loc. 610).

The third chapter of the book tells us that the Torah points to Messiah as its purpose. Of course, there is a vastly higher percentage of verses that refer to the Law (62%) than those referring to Messiah (0.15%) in the Torah (Loc. 627-630). Nevertheless, it anticipates Israel’s disobedience to the Law and breaking the Sinai covenant (Loc. 644) and it is God’s purpose to bless Israel and humanity (Loc. 648). Therefore, the Torah has to point elsewhere to a remedy, and it does so through its story line. The story of Adam in the Garden is repeated in the prophecy about Israel in Deuteronomy 30-31, where they “will enter the Land, eat of its fruit, break God’s commandments... and be driven into exile” (Loc. 743). Thus, the primary goal of the Torah is not to encourage obedience, but to point to messianism as its “major theme” (Loc. 769). The Messiah is “*the lynchpin of God’s plan to reestablish (sic) His blessed rule over a temporarily curse-ridden creation*” (Loc. 778; emphasis in the original).

The Abrahamic covenant repeats the aspects of blessing, seed and land contained in the creation mandate of Genesis 1:26-28, we are told in the fourth chapter. These aspects then become central to the story from Genesis through 2 Kings (Loc. 826) as the story of Adam and Eve becomes the story of Israel. Adam is “God’s First King,” who received from Him a “dominion,” a concept reiterated in Solomon’s rule and in several messianic prophecies (Loc. 840). This supports the idea that “God intends to establish His rule over creation through *Adam* and his seed” (Loc. 851). Adam is also “God’s First Priest” as there are parallels between “the creation week and the Tabernacle narrative” (Loc. 851) and the “links

between the Garden of Eden and the tabernacle” (Loc. 904). This “royal-priestly Adam [is] a prefiguration and sign of things to come,” and these things are related both to Israel as a whole and to an individual from Israel (Loc. 950-954).

Chapter five shows us parallels between Israel and Adam. The same word is used for placing Adam in the garden and bringing Israel into the Promised Land (Loc. 968). David and Solomon’s reigns both contain echoes of Adam’s mandate. This points to a king who will accomplish Israel’s mandate and Adam’s mandate “vicariously” (Loc. 972). We can see Adam’s failure through the lens of his royal priesthood thus it is a failure “to conquer the land and rule over it” (Loc. 1063, ch. 6). At Mount Sinai, Israel is beckoned “a *kingdom of priests*” as it partakes in God’s plan to “reestablish (sic) His dominion over creation through the seed of the woman” (Loc. 1068). Genesis 3 therefore portrays not only the fall of man into sin, but a programmatic enmity between God’s seed and the seed of the serpent. God’s seed progresses through generations from Seth through Abraham to Israel as a collective entity. Nevertheless, it also pertains to an individual seed, identified as a Messiah-King who will fulfil the prophecies contained in the Torah. Protoevangelium in Genesis 3:15 predicts both the victory and the sufferings of “the coming Messiah-King” (Loc. 1178). Noah is a picture of woman’s seed as he brings rest to creation by building an altar and offering a sacrifice to the Lord (Loc. 1223). Nevertheless, he also fails in ways similar to Adam (in his own garden), and therefore points to “one beyond Noah” who will “reestablish (sic) God’s purposes for creation” both as a king and as a priest (Loc. 1240).

In chapter seven, Jacob’s blessing of his sons also points toward the coming of Eve’s seed through the seed of Judah’s seed. Even the blessing that Jacob received about dominion over his brother Esau was not fulfilled in Jacob, but awaited fulfilment in Jacob’s seed, “the king from the tribe of Judah” (Loc. 1317). This king coming from the seed of Judah will “grab his enemies by the back of the neck (v.8)” (Loc. 1340), therefore taking “the serpent and his seed by the neck” and fulfilling God’s promise to Eve (Loc. 1343). Chapter eight brings us to the story about Balaam and Balak, which has clear connections to “the promised blessing and curses of the Abrahamic Covenant” (Loc. 1385). Even though he was a pagan diviner, Balaam serves as a prophet in the same way his donkey was enabled to speak. Moses wanted to draw our attention to Balaam’s third oracle in order to emphasize this vision (Loc. 1417). His oracle is similar to Judah’s blessing in Genesis 49 (Loc. 1426), and therefore it also refers to Messiah (Loc. 1437). Systematizing all of this together, authors conclude that “the Torah’s purpose is to point to a king who is the seed of the woman, from the tribe of Judah, coming in the last days” (Loc. 1506).

The second part of the book deals with the believer’s relationship to the Law. In chapter nine, we see that the Law functions as “tutor, shadow, theology, love,

wisdom, and prosecuting attorney” (Loc. 1522). It would be interesting to compare their understanding to a classical reformed understanding of the three uses of the Law. Functions of tutor, shadow and prosecuting attorney fall pretty neatly under the first two uses of the Law. Nevertheless, it seems that our authors are rejecting the third use of the Law, as a rule of life for believers. They reject that the Law that Christians ought to follow is the OT Law, as the Law was changed with the change of the Covenant. Nevertheless, we could still put their three functions of the Law, that of theology, love, and wisdom, under this category, since they do not outrightly reject the Law as having no function in the life of believers under the New Covenant. Indeed, their view seems to coincide with the third use of the Law on a functional level.

Chapter ten deals with the specificity of the laws in the Torah, as they were both given for the needs of people in specific times and were considered to be “inferior, looking toward a future and a better covenant” (Loc. 1809) by the Old Testament itself. Indeed, we can look at the law as “moral improvements without completely overriding the social structures of their Ancient Near Eastern cultural context” (Loc. 1828). We see this from Christ’s understanding of divorce permit under Moses, which we can apply to other laws, for example, laws about slavery (Loc. 1839).

In chapter eleven we learn that it is impossible to keep Moses’ law today, because there is “no priesthood, no temple and no sacrificial system – all of which comprise the heart and essence of the Law” (Loc. 1856). Even if there were a temple today, it would be impossible to keep the whole Law. Also, even the Talmud expresses the understanding that from about AD 30, “God no longer honoured the Sinai covenant as the way to cover Israel’s sins” (Loc. 1894). After AD 70, Jewish leaders “disconnected from the Bible,” making the rabbis their primary functional authority (Loc. 1924). The second part of the chapter deals with the false belief that there is an Oral Law, given to Moses at Sinai, to which Jews have to be obedient. This goes against the clear teaching of the Torah, because according to Exodus 34:27, “God’s covenant with the people of Israel at Sinai is based only upon the written Law, which He commands Moses to write” (Loc. 2017).

Chapter twelve discusses the Messianic Jewish identity. First of all, Yeshua did not come “to abolish a distinct Jewish identity” (Loc. 2116). This is clear from Paul’s treatment of the issue in Romans 11, where he shows that he himself is an Israelite and that there is a Jewish remnant of believers in Yeshua (Loc. 2132). Since a Jew is a person who has Jewish ancestry, “[k]eeping the Law and the Jewish traditions does not make” one more Jewish (Loc. 2145-2149). Nevertheless, our authors do keep some Jewish traditions, like worshiping on Saturday and celebrating biblical feasts, but not out of obligation “to the Sinai covenant or to the rabbis” (Loc. 2153). New Covenant is not a renewed covenant, but a comple-

tely new covenant (Loc. 2160). Therefore, the Law is different also (Loc. 2175). Yet, as Jewish believers they live their lives “in close interaction with the Law and with our traditions” because they live among other Jews in a culture shaped by the Law and that tradition (Loc. 2189). It also helps them make Yeshua more understandable to their people, in a way that “Christmas trees and Easter bunnies” could never do (Loc. 2196).

The closing chapter ends with a conclusion that observing the Torah today is no longer accomplished by living “under the authority of the Law,” but by believing in Yeshua” (Loc. 2214). They challenge their believers to be “consumed with Yeshua, not with laws and traditions,” because “Moses wrote the Torah to lead us to Yeshua” and because “lasting change comes only through Yeshua” (Loc. 2222-2225).

This was an interesting book to read. Its 128 pages are packed with rich explanations of biblical material. One goes away from the book understanding the Old Testament better, especially its grand purpose of pointing towards its fulfilment in Christ. Unlike some other books written by Messianic Jews, authors did not crowd the book with Jewish terminology. They explained their methodology well and illustrated it pretty convincingly.

Nevertheless, there are some ways the authors could improve the book. For example, it was not as clear as it could have been whether they believe in the third use of the Law or not. Sure, most readers will not find this important, but it definitely is an issue that needs to be considered when writing about believer’s relationship to the Old Testament Law. Also, the amount of details would fit better a book that is twice this size. Finally, *Reading Moses, Seeing Jesus* is a book that I would warmly recommend to Jews and Gentiles, believers and unbelievers alike. Indeed, may it help us read Moses more and see Jesus better!

Miroslav Balint-Feudvarski

Larry W. Hurtado

Destroyer of the gods: Early Christian Distinctiveness in the Roman World

Waco, Texas, USA, Baylor University Press, 2016, 290.

In his latest contribution, Larry W. Hurtado, Emeritus Professor of New Testament Language, Literature, and Theology in the School of Divinity at the University of Edinburgh and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, argues for the distinctiveness of early Christianity within the Greco-Roman religious world. Hurtado is careful to qualify what he means by “religion,” since as he cogently argues, many modern assumptions about what constitutes “religion”—monotheism, the centrality of sacred texts and the close relationship to applied ethics, among