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Schroeder's "The Bible in Medieval Tradition: The Book of Genesis" (Book Review)

Lisa Cutforth-Anderson
Alberta Bible College

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The Bible in Medieval Tradition: The Book of Genesis,

translated and edited by Joy A. Schroeder. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2015. 307 pp. \$35.00. ISBN 9780802868459

Reviewed by Lisa Cutforth-Anderson, Learning Resource Coordinator and Old Testament professor, Alberta Bible College, Calgary, AB

This book is one volume of the *Bible in Medieval Tradition* series, which strives to offer medieval works to twenty-first century audiences for study, spiritual formation and preaching. This volume accomplishes that aim as Joy Schroeder provides previously unavailable-in-English access to the mostly allegorical hermeneutic of the Middle Ages. She does this by offering the first English translations of several medieval, Latin commentaries on the book of Genesis. She unites these with previously translated writings to present one complete literary unit of the Book of Genesis. Although Latin scholar is not on her resumé, readers may trust her translation skills as she provides extensive citations for primary and secondary sources that readers can analyze themselves. The writings she includes are by Remigius of Auxerre of the Carolingian tradition (Gen 1-3), Rupert of Deutz (4-8), Hildegard of Bingen (9,18,23,24), Andrew of Saint Victor (9-30), Peter Comestor (31-41), Nicholas of Lyra (42-46) and Denis the Carthusian (47-50). Her informative introduction includes a brief biography of each author, as well as information on their personal hermeneutic of scripture. She included these specific samples on Genesis because these writers either built on each other's writings or refuted them. Placed alongside each other in this way, she offers a "bird's eye view" of medieval hermeneutics.

Besides offering a general view, the format of her book allows readers to zero in on specific passages. Scripture quotations are in bold typeface and her extensive footnotes offer additional explanation of translation problems, cross references to other medieval authors, or general insights into medieval interpretation. As opposed to endnotes, these footnotes allow the reader immediate and easy access to additional information, and to her understanding of the writings included in this volume. In addition to these notes, this volume contains an extensive bibliography and indexing by name, subject or scripture reference.

In contrast, it is not always easy to understand how some of the authors interpreted scripture as they did. Shroeder does not include many comments on their actual interpretations of scripture; but presents the texts as she discovered them. Therefore, I would suggest this book is better suited as a college-level textbook for presenting alternative interpretation styles as opposed to a study of Genesis. Shroeder is to be commended for sifting through the plethora of Christian writing in the Middle Ages and collating these selections in such a way as to allow English-only readers to trace the development of biblical interpretation at a specific point in church history.