

Possibly my major critique is that the editors and authors seem to make a dichotomy between Luke's social concerns and his theological concerns. It has been traditional to do this, but is it valid? Up front I must point out a notable exception found in Joel Green's contribution on "Salvation in Luke-Acts" (see also David Peterson's article on "Worship," esp. 389-393). Green's essay highlights the socioeconomic and communal dimensions of the salvific concept. Even though he focuses more on the personal aspect of salvation, the social is not ignored.

Ben Witherington III's piece on "Salvation and Health," on the other hand, is a classic example of the sharp dichotomy between "true salvation" (a personal eschatological salvation), and the "mundane salvation" (such as healing and other social deliverances). With these dichotomized presuppositions the wholistic theology of salvation that Luke presents is missed. Luke, both in the Gospel and in Acts, sees the salvific event/process as involving deliverance from physical, social, and personal/spiritual sins and evils. We misread Luke when we attempt to downplay any aspect of what is involved in the initiation into the Reign of God.

Even if the editors and authors philosophically could not integrate Luke's social and personal theology, or view it as inseparable, I reckon that a section or chapter on his social theology would be appropriate. While saying this, I must compliment the editors on devoting a chapter on looking at Acts from a social-scientific perspective—even though some argue that this Lukan material is not amenable to such an interpretation. It is doubly surprising, therefore, that sociohistorical and descriptive studies (to which the Lukan material is much more amenable) are limited to Brian Capper's contribution on "Reciprocity and the Ethic of Acts." And, even though this is a fine article that addresses the Greco-Roman literary resonances in Acts, it fails to highlight the sociohistorical Palestinian economic background to Luke's report.

The weaknesses of this study should not in the least subtract significantly from the benefit it has in the library and study of any scholar, particularly the evangelical pastor and student. Kudos for another worthwhile volume in the burgeoning contemporary Luke/Acts studies.

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Moxnes, Halvor, ed. *Constructing Early Christian Families: Family as Social Reality and Metaphor*. London: Routledge, 1997. 304 pp. Hardcover, \$75.00; Paperback, \$24.95.

This collection of articles by a truly international team of scholars promises a significant advance of the discussion of the impact of the cultural context of kinship on the ethos and structures of the early church and the texts of the NT. This conversation is truly interdisciplinary, being fed by cultural anthropological investigations of Mediterranean families (work connected, for example, with the names of Julian Pitt-Rivers and J. G. Peristiany), classical studies of Greek and Roman families (notably found in the work of Keith Bradley, R. P. Saller, and S. C. Humphreys), and earlier investigations of household codes, family relationships, and fictive kinship in the NT (an area dominated by the names of David Balch, John H. Elliott, K. C. Hanson, and others). The essays in this volume are highly conversant with each of these areas of

research and are executed with a high degree of scholarly acumen.

After an introduction to the whole by Halvor Moxnes, four essays introduce "The social context of early Christian families": Halvor Moxnes, "What is family? Problems in Constructing Early Christian Families"; Santiago Guijarro, "The Family in First-Century Galilee"; J. M. G. Barclay, "The Family as the Bearer of Religion in Judaism and Early Christianity"; and S. C. Barton, "The Relativisation of Family Ties in the Jewish and Graeco-Roman Traditions." A second part explores "Family as Metaphor": E. M. Lassen, "The Roman Family: Ideal and Metaphor"; P. F. Esler, "Family Imagery and Christian Identity in Gal 5:13 to 6:10"; K. O. Sandnes, "Equality within Patriarchal Structures: Some NT Perspectives on the Christian Fellowship as a Brother- or Sisterhood and a Family"; Reidar Aasgaard, "Brotherhood in Plutarch and Paul: Its Role and Character"; Lone Fatum, "Brotherhood in Christ: A Gender Hermeneutical Reading of 1 Thessalonians." The third part moves into the narrower focus of "Family, Sexuality, and Asceticism in Early Christianity." Dale Martin offers an essay on "Paul without Passion: On Paul's Rejection of Desire in Sex and Marriage," while two other scholars analyze the family in Gnostic texts: Risto Uro, "Asceticism and Anti-Familial Language in the *Gospel of Thomas*"; and I. S. Gilhus, "Family Structures in Gnostic Religion."

On the whole, this collection should be regarded as essential reading for those who desire to hear the NT in its first-century context, who want to understand the models of kinship and fraternal relationships that these authors and readers assumed and imported into the texts (rather than impose modern cultural assumptions of the same). These essays would be best appreciated after reading another recent contribution to this field of research, namely, Carolyn Osiek and David Balch, *Families in the New Testament World: Households and House Churches* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1997), which is a more comprehensive and synthetic treatment. The contributions by Moxnes, Guijarro, Barclay, Barton, Aasgaard, Esler, and Sandnes will be of particular importance to the student of the NT. The first five of these authors provide essential foundational material on the nature of Greco-Roman and Jewish families (read from both textual and archaeological resources) and on the other groups prior to and contemporary with the early church that proposed alternative structures to the natural kinship group, while the last two offer models for ways in which this material can be applied soundly and fruitfully to the reading of particular texts (Esler on Galatians, Sandnes on Philemon).

Two of the articles, while fascinating, were not wholly convincing. Lone Fatum offers a bold and challenging reading of 1 Thessalonians, arguing that Paul's concept of "brotherhood" was formed wholly along the lines of the patriarchal family in which women were present but certainly not equal members. She correctly notes that females generally fit into society through being "embedded" in some male (generally a father or husband), but she does not demonstrate that Paul's use of "brother" terminology must be read as in fact gender exclusive rather than generic. She presents a cogent challenge to the assumption that the discussions of "brotherhood" in Paul or Plutarch or Aristotle can automatically be read as including a "sisterhood" as well, but there remains ample evidence to suggest that both Plutarch and Paul regarded their discussions of brotherhood to be equally applicable to, and inclusive of, sisterhood and, generically, siblinghood. Although Plutarch's treatise,

"On Fraternal Affection," speaks only of "brothers," he applies the same virtues and ethos in his presentation of two sisters who die together resisting a tyrant in his "On the Virtues of Women." In a similar way, Paul gives the label "sister" to specific women (Rom 16:1; possibly Phlm 2) and speaks of the "brother or sister" as he develops casuistic rules for divorce in the case of the marriage of believers to unbelievers. James also provides early evidence of viewing women in the church as "sisters" (2:15), as does the Paulinist author of 1 Tim 5:2, irrespective of their being embedded in some male Christian as wife or daughter. Such texts continue to recommend the view that female Christians were indeed part of the siblinghood of Christ, and that the generalizing of "brotherhood" to include female members remains appropriate.

Among the three articles in Part III, Dale Martin's contribution would probably be the most helpful for students of the NT and early Christianity. He cautions us against reading our modern notions of "healthy sexual desire" into Paul's affirmation of marriage as a pure concession to human weakness ("it is better to marry than to burn," 1 Cor 7:9), and offers an insightful discussion of Paul's distrust of passion (desire) itself in the context of Greco-Roman philosophical treatments of "desire." His presentation of Rom 1 and 1 Thess 4 does not, unfortunately (and no doubt of necessity, given constraints of length), treat the complexities of the exegesis of those texts, with the result that this reader, at least, remains more conscious of possible objections than convinced by Martin's argument. I have also found in my own study of certain Hellenistic philosophical discussions (particularly Hellenistic Jewish texts like *Epistle of Aristeas*, *4 Maccabees*, and Philo) that it is not the experience of passion that is deemed shameful or problematic, but only allowing those passions to govern one's actions. While I therefore appreciate Martin's caveat against viewing passion within marriage as positive for Paul, I find it still possible to speak of passions as indifferent in and of themselves and as sources for shame or condemnation only when they are allowed to drive the person to illicit or vicious behavior (however that is defined within the culture of the author, e.g., Jewish or Christian or Roman).

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† Murphy, Frederick J. *Fallen is Babylon: The Revelation to John*. The New Testament Context, ed., Howard Clark Kee and J. Andrew Overman. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1998. xx + 472 pp. Paperback, \$30.00.

Frederick J. Murphy, better known for his work in the Jewish context of Jesus and first-century Christianity, here tries his hand at the most challenging document in the Christian canon. His commentary on Revelation exhibits his purpose, in harmony with the purpose of the commentary series, to illuminate the reader's understanding of Revelation by situating it in its various contexts, including historical, social, religious, and literary. His particular area of interest, not surprisingly, is to focus on the Jewishness of Revelation and of the Christian perspective that Revelation reflects. After nearly sixty pages of introductory comments, Murphy offers more of a section-by-section commentary than a verse-by-verse treatment.