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Uytanlet's "Matthew: A pastoral and contextual commentary" (book review)

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Book Reviews



Uytanlet, S. L. (2017). *Matthew: A pastoral and contextual commentary*. Carlisle, Cumbria, UK: Langham Global Library. 281 pp. \$28.00. ISBN 9781783681716

The List of Abbreviations (p. xv-xviii) contains many familiar titles as well as those representing multiculturalism. The “bibliography” at the end of the volume is not a bibliography but is a list of “Recommended Works.” In 278 pages of introduction and commentary on the gospel of Matthew, there are 486 footnotes. Supposedly all of the abbreviations appear in footnotes and all footnotes have some support in the list of abbreviations. But there is no cumulated list of authors cited.

The language of the commentary is highly readable but sentences sometimes suffer from a weakness in syntax. There are helpful charts and topical discussions.

The commentary on the gospel of Matthew is divided into twelve segments: 1:1-2:23, 3:1-4:16, 4:17-7:29, 8:1-9:34, 9:35-10:42, 11:1-12:50, 13:1-58, 14:1-16:20, 16:21-22:14, 22:15-46, 23:1-25:46, 26:1-28:15. But there is no list of these segments. They serve as chapters in the book but do not appear in the table of contents. Segments are not numbered as chapters.

Segments often begin, or end, with a summary of the flow of the gospel. These summaries serve as transitions from one segment to the next, describe the development of the gospel, and prepare the reader for the next segment. The flow and development of the gospel of Matthew is treated brilliantly throughout the commentary, but this material has not been gathered into an outline or analysis.

This volume does not seek to advance current scholarship on the gospel of Matthew. Neither does it serve as an exegetical treatment of the gospel in the practice of detailed analyses of so many scholarly tomes. Neither is this a homiletical commentary; the construction of sermons is clearly not the first intent of this material. Nor is this strictly a devotional commentary. And the text of the New International Version is not reproduced here.

According to its subtitle this book is a pastoral and exegetical commentary. This commentary is a faithful explanation of the content of the gospel of Matthew, usually illustrated from Asian cultures such as Chinese or Filipino. Treatment of the text of the gospel of Matthew is straightforward, leading to single conclusions, while rarely delving into multitudes of options for understanding a particular text.

The culture of the people of the Matthean gospel is more Asian than Western. Writing from an Asian perspective is, therefore, illuminating, bringing fresh insight to the gospel. Near the beginning of my notes I wrote “This is going to be fun.” It was. Highly recommended, within its scope.

Reviewer

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