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cultic centralization program. One wonders, however, whether H's centralization programs might have been better situated in other historical periods. Similarly, R. also fails to engage sufficiently with opposing views on the literary relationship among D, P/H, and Ezekiel. It is surprising that she does not even mention important works on the topic such as Benjamin Kilchör, *Mosetora und Jahwetora: Das Verhältnis von Deuteronomium 12–26 zu Exodus, Levitikus und Numeri* (BZABR 21; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2015); Michael A. Lyons, *From Law to Prophecy: Ezekiel's Use of the Holiness Code* (LHBOTS 507; New York: T&T Clark, 2009), and Risa Levitt Kohn, *A New Heart and a New Soul: Ezekiel, the Exile and the Torah* (JSOTSup 358; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002).

In short, while not everyone will agree with R.'s overall thesis, it is nevertheless thought-provoking research and a valuable resource for further studies of cultic centralization in ancient Israel.

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NAHUM WARD-LEV, *The Liberating Path of the Hebrew Prophets: Then and Now* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2019). Pp. xxvi + 235. Paper \$26.

In one of the most compelling books on the Hebrew Prophets published in the past few years, Nahum Ward-Lev takes up the ongoing challenge of engaging ancient literature in an authentic and relevant manner and provides readers with an accessible overview of the main scholarly conversations intertwined with his own journey with the prophetic texts. In the introduction, W.-L. describes three aims for the book, including (1) lifting up the “wisdom, courage, and vision in the prophetic literature,” (2) highlighting the “prophetic themes” that run from the Torah through the Prophets and on into contemporary life challenges, and (3) presenting “the Torah and the Prophets . . . as sacred texts fundamentally concerned with human liberation” (p. xxv). As he himself admits, his book goes beyond these initial aims to include further wrestling with the practical implications of these themes in both individual and collective life today.

Playing on the wording of the well-known lines from Amos 5:24, “Let justice roll down like a river, righteousness like a mighty stream,” W.-L. calls attention to the prophetic “stream” flowing through the Hebrew Bible and on into the work of modern-day prophets who join their voices with the ancient chorus, daring to imagine an alternative to an imperial model of life and society. This stream, as W.-L. points out repeatedly, is certainly not exclusive to the prophetic literature of the Hebrew Bible. The theme of liberation is foundational, threading through the Hebrew Bible from the first pages to the last, from the creation narratives to the mention of the Persian king Cyrus liberating the people to return to Jerusalem. Viewed in this context, the prophetic literature as represented by the so-called writing prophets reveals but one stage in an ongoing and developing dialogue about human flourishing. For the prophets, no phase in the story stood alone. Rather, each stage of Israel's journey with God was depicted as both connected to previous stages (for instance, viewing the “exodus as an extension of God's mighty acts during the creation” [p. 42]) and serving as a launchpad for imagining an alternative future (for instance, helping people under the weight of empire “to perceive the possibility of living outside of the oppressive structures of their day” [p. 42]). By highlighting the liberation themes woven through the Torah and

the Prophets, W.-L. brings to the forefront the aspects of the prophetic literature that make it timeless and an energizing source for the prophetic work going on at any point in the human journey.

As many scholars have pointed out, the prophetic literature in the Hebrew Bible is highly dependent on the covenant between God and humans as articulated in the Book of Deuteronomy. W.-L. points out that, in the description of the covenant found in Deuteronomy, we glimpse a progression toward a more mutual relationship—a journeying together that involves ongoing dialogue and increasing intimacy, and the risks and responsibilities inherent in relationships. He writes, “Dialogue and enacting love are the way forward on the liberation journey” (p. 178). He then describes prophetic testimony as what “points the way forward to a more relational society” (p. 179). Engaging with the work of Martin Buber (*I and Thou* [trans. R. G. Smith; New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1958]), W.-L. demonstrates how the Hebrew prophets, in calling the people back to covenant relationship, acknowledged both the transitory and the relational nature of life. Like the people to whom the prophets spoke and wrote in the first millennium B.C.E., people today find their vision clouded by productivity, efficiency, and individuality, and, as W.-L. points out, voices ranging from the prophet Isaiah in eighth-century B.C.E. Jerusalem to bell hooks in twentieth-century America call us back to shared humanity, liberation, and mutual, open dialogue.

Ward-Lev accomplishes a remarkable convergence between content and form in his writing, joining the dialogue making up the prophetic literature in the Hebrew Bible as much as talking to his readers about it. He writes as one at home in the art of Hebrew poetry as exemplified in the prophetic literature. Using his personal experiences on the Rio Grande River as a metaphor for the prophetic stream, he writes, “As it follows the twisting course of an ancient rift in the arid desert, the river sings the song of life, a multioctave melody of unfolding possibility” (p. 183).

This book fills a gap in the recent literature in the sense that it is far easier to write about either modern-day prophets or biblical prophets. For example, Albert Raboteau’s book *American Prophets: Seven Religious Radicals and Their Struggle for Social and Political Justice* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016) provides a compelling presentation of modern religious radicals and how their work and experiences aligned with the prophetic tradition. Charles Strain, in his book *The Prophet and the Bodhisatva: Daniel Berrigan, Thich Nhat Hanh, and the Ethics of Peace and Justice* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2014), examines the articulation and embodiment of moral ideals of peace and justice that cross religious boundaries; while Walter Brueggemann’s *From Judgment to Hope: A Study on the Prophets* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2019) explores the ways the biblical prophets were free from the dominant assumptions of their day and called people to join them in daring to imagine an alternative, and Peter Gentry’s *How to Read and Understand the Biblical Prophets* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017) provides a brief and accessible introduction to covenant, repetition or parallelism, use of imagery, and a number of other elements of the prophetic literature in the Hebrew Bible that can leave a modern reader lost or missing the point. W.-L. manages to bridge the gap, bringing together the most significant modern scholarship on the prophetic literature with rigorous reflection on the ongoing implications and embodiments of the messages of liberation lived and articulated by the Hebrew Prophets. As Walter Brueggemann notes in his foreword, “[T]he book in a singular way serves to connect the dynamism of the old covenant tradition and the prospect

and reality of faithful covenant living in contemporary culture” (p. xi). *The Liberating Path of the Hebrew Prophets* is both academic and personal, rigorous and practical. It reads like a magnum opus—not in the sense of a literary work that overshadows W.-L.’s everyday work facilitating multifaith dialogue and learning, but in the sense of a cohesive and integrated summation of a life spent immersed in the prophetic literature, in intentional community, and in creatively and vulnerably wrestling with what it looks like to stand on the shoulders of the Hebrew prophets today.

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JENNI WILLIAMS, *The Kingdom of Our God: A Theological Commentary on Isaiah* (London: SCM, 2019). Pp. x + 229. Paper \$35/£19.99.

This commentary contains an introduction and three main parts that correspond to the standard threefold division of the Book of Isaiah (chaps. 1–39, 40–55, 56–66). In the introduction, Williams briefly treats basic issues, such as the historical background, authorship, and unity of the book and also articulates her approach to the Christian interpretation of Isaiah. This work provides a guide to reading the Book of Isaiah as a narrative of God’s purposes unfolding in the world, and in this way it serves as a specifically “theological” commentary. Since this theological aspect is what distinguishes this commentary from others, it will be the main focus of this review.

Before evaluating the treatment of theological themes, however, there is another characteristic of this commentary that ought to be mentioned at the outset: its readability. The author has achieved an elegant style while also managing to address the complexities of the text and its historical details in a succinct manner. She offers summary explanations of important concepts from the OT, such as Sheol (p. 38), *hesed* (p. 59), the divine name and divine glory (p. 134), as well as background information, including historical periods, important events, and political realities, without extraneous detail or lengthy footnotes. In lieu of prolonged expositions on key concepts or important works in the history of Isaian studies, W. provides a list for further reading (pp. 208–10) to which she periodically directs the interested reader. All of this prevents the discussion from digressing while also giving the reader a basic understanding of the historical and theological background of the book. Although there are a few places where the brevity of the discussion leads to a lack of clarity (e.g., the discussion of apocalypse/apocalyptic literature on pp. 74–76), overall the author succeeds admirably in providing a focused analysis of Isaiah.

Regarding the theological dimension of her commentary, W. seeks to examine “how the New Testament and Christians have used the book of Isaiah to understand better the life and mission of Jesus of Nazareth and his calling to his Church” (p. 2). Throughout the commentary, this statement serves as the criterion for including in the analysis certain observations about the use of Isaiah in the NT. These observations are, for the most part, well integrated into the discussion, and W. does a good job of illuminating the textual and conceptual connections between Isaian texts and the NT texts that draw upon them. There are, however, one or two places where the connections to the NT could benefit from a fuller treatment (e.g., pp. 34–35, 183), yet, given the brevity of the work, this is to be expected.