

## ICI REPORT FOR SEPTEMBER 2012

### (a) ICI FORUM MEETING AT THE SBL ANNUAL MEETING.

Our meeting will take place on Nov. 17, from 2:00 PM to 3:00 PM. The room is W473 - McCormick Place. Please come so we may all share our ideas and comments in order to make ICI serve us better.

We are aware that most of us will not be in Chicago. You may still share your ideas and comments at the meeting by sending them to ([leigh.andersen@sbl-site.org](mailto:leigh.andersen@sbl-site.org)) or to me ([ehud.benzvi@ualberta.ca](mailto:ehud.benzvi@ualberta.ca)) and will be glad to bring them to group.

### (b) TWO SESSIONS AT THE SBL ANNUAL MEETING WILL BE SKYPED

We will experimentally skype two sessions that will take place at the SBL Annual Meeting. Details are still being worked out. Skyping sessions was one of the suggestions we received in previous meetings of the ICI forum.

### (c) PUBLICATIONS: ONLINE BOOKS – NEW BOOKS ADDED

(For the full list, please go to [http://www.sbl-site.org/publications/Books\\_ICIbooks.aspx](http://www.sbl-site.org/publications/Books_ICIbooks.aspx))

The following books, including two titles from Wiley-Blackwell, our newest partner in the initiative, were added since the last report:

- (1) Edwards, Mark. *John*. Blackwell Bible Commentaries. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2004.

This pioneering commentary embraces the full scope and themes raised in John's Gospel, offering an engaging and perceptive reading. Mark Edwards explores a diverse range of excerpts and creative responses, with particular emphasis on the treatment of the Gospel in English poetry.

- Explores the diverse themes and issues raised in John's Gospel, and considers its influence on figures from Saint Augustine, to Dorothy Sayers and Bob Dylan.
- Treats well-known interpreters such as Thomas Aquinas along with lesser-known figures such as the Gnostic Heracleon, and the sixth-century hymn-writer, Romanos.

- Brings ancient and modern commentators into dialogue with each other, and takes a critical stance towards some parallels drawn by modern scholars between the Gospel and the surrounding pagan culture.
- Features excerpts from a wide variety of poets who give a creative interpretation of John's Gospel, and considers many artistic representations.
- Suggests that imaginative response can illuminate a reading of the Bible where purely critical and historical analysis has proved unsatisfactory.
- An accessible introduction and extensive section notes address interpretations of the Gospel from antiquity to the present.
- Published as part of the ground-breaking *Blackwell Bible Commentaries* series.

(2) Fritz, Volmer. *The Emergence of Israel in the Twelfth and Eleventh Centuries B.C.E.* Bible Encyclopedia. Biblical Encyclopedia. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011.

According to the biblical image of Israel's history, the time before the Israelite state can be divided into two periods: the conquest and division of the land (Joshua) and Israel's self-preservation against various enemies in the now-occupied land (Judges). The description of both eras is, to be sure, largely fictitious, since the traditions recorded in these books emerged only during the period of the monarchy. However, the basic kernel of the Song of Deborah (Judges 5) is an authentic text from this period, and in it we discover that, in the eleventh century, ten tribes settled in the region and resisted Canaanite power claims. According to archaeological findings, although some Canaanite cities continued to exist in the eleventh century, the land was largely populated by new people in small nearby towns in which the material culture of the Canaanites was taken over. By carefully separating fact from fiction, Fritz offers an insightful and enlightening depiction of this seminal period of Israel's history.

(3) Johnson, Timothy Jay. *Now My Eyes See You: Unveiling an Apocalyptic Job.* Hebrew Bible Monographs, 24. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2009.

This groundbreaking study on the book of Job is the first systematic effort to reveal and organize its apocalyptic impulses. Drawing on such scholars as John Collins, Christopher Rowland and Frank Moore Cross, Johnson argues that interpreting Job through the lens of apocalypse yields a coherent reading that is able to incorporate all of the seemingly disparate literary features of the book that historically stymie interpreters.

An apocalyptic reading of Job begins with the presence of three important revelations: Eliphaz's vision, the hymn to wisdom and the Yahweh speeches. A

literary division following these revelations contributes to the book's overall emphasis, which is to persevere in the midst of suffering. Thorny questions such as the reason Elihu was not rebuked by God in the epilogue receive fresh treatment from an apocalyptic paradigm.

In tracing the history of the interpretation of Job, Johnson offers evidence that both Jewish and Christian traditions recognized many of these 'apocalyptic' elements. For example, the LXX version of Job contains a resurrection plus in the epilogue, the Testament of Job emphasizes the influence of Satan, the Qumran sect may have drawn strength from the book's message to persevere, and the 'apocalyptic' passage of James upholds Job as a model for perseverance.

Viewing Job as a nascent form of apocalypse may also resuscitate Von Rad's hypothesis that apocalypse grew out of wisdom categories over against the more commonly accepted prophetic works.

Students of Job at all levels are treated here to a stimulating appraisal that will open their eyes to the apocalyptic characteristics woven throughout this diverse book. This monograph will make important contributions to genre studies, the history of interpretation and be valuable to those interested in the intersection of wisdom and apocalypse.

- (4) Langston, Scott M. *Exodus Through the Centuries*. Blackwell Bible Commentaries. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2006.

This Bible commentary looks at how Exodus has influenced and has been influenced by history, religion, politics, the arts and other forms of culture over the ages.

- A Bible commentary tracing the reception history of Exodus from Old Testament times, through the Patristic and Reformation periods, to the present day.
- Considers the ways in which Exodus has influenced and has been influenced by history, religion, politics, the arts and other forms of culture in Jewish, Christian and secular settings.
- Looks at how Exodus has served as a tool of liberation and tyranny in a variety of settings.
- Shows how Exodus has been used to shape the identities of individuals and groups.
  - Discusses the works of current and past poets, musicians, film-makers, authors and artists influenced by Exodus.

- Addresses uses of Exodus related to American and European history such as the Glorious Revolution, colonialism, the American Revolution, Civil War, Civil Rights Movement, African-Americans, and Native Americans, as well as uses by prominent and little-known historical figures
- Considers the impact of the Ten Commandments and other laws, in legal, political and religious contexts.
- The Blackwell Bible Commentary series is supported by a website at [www.bbibcomm.net](http://www.bbibcomm.net)

(5) Shectman, Sarah. *Women in the Pentateuch: A Feminist and Source-Critical Analysis*. Hebrew Bible Monographs, 23. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2009.

For the first time, literary source criticism and feminist biblical interpretation are here brought together systematically. Taking into account recent trends in Pentateuchal source criticism, Shectman divides the narrative into priestly and non-priestly threads, tracing the portrayal of women in each. In both sources, as Moses comes to the fore, women recede increasingly into the background, with the result that far fewer women appear in Exodus–Numbers than appear in Genesis.

A stark contrast between the sources also emerges from this study: non-P contains many more fully developed narrative traditions focused on women, particularly those involving childbirth, pointing to an original genre of narratives unique to biblical women. However, with the combination of traditions in the Pentateuch, these traditions are absorbed into the patriarchal ones, culminating in Genesis 17, P's programmatic statement of the promise and covenant. P significantly limits the roles of women that were preserved in non-P. This difference between the sources is primarily the result of increased centralization: whereas the non-P material reflects a period before centralization had become entrenched, in P, centralization has taken hold, with the result that women's roles are more limited.

In addition to a new and detailed source-critical analysis of women in the Pentateuch, this book also provides a detailed overview of feminist biblical criticism, from the work of Elizabeth Cady Stanton up to the present, which will be useful for those interested in the history of biblical, particularly feminist, interpretation.

(d) EVENTS

The SBL maintains a significant list of events taking place anywhere in the globe. For the full list please go to <http://www.sbl-site.org/meetings/events.aspx>. Please provide

information on conferences in your region, including calls for papers, to Sharon Johnson at [sharon.johnson@sbl-site.org](mailto:sharon.johnson@sbl-site.org).

Events that may be of interest to you include:

November 17-20 SBL ANNUAL MEETING, Chicago, USA.

December 20-21 BIENNIAL CONFERENCE THE SOCIETY FOR BIBLICAL STUDIES IN INDIA (SBSI)

The Society for Biblical Studies in India (SBSI) will hold its biennial conference in Bangalore, Whitefield at the Ecumenical Christian Center. The Theme for this conference is: Biblical Jubilee: Indian Liberation Hermeneutics. For more information contact [Rev. Dr. K. Jesurathnam](#), Secretary, SBSI.

(e) Liaison Network

The ICI Liaisons list, along with contact information for each liaison, is posted on the SBL web site at <http://www.sbl-site.org/InternationalCoopInitiative.aspx>. If you wish to be part of this initiative and serve as a country or local representative, please contact Tim Langille [tim.langille@gmail.com](mailto:tim.langille@gmail.com).

(f) PLEASE PASS THE INFORMATION

You are encouraged to distribute this report among all those you think might find it helpful. If you are a member of other professional organizations related to biblical studies, we urge you to send our newsletters to those responsible for communication within those groups as well.

Ehud Ben Zvi, SBL - International Cooperation Initiative