

A House for My Name

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A Survey of the Old Testament

By Peter Leithart

Leithart's target or goal is to help us connect the dots. To show how episodes of the Bible fit together into the single story of God's works within the creation and especially with Israel.

His book is not necessarily for scholars and preachers, but it's "designed to be read aloud at the dinner table during family devotions" (p.15)

Brief exert: p. 130

When the Philistines capture the ark, it begins another exodus story. During the battle of Aphek, Israel shouts as the ark is brought into the camp, and the Philistines remember that 'These are the gods who smote the Egyptians with all kinds of plagues in the wilderness' (1 Samuel 4:7-8). But the Philistines haven't really learned much from the Exodus. They take the ark to Philistia, but the Lord sends plagues (5:6-12). It is not a surprise that Philistines get treated like Egyptians, since according to Genesis 10:13-14, they come from the family of "Mizraim," the Hebrew name for Egypt [the ESV translates it 'Egypt']. The Lord can handle the Philistines; long ago, He won a great war with their relatives, the Egyptians. As in the Exodus, Yahweh wars not only against a nation but against the gods of the nation. Yahweh's throne is put in the temple of Dagon, because the Philistines think Dagon has defeated Yahweh. In the morning, the image of Dagon is fallen before the ark, and the next day, he is broken to pieces (1 Samuel 5:1-5). The Lord judges the gods of Philistia as he had judged the gods of Egypt (Exodus 12:12).

Brief exert p. 162

Leithart will notice how the books of 1 & 2 Kings opens the history of the Northern Kingdom by talking about a group of seven kings and ends the story with another group of seven kings. In between these two groups is the work of Elijah & Elisha:

A. First seven kings

1. Jeroboam, 1 Kings 12:1-14:20
2. Nadab, 15:25-32
3. Baasha, 15:33-16:7
4. Elah, 16:8-10
5. Zimri, 16:11-20
6. Omri, 16:21-28
7. Ahab, 16:29-34

A, Last seven Kings:

1. Jeroboam II, 14:23-29
2. Zechariah, 15:8-12
3. Shallum, 15:13-16
4. Menahem, 15:17-22
5. Pekahiah, 15:23-26
6. Pekah, 15:27-31
7. Hoshea, 17:1-41

B. Ministry of Elijah & Elisha in the Northern Kingdom, 1 Kings 17.1-2 Kings 13:21

The author wants to observe how balanced this history is. Both groups of seven begin with a Jeroboam, and both end with a king whose rule is a terrible disaster (Ahab & Hoshea). Leithart notices how Elijah and Elisha are in the center of the book and spends his time developing the ministries of the two prophets.

I think this short book offers a good 30,000 foot overview of the story of Israel. It does read fairly easily and can be useful at home as a family study tool. I do not agree with all his parallels, at the same time he offers some meaty and thoughtful insight as to how many stories are linked at points we may overlook.

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