

The last scholar treated in this text is an essay on R. Alan Culpepper, written by Ron C. Fay. Fay's treatment is a helpful overview of the influence of Culpepper's role in the rise of narrative criticism. Culpepper's *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983) remains an important ground-breaking work that explores the Gospel of John as story. A four-page final chapter, summarizing key findings in the book, concludes the book, along with standard Scripture and author indices.

As indicated at the beginning of this review, the first volume in this new series will be helpful to graduate students reviewing key figures in modern Johannine interpretation. As the series progresses and new volumes are added, theological librarians will also find each one to be a helpful addition to their collection. We look forward to the second volume in the series coming out in late Fall 2020 or Spring 2021, a volume on modern interpreters in the study of Luke-Acts.

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Reading Romans with Eastern Eyes: Honor and Shame in Paul's Message and Mission. By Jackson Wu. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2019, xi + 231 pp., \$20.00 paper.

What do shame and honor have to do with Paul's mission? Everything, if you ask Jackson Wu. For decades anthropologists and missiologists have argued that the shame-honor motif serves as a pivotal paradigm for understanding an Eastern mindset. In his newest book, *Reading Romans with Eastern Eyes: Honor and Shame in Paul's Message and Mission*, Wu makes a similar kind of claim, based on Romans. A strong educational background in biblical studies completed in the West combined with twenty years of cross-cultural living and teaching experience in the East makes Wu uniquely qualified to write this groundbreaking book.

Wu's study explores Paul's message, especially as articulated in his letter to Rome from an honor-shame perspective. This important book adds to the recently emerging conversation on glory in Pauline studies (e.g. see the work of Newman, Gaffin, Morgan and Peterson, Berry, Burton, Jacob, Sivonen, Jackson), stimulates fresh thinking on the honor-shame cultural framework up until now often relegated to studies by missiologists, and engages the ongoing discussion on the relationship between salvation paradigms of shame-honor and guilt-justification in Paul.

The purpose of the book is to answer the following question: "How did Paul's theology [in Romans] serve the purpose of his mission within an honor-shame context?" (p. 3). Even though the book is not a commentary, its twelve chapters are divided by the order found in Romans. Wu starts his exploration in chapter 1 by providing an Eastern lens to read Romans. According to Wu, although the contemporary Eastern and ancient perspectives are not equal, there are significant similarities. Most importantly, they are both "shame-honor cultures" that emphasize tradition (stability), relationship (loyalty, collective identity), and social hierarchy (position and authority). "These three factors shape a person's social status or 'face'" (p. 13). Wu insightfully contrasts the ascribed honor, prioritized by East

Asians, from the achieved honor, preferred in Western contexts (p. 15). By engaging with recent scholarship, he also introduces the massive honor-shame theme found in the Bible, especially in Romans.

In chapter 2, Wu shows how Paul's "missionary agenda is embedded within pastoral concern for the Romans, which is couched in the larger narrative of Israel's history" (p. 26). Paul communicates indirectly to address the problems in the church in Rome: their misplaced identity (idolatry) is an obstacle to God's mission. Rather, believers' collective identity in Christ, namely the correct view of the church, should shape their sense of the mission.

Chapters 3 through 6 explore Romans 1–4 in light of an honor-shame perspective. Wu shows how Paul's view on sin is rooted in idolatry that is demonstrated in both the life of Adam (i.e. humanity) and Israel, by exchanging the glory of God for created things. Human beings are not fulfilling their vocation as a reflection of the glory of God. The consequences are brutal: impurity and shame before God, "losing face," seeking face by people pleasing (pride), dishonor before disobedience, and chasing a name for themselves (chap. 3). Additionally, ethnic pride—categorizing people as "us" vs. "them," "insiders" vs. "outsiders"—is the fruit of sin and shame (chap. 4). Yet these categories are removed in Christ: "God does not disregard collective identity; he reorients it." (p. 61). In chapter 5, "Christ saves God's face," Wu describes the work of Christ in terms of honor-shame: "The shame of Christ vindicates God's honor ... Christ's sacrifice saves God's 'face'" (p. 81). In chapter 6, in explaining justification from an honor-shame perspective, Wu emphasizes the importance of the *how* and *who* of justification by faith in Christ. "*How* individuals are justified is an implication of Paul's main point: *who* can be declared righteous" (p. 86). Certainly, he can expect pushback to statements like this from those who understand Paul with an old perspective lens.

Chapters 7 to 9 investigate Romans 5–8 from an honor-shame perspective. Chapter 7 "presents Christ as a 'filial' son, who faithfully restored honor to God's kingdom and restores the human family" collectively (p. 4). Chapter 8 is a rich exegetical, theological, and devotional feast on glory. "Christ was honored through shame; therefore, God's people will be honored through shame" (p. 121). Wu challenges the traditional reading of Romans 7 (see chap. 9) by "arguing that Paul does not prioritize the individual and guilt" (p. 129). Rather "I" refers collectively to Israel during the Exodus, and consequently Paul's view of humanity is more optimistic than often argued by Western theologians. Even though he has many helpful insights from the text, not every exegete will agree with everything that Wu says in this chapter.

Chapter 10 examines how the OT, especially Isaiah 28, 41, 45, and 50, shapes Paul's use of honor and shame in Romans 9–11. Although he misses Marilyn Burton's recent detailed study *The Semantics of Glory: A Cognitive, Corpus-Based Approach to Hebrew Word Meaning* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), Wu shows convincingly how the Lord saves his people through the faithful covenant-keeping king. God rescues his people from shame into his glory.

Chapters 11 and 12 talk about the ethical implications among God's people. They have been freed from competitive practices for status and self-exaltation to

honor Christ, and consequently to honor others above themselves. This enables them to live as a humble and unified and harmonious society where relationships flourish, even among people from diverse social backgrounds.

Wu is not a stranger to controversy, claiming that others have misrepresented glory-shame theology (www.patheos.com/blogs/jacksonwu). In addition, his earlier groundbreaking book on the same motif, based on his dissertation, *Saving God's Face: A Chinese Contextualization of Salvation through Honor and Shame* (Pasadena, CA: WCIU, 2012), received criticism for overly academic language and for his polarizing views between justification and shame language. *Reading Romans with Eastern Eyes* is, however, constructive in voice, generous and irenic in tone, non-provocative in its approach, and accessible to all readers. It is not meant to stir a polemic but to serve as a fresh and prophetic voice in the West about a neglected aspect of salvation: from shame to glory. The author succeeds in this purpose with distinction. Wu's book is a vital voice in response to an imbalanced reading that focuses solely on the legal justification aspect in Romans. He is careful *not* to set the justification legal language and the shame-honor motif as competitive hermeneutical keys. He does not seek to deny or minimize the doctrine of legal justification found in Romans either. Rather, his aim, which he fulfills successfully, is to elucidate the importance of the honor-shame motif.

Wu's work is not without some weaknesses. First, at times, he may underplay the historical Western understanding of glory-salvation. Certainly, the doctrine of union with Christ, including its emphasis on glorification (including deification) has been present in various Reformers' writings (e.g. Luther and Calvin) and later Lutheran and Reformed readings of Paul for centuries, as recent scholarship has confirmed. Second, focusing merely on a collective honor-shame perspective may minimize the individual's need for legal approval before a holy God. To be sure, the author's purpose is not to try to silence other motifs and themes (especially imputation); rather, he presents the book of Romans from one major neglected perspective. Third, and perhaps most substantially, the scope of Wu's book lacks linguistic exploration on glory. Should the examination include primarily a single lexeme, *doxa*, or comprise several lexemes that share the same semantic domain? Also, Wu focuses on the *honor* aspect of glory in Romans to such a degree that he overlooks at least the possibility that it may also carry the meaning of *visible manifestation and presence*. Wu omits this controversial topic even though he must have been aware of it after reading Newman and Jacob.

Despite of these minor shortcomings, the book is captivating reading and enlarges the reader's capacity to reflect on the glory of God, individual and corporate shame, and a collective aspect of salvation from a neglected point of view. Well-placed (but not over-used) personal and cross-cultural stories at the beginning of chapters add flavor and contribute to the readability of the book. A helpful discussion guide, up-to-date bibliography, and carefully crafted indexes (author, subject, Scripture) make the book even more accessible and user-friendly. Wu's book is well researched with a judicious use of quotations and informative (yet not overly long) footnotes, which are filled with recent literature on the topic. His ability to interact

with recent biblical scholarship, compare missiological ideas between East and West, and engage readers' hearts is stimulating and refreshing.

No serious Pauline student or scholar can afford to miss reading this book. Indeed, all people in the West are encouraged to engage with it. Not often is a book as exegetically vigilant, theologically sound, missiologically eye-opening, and devotionally heart-warming. This book fulfills all those aspects. You will never quite read Romans, Paul, and the whole Bible with the same lens after interacting with the ideas found in *Reading Romans with Eastern Eyes*.

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Colossians and Philemon. By G. K. Beale. Baker Exegetical Commentary on the NT. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2019, xxvi + 514 pp., \$54.99.

This scholarly commentary on the Greek text of Colossians and Philemon by Gregory Beale, Professor of NT and Biblical Interpretation at Westminster Theological Seminary (Philadelphia), reflects the author's interests in the use of the OT by the NT and in the biblical-theological concept of the temple as God's earthly dwelling place.

Contents include an introduction (pp. 1–21) and commentary on Colossians (pp. 23–365), introduction (pp. 367–74) and commentary on Philemon (pp. 375–437), and five excursuses (pp. 439–57). The latter cover: the invalidity of using linguistic features as criteria of authenticity, defining what constitutes an OT allusion, Christ's messianic rule over the Gentiles as an OT mystery, circumcision and uncircumcision as symbolic of spiritual realities even in the OT, and the implications of Paul's view of slaves for today.

Paul himself authored Colossians, according to Beale. Critical objections to apostolic authorship (vocabulary, style, development of ideas) fall short. Owing to the distance of Rome from Colossae, Beale leans toward a provenance from Ephesus in the early 50s rather than from Rome in the early 60s, despite the lack of evidence for an imprisonment of Paul at Ephesus; about the place of writing, however, Beale finds it admittedly "hard to be confident" (p. 8). The syncretistic teacher(s) at Colossae invited people to seek God's presence by practicing Torah regulations for the tabernacle/temple—dietary rules, festivals, sabbaths—while mixing in an idolatrous element of angel veneration. Beale's literary determination that "the main point and goal of the body of the letter" falls on Paul's instruction to pray for the spread of the gospel (Col 4:2–6; see p. 21) may strike readers as eccentric.

As in his commentary on the Revelation to John, Beale pursues every imaginable allusion to the OT in Colossians with maximizing vigor. For the Apocalypse such an approach is appropriate. It is questionable in Colossians, an epistle containing not a single OT citation. Does Paul's use of "saints" in the greeting (1:2) allude to Daniel 7 (p. 26)? Does the gospel's fruitfulness "in all the earth" (1:6) hark back to the creation mandate in Gen 1:28, suggesting that the new creation is now inaugurated (pp. 41, 48–50)? Need we trace Paul's prayer that the Colossians be filled