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ZECHARIAH 9–14. International Exegetical Commentary on the Old Testament. By Paul L. Redditt

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ZECHARIAH 9–14. International Exegetical Commentary on the Old Testament. By Paul L. Redditt. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2012. 164 pages. Hardcover. \$81.00.

Paul Redditt has spent most of his academic career publishing monographs and articles on the book of Zechariah and so his commentary on the book's last six chapters exhibits seasoned reflections and numerous insights on a very difficult text. Following the goal of the

International Exegetical Commentary on the Old Testament, Redditt brings diachronic and synchronic methods into closer discussion with each other. On each section of Zechariah 9–14 he offers a translation with notes, a synchronic and diachronic analysis, and then concludes by integrating both methods in what he calls a “concluding integrative summary.”

Redditt believes that Zechariah 9 was composed during the hopeful days of late sixth-century Persian Yehud while Zerubbabel or his Davidic successor lived in Jerusalem. Zechariah 10 possibly arose in the early part of the fifth-century while people still believed that Israel and Judah would reunite. After these hopes failed the darker and more strident chapters 11–14 were added, perhaps sometime during the latter part of the fifth century. Unfortunately, the author does not embrace the idea that the hope for a new king emerges after 9:9–10 and so he does not interpret 10:2, 4; 11:13; 12:10; 13:7 as messianic promises. The Davidic hope died and in its place the author/redactor promotes a divine theocracy (14:9, 17). Redditt does not believe that Zechariah 9–14 exhibits apocalyptic eschatology (as this term is generally understood) and his position on the Book of the Twelve is that it is not “... a collection of the sayings of twelve individual prophets, but is a composite work that *over time shows more and more internal dialogue among collections*” (21).

Redditt’s keen synchronic analysis is on display when he notes that in Zechariah 9 Yahweh is the chief actor as well as the main speaker. Zechariah 9:1–6a and 14–17 describe what Yahweh will do in the future. In these parts Yahweh speaks in the third person. In

the middle section, 9:6b–13, Yahweh speaks in the first person. Redditt then suggests a chiasmic structure that accents the main theme of the chapter—God’s re-establishment of his kingdom.

- 9:1–6a Yahweh’s restoration of his kingdom
- 9:6b–8 Yahweh speaks of his redemptive plan
- 9:9–10 Yahweh presents Zion’s King
- 9:11–13 Yahweh speaks of his redemptive plan
- 9:14–17 Yahweh guards his restored kingdom

Redditt pays close attention to earlier texts, believing that Zechariah 9–14 alludes to and echoes previous passages more than any other section of the OT. For instance, he points out that 9:11–17 presents an assorted array of earlier themes like imprisonment, warfare, theophany, and miraculous fertility. The movement is from ultimate despair in a waterless pit (9:11) to absolute joy in God’s provision of grain and new wine (9:17). This not only depicts Israel’s sojourn in Egypt and subsequent deliverance but also Judah’s exile in Babylon and the people’s rescue by “Yhwh of armies” (9:15). Another link to the exodus comes in 9:14 which envisions God’s march from Sinai to Zion. Since he led his people once, he will lead them again.

Throughout his commentary Redditt displays an astute awareness of how units are linked together. For example, in his comments on 11:4 he observes that the falling trees in 11:1–3 prepare readers for the fallen hope that the north and south will be reunited as envisioned in, e.g., 9:12 and 10:6–12. Moreover, the text’s mockery of the shepherds (11:1–3) paves the way for the prophetic sign-act involving shepherds (11:4–16) and judgment against the worthless shepherd (11:17).

One more example of Redditt's synchronic analysis will suffice. He notes that 12:1–13:9 goes full circle. Promises for divine protection begin the unit (12:1–9) and are followed by thorough-going repentance and purification (12:10–13:9a). But these chapters end with a description of reconciliation between God and his people (13:9b). The journey is racked with pain and suffering but ends with gladness and joy. Chapter 14 covers much of the same territory though it concludes with a loftier destination.

Who are the uncompassionate shepherds in chapter 11? Redditt thinks that they represent Yehud's religious leaders—possibly Levites and priests—in the fifth century who took orders from governors under Persian influence and then enacted their policies. The author maintains that the text “may well have been condemning the priests at the temple for

their collusion with the actual overlords, the Persians. Such a condemnation might well need to be made quietly, discreetly, even ambiguously” (84). And who are the merchants in Zechariah 11? Redditt believes that they are the Persian officials who were overseers of the shepherds, i.e., the Judean temple personnel.

In bringing together a lifetime of work in Zechariah 9–14, Redditt's commentary sheds significant light upon a very obscure section of the Bible. His connections to the New Testament are few and far between and his fascination with diachronic issues often obscures the organic unity of these chapters. That said, Redditt's commentary is a welcome contribution, not only in Zechariah studies, but also for those who continue to research and write on the Book of the Twelve.

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