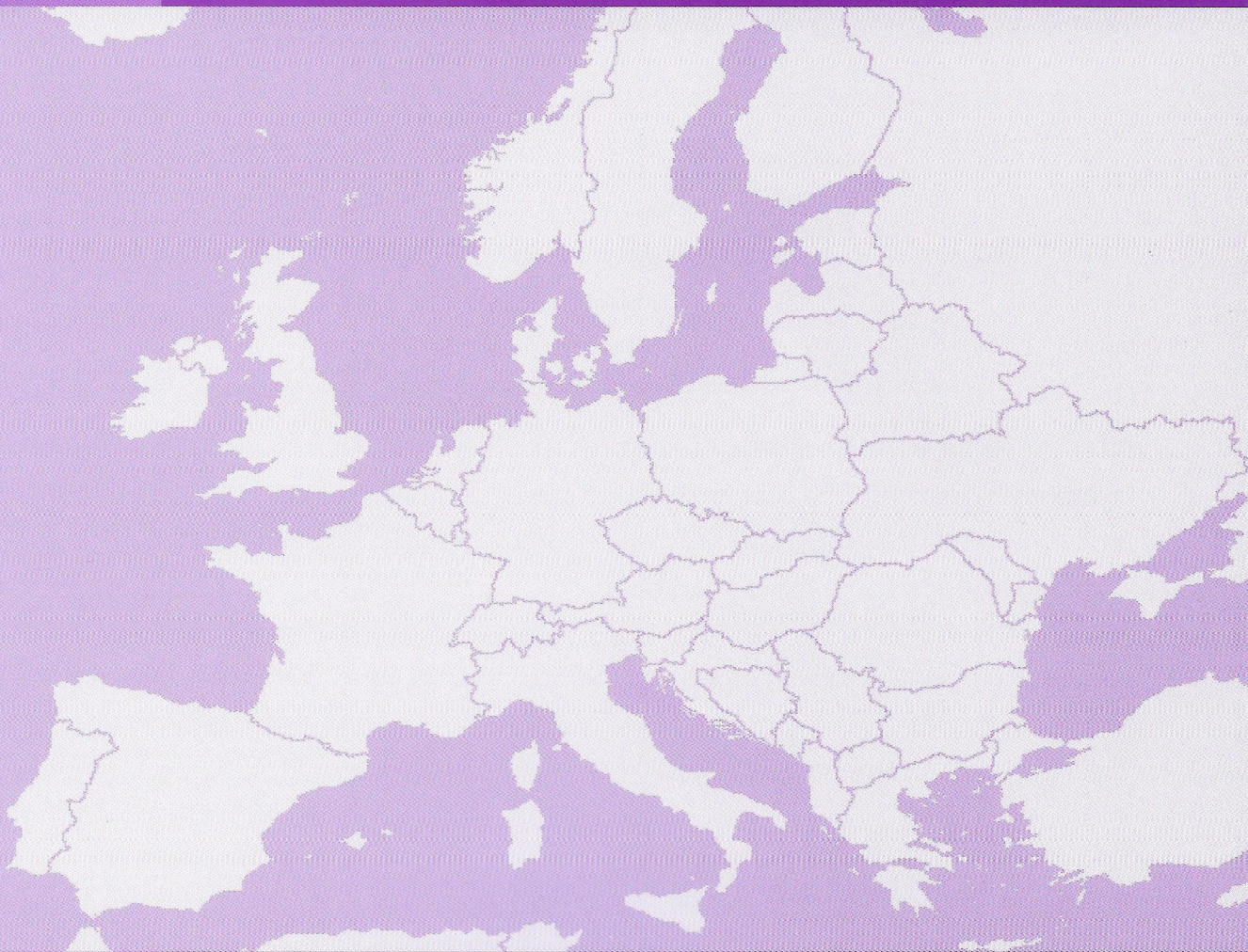


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and rhetorically gifted teacher of the law in Luke 4:16–30, and how the apostles are compensated by the gift of the Spirit for their lack of education, surprising the people in Jerusalem at Pentecost by their ability to speak many languages and to deliver learned speeches.

The discussion of Paul opens with an extensive analysis of Acts 22:3 in which she argues that the historical Paul was probably born in Tarsus and moved to Jerusalem at some point in his childhood or youth, where he had a loose connection with Gamaliel. Luke seeks to make the most out of this for his own purposes: on the one hand, he emphasizes Paul's birth in the renowned city of Tarsus, where Paul learned Greek as mother language (Acts 21:37), on the other hand, he presents Paul in his defence before his fellow Jews as having been brought up (by his parents) in Jerusalem and educated by Gamaliel. Thus, Luke associates Paul both with Jewish and Greek learning. This illustrates what Hess designates as Luke's 'controlled fiction', and also Hess' own methodology, that is characterised by a cautious use of *Redaktionskritik*.

A few critical comments apropos this interpretation. First, it seems to me that the syntactically more natural reading that takes 'at the feet of Gamaliel' to belong to Paul's 'upbringing' coheres better with what Hess views as Luke's strategy: this leaves room, on the one hand, for a considerable time of childhood spent in Tarsus, and on the other hand, presents Gamaliel as Paul's 'spiritual father' in Jerusalem.

Secondly, this alternative reading has also been proposed by Andrie Du Toit in an extensive article on Acts 22:3 which revisits the classic study of W.C. van Unnik on this theme, but which is missing from Hess' bibliography (Andrie B. du Toit, 'A Tale of Two Cities: "Tarsus or Jerusalem" Revisited,' *New Testament Studies* 46.3 [2000] 375–402). More generally, the secondary literature Hess uses is predominantly German; only the major English monographs and commentaries are consulted (but the female Acts-scholar Loveday Alexander is transformed into Alexander Loveday), and Franco-phone scholarship on Acts is absent.

Thirdly, my main point of criticism is that reflection on large concepts such as 'Judaism' and 'Christianity' is lacking in the book. The implicit assumption seems to be that true Judaism is Pharisaic Judaism. Hess claims that Luke plays with the 'tension' (276) between Paul's Jewish and his Hellenistic education and presents Paul as 'more than a Jew' (189) because of his Hellenistic credentials; similarly, Apollos was a Jew, *but* strongly assimilated to Hellenistic culture (357). This is not in line with the Lucan use of *Ioudaios*. Luke presents Paul as an educated, cosmopolitan, Pharisaic

Jew, who as such was a disciple of Christ. Such a presentation serves an apologetic agenda not only towards the Greco-Roman world, but also towards the Jewish world. It is with good reason that the defence speeches find their climax before the cosmopolitan Jewish king Agrippa.

This criticism does not diminish the fact that Hess has successfully navigated many exegetical debates (covering the major episodes in Acts 13, 17, 18–19, 24–26 and 28) and has convincingly substantiated her main thesis. The book is warmly recommended to anyone interested in Luke–Acts, in the debate about the level of education among early Christians, and in the way early Christians sought to position themselves in their Greco-Roman and Jewish contexts.

Arco den Heijer
Kampen, the Netherlands

Revelation: An Introduction and Commentary
Tyndale New Testament Commentaries 20

Ian Paul

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RÉSUMÉ

Ian Paul a rédigé un excellent commentaire sur l'Apocalypse, bien argumenté, pour la série renouvelée des commentaires Tyndale du Nouveau Testament. L'introduction détaillée traite des diverses approches d'interprétation du livre et aborde les principales questions d'introduction. Le commentaire par périopes s'organise en trois points : le contexte, le commentaire et la théologie. Il considère que l'Apocalypse présente un genre littéraire mélangé : c'est une apocalypse, une lettre et un écrit prophétique. Il aide les chrétiens à vivre, affermis par l'espérance future, dans leur époque contemporaine.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Ian Paul schrieb einen wohl begründeten, hervorragenden Kommentar zum Buch der Offenbarung in der Reihe der revidierten Tyndale New Testament Commentaries. In einer detaillierten Einleitung erörtert er Ansätze zur Offenbarung und die damit verbundenen grundlegenden Einleitungsfragen. Der Kommentar zu den einzelnen Perikopen ist jeweils in drei Überschriften mit den dazugehörigen Abschnitten eingeteilt: Kontext, Erläuterung und Theologie. Die Offenbarung ist genreübergreifend: Apokalypse, Brief und Prophetie. Dieses Buch hilft Christen, in ihrer eigenen Zeit und Welt zu leben und dabei in ihrer Hoffnung auf die Zukunft gestärkt zu werden.

SUMMARY

Ian Paul has written a well-argued, excellent com-

mentary on Revelation in the series of revised Tyndale New Testament Commentaries. In a detailed Introduction he discusses the questions of approaches to Revelation and its major introductory matters. The commentary on the pericopes is arranged under three headings: context, comment and theology. Revelation has a mixed genre: apocalypse, letter and prophecy. The book helps Christians to live in their own present time strengthened by hope for the future.

* * * *

The widely used series of Tyndale Commentaries has served several generations of readers well for over sixty years. It is a welcome decision of the editors that they are continuing the series, now in its third period. Some authors will revise their own commentary that appeared in the second series, and some volumes are written by new authors. For this third series, Ian Paul, adjunct professor at Fuller Theological Seminary, was asked to write a new commentary on Revelation.

Based on many years' research in this area, Paul has written a well-argued, clear and helpful commentary on one of the most difficult books of the New Testament. In the Introduction (1–56) he discusses the questions of approaches to Revelation and its major introductory matters under the following headings: 1. Approaching Revelation; 2. Who was John?; 3. The date of Revelation; 4. The social and historical context; 5. Did John actually have a vision?; 6. What kind of text is Revelation?; 7. Reading Revelation's imagery; 8. Revelation's use of numbers; 9. Revelation's use of the Old Testament; 10. The structure of Revelation; 11. Revelation's main theological themes; 12. Approaches to its interpretation. Paul introduces readers to the major – often diverging – views held throughout the history of the interpretation of Revelation, and at the same time he argues convincingly for his own position. Below are examples of his outlook at key points.

As regards the authorship of Revelation, Paul summarises the arguments that have been brought against the traditional view that John the Apostle may be the author of Revelation, and he does not find these counterarguments convincing (8–11). He holds the view that Eusebius may have misread Papias when Eusebius thought that Papias knew two distinct persons by the name John: an apostle and an elder (8). Paul thinks Papias may have referred to one and the same person, because an apostle may also have been an elder (see also 1 Pet 5:1). He concludes that there is nothing in the text of Revelation that would contradict the view of Irenaeus that John wrote Revelation towards the end of the reign of emperor Domitian (13, 16).

Ian Paul rightly emphasizes that Revelation

cannot simply be called an apocalypse, because it also has some characteristics of an apostolic letter, and it also repeatedly uses the term prophecy concerning its own content (29–30, 60; Rev 1:3; 22:7, 10, 18, 19). Even as a Christian apocalyptic writing, it decidedly addresses the present life of the readers (28, 48). It offers help to its ancient (and present-day) readers 'to live courageously in an inhospitable climate' (5).

Paul shows convincingly that Revelation is 'a very carefully composed text' (36), with explicit structural markers (41). As was customary in ancient times when a longer writing was composed, we can suppose that Revelation was written over an extended period of time (12, 24).

Revelation shows an interest in numbers; this was also characteristic for the ancient Greeks (36–38). The significance of the number seven is rightly highlighted by Paul (34–35). He also shows in the Introduction and throughout the commentary that the author of Revelation employs numerous allusions to Old Testament ideas and imageries, often reinterpreting them (39–40).

When interpreting Revelation, it is important to see that John used metaphors and did not claim to identify exactly what he saw (23–24). The message and symbolism of the visions are more important than the visions themselves (24–25). We have to pay attention to the words that appear repeatedly in Revelation (35, 44).

Ian Paul summarises in a helpful way which major approaches of interpretation have been offered in the history of interpreting Revelation (48–51). He claims that certain 'aspects' of each of the major four approaches can be accepted even if not one of them alone is capable of offering an overarching explanation of the book. Revelation remains important in the life of the Church not only because it points to atonement in the sacrifice of Jesus the 'slain lamb', who also shares to throne with the Father (46), but because this writing has 'the most developed trinitarian theology of any New Testament book' (4).

The expositional sections of the commentary are based on an excellent 'analysis' of the structure of Revelation (53–56). The commentary on each pericope has three subsections: context, comment and theology. The commentary is based on thorough scholarly exegesis, yet it is written in such a clear language and style that even readers without knowledge of the Greek language can understand it and greatly benefit from it.

*Peter Balla
Budapest*