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Corley, Lemke, and Lovejoy's "Biblical Hermeneutics: A Comprehensive Introduction to Interpreting Scripture" (Book Review)

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**Biblical Hermeneutics: A Comprehensive Introduction
to Interpreting Scripture,**

edited by Bruce Corley, Steve Lemke, and Grant Lovejoy. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2002. 544 pp. \$29.99. ISBN: 9780805424928

Reviewed by Greg Rosauer, Librarian, Bethlehem College & Seminary, Minneapolis, MN

In its second edition, *Biblical Hermeneutics* is a collection of 28 essays on biblical interpretation meant as a comprehensive introduction for students and ministers. Two essays from the 1996 edition were either replaced or cut (“Early Baptist Hermeneutics” and “Preunderstanding and the Hermeneutical Spiral”), and seven new chapters were added comprising part four on genres. The purpose of the book remains the same as the first edition: to fill a particular curricular gap at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, with which most of the contributors are associated.

Part one is composed of three introductory essays. The first helpfully introduces terms like “exegesis” and “hermeneutics” along with the broad steps of interpretation. The second chapter introduces the basic division of data (grammatical and historical) in modern interpretation and how to approach them. The last chapter commends the inductive bible study method, but this chapter has little if any bearing on the rest of the book.

Part two contains eight essays on the history of biblical interpretation where other similar books usually lump interpretive history into a single chapter. The quality amongst these varies (chapters 8 and 11 being the best in my judgment). Moreover, they should have kept the essay “Early Baptist Hermeneutics” from the first edition as it was a unique feature of obvious value to those in the Baptist tradition. And for that reason alone, libraries may want to hold onto the first edition.

Part three is somewhat disjointed. Chapters 12–13 discuss inspiration and authority. Next, Millard Erickson’s essay (chapter 14) on language is characteristically clear and concise. The complicated worlds of both OT and NT textual criticisms are summarized well in chapter 15. This brief treatment of both together is as good as any I’ve come across, but is now slightly dated. Chapter 16 on translations – while it has a concise discussion of the history of the English Bible – is noticeably dated as it doesn’t consider major new translations in the last 15 years (e.g., ESV, HCSB, and 2011 NIV) or recent developments in translation theory.

Part four (chapters 17–23) on the specific genres of scripture is by far the most valuable addition to the second edition. Each of these chapters succinctly demonstrates useful approaches to the various genres and subgenres of scripture.

Part five (chapters 24–28) is entitled “From Exegesis to Proclamation” and these essays attempt to move the reader beyond the historical and theoretical issues of interpretation toward the application of the biblical text in proclamation – both contextualization and preaching. Chapter 24, while not designated “theological interpretation,” more or less fits into that recent trend, and – along with the following chapter – could have been placed in parts two or three. The last three chapters (26–28) properly deal with sermon preparation and preaching.

The after matter includes a lengthy glossary of terms in biblical studies, a helpful (but now dated) bibliography of biblical reference books, and a short index.

Comparing this title with more recent comprehensive introductions, it seems to fall short at two places: first, while the many authors are theologically and methodologically in the same camp, there is no guiding interpretive paradigm as with some textbooks by two or three authors (e.g., *Grasping God’s Word* [Zondervan, 2012] and *Invitation to Biblical Interpretation* [Kregel, 2011]) and of similar length. And, as a result of the many authors, the essays are uneven with some skewing technical and others overlapping in content. So, other than attempting to be logically ordered, the essays don’t feed into a controlling interpretive paradigm, and thus make it more akin to a handbook on interpretation. Second, the book may be too long for most introductory courses on interpretation, but not comprehensive enough for graduate theological students. As such, I doubt many who teach hermeneutics would use this book only or in its entirety. At best, professors may select a few of the better essays from it, but would not require the whole volume. Shorter, non-specialist introductions to biblical interpretation (like Robert Stein’s *A Basic Guide to Interpreting the Bible* [Baker, 2011] or Robert Plummer’s *40 Questions about Interpreting the Bible* [Kregel, 2010]) might serve beginners better.

**Bring Back the Bureaucrats: Why More Federal Workers
Will Lead to Better (and Smaller!) Government,**

by John J. DiIulio, Jr., West Conshohocken, PA: Templeton Press, 2014. 186 pp.
\$12.95. ISBN 9781599474670

*Reviewed by Dorothy J. Smith, Acquisitions Librarian,
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, TX*

Bring Back the Bureaucrats is the latest in the New Threats to Freedom series from Templeton Press. DiIulio, a self-described “pro-life and pro-poor Catholic Democrat,” is a professor of political science at the University of Pennsylvania (p. 9). He clearly presents his view of the big-government problem supported by numerous documented examples with graphs and charts as well as a proposed solution. He