Book Reviews

Flavien Pardigon. *Paul Against the Idols: A Contextual Reading of the Areopagus Speech*. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2019.

Flavien Pardigon is a guest lecturer at Reformed Theological Seminary in Washington, DC. This book is "a substantial revision of a PhD dissertation submitted at Westminster Theological Seminary (Philadelphia) in December 2007." It shows a broad scope of knowledge and understanding, engaging in scholarly discussion while demonstrating the redemptive-historical interpretation and practical implications of Paul's Areopagus Speech (Acts 17:16–34) in light of the historical and literary context of Luke-Acts. The book, which has two parts, has a brief and commendable foreword by dissertation advisor William Edgar (xiii–xvi), an author's preface (xvii–xix), and a list of abbreviations (xx–xxiii). Part 1 ("Contextualizing and Orienting Our Reading of the Areopagus Speech") includes an introduction and three chapters. Part 2 ("A Contextual Reading of the Areopagus Speech") has six chapters, followed by an "exegetical epilogue" and conclusion. The author finishes the book with a bibliography, a valuable resource for further research into Luke-Acts, and indexes of modern authors, Scripture citations, and ancient sources (227–80).

The author explores Luke's theology, his use of the Old Testament, and the narrative setting for the story of Paul in Athens in light of the "macro-narrative framework" in chapters 1 to 3 (pages 1–97). He evaluates divergent interpretations and understandings of Luke's theology, primarily represented by historical-critical methods. He also identifies Luke as a redemptive-historical theologian, stating that "Luke's thought demonstrates a clear redemptive-historical structure and sensitivity" (10–11). He presupposes Luke to be a Trinitarian theologian, noting that "Luke-Acts is wholly

consecrated to the depiction of the triune God's activity in human history" (6–12). He also highlights the importance of Luke's biblical eschatology to the understanding of his interpretation of history in light of God's redemptive history in and through Israel (20). Exploring the use of the Old Testament, he argues that Luke uses "the Isaianic New Exodus program as the canvas for his own New Exodus program" in Luke-Acts. Therefore, the eschatological new exodus motif should be applied as "a primary interpretive lens in our study of Acts 17:16–34" (80). Evaluating the Athens episode along with the diverse speeches in Acts, the author emphasizes that "Acts 17 is the last so-called 'missionary speech' recorded in the book of Acts" (86).

Subsequently, the author extensively discusses "the micro-narrative" of the Athens episode itself in chapters 4 to 9 (101–216), dealing with the narrative frame of the speech (Acts 17:16–22a, 33–34), its beginning (Acts 17:22–23), God as Lord (Acts 17:24–25), the divine design for mankind (Acts 17:26–27), man's treason (Acts 17:28–29), and the eschatological proclamation of judgment (Acts 17:30–31).

Pardigon demonstrates keen insight and observation in his exegesis of verses 30 and 31 in light of the eschatological judgment, rightly seeing these verses as the conclusive thrust of the Areopagus speech (211–16). Thus, he argues that it is "God's universal lawsuit" against idol worshipers because they are covenant breakers, "The mention of the preparatory proceedings for God's universal lawsuit is syntactically and causally related to God's *commanding* to men to repent. … This double turn of events (imminent lawsuit and divine injunction), however, is a rhetorically effective and pressing inducement to repent." Indeed, it is a brilliant observation to see "God's universal lawsuit" in the historical context of Paul's Areopagus speech against the idol worshipers in Athens. Moreover, the author identifies idolatry as "seditious covenant-breaking" (212). Closely examining verse 31, the author correctly indicates that "a day" has been set for the final verdict and the "second Adam" as the judge has been appointed as well:

> Verse 31 now tells us that everything for the trial is in place and ready: the date has been set, the evidence and witness are gathered, and a competent and legitimate judge has been appointed to render the verdict. The date of the court session is set to "a day," but no specific data is offered in line with Jesus' words to his disciples in 1:7. This suggests both the eschatological nature of the "day" and its redemptive-historical imminence. In the ancient world, the setting of a date and appointment of a judge indicated that the trial was ready to start. … The characterization of the instrument appointed for this worldwide lawsuit is intriguing, to say the least: God will judge the inhabited world ἐν ἀνδρὶ. … Jesus is the Isaianic Servant who serves in Yahweh's lawsuit. … It has therefore unmistakable messianic and eschatological overtones, especially as it suggests that the judge is a "second Adam" who defines

> or establishes the final redemptive-historical age. … The one event that brought redemptive history to its telos and birthed the eschaton is, in Lukan short-hand, the resurrection of Jesus. Since Jesus' death "inaugurates" the eschatological lawsuit (proleptically, it represents the judgment of all of humanity), mankind is now arraigned before God's eschatological tribunal to answer for its idolatry. (213–16)

Introducing the good news of the gospel to idol worshipers in all nations is a worldwide lawsuit, as the author insightfully indicates. Furthermore, Jesus serves as the final judge in Yahweh's lawsuit on the appointed day of the Lord.

In the appendix, the author provides succinct insights into the "Areopagita" as "a powerful scriptural evidence *against* the theories of inclusivism," suggesting the proper approach to "a biblical theology of religion" (223–26). He convincingly notes that in light of the antithesis between unbelievers in Adam and believers in Christ, "The Areopagita is a powerful anti-idol polemic which demonstrates the foolish and culpable nature of man's religiosity outside of God's covenant statutes. It proclaims a final and eschatological judgment on all men who are in Adam but not in Christ, i.e., who belong to 'this age' which is set for destruction rather than to the 'age to come' that broke through in the person and work of Jesus" (224).

As an apologist and theologian Pardigon displays creative and sound scholarship. He engages with divergent scholarly opinions in the theology of Luke-Acts, Paul's apologetical method, and its apologetical and missiological implications in the global missional age. Moreover, he contributes valuable insights with in-depth analysis for missionaries, pastors, and believers, providing apologetical, hermeneutical, missiological, and theological insights and implications. He shows redemptive-historical consciousness in his analysis and interpretation of Luke-Acts and Paul's Areopagus speech.

Nevertheless, I would like to add a constructive suggestion to strengthen a comprehensive understanding of the implications of the text. Paul presupposed *the antithesis* between unbelievers in the first Adam and believers in the last Adam when he delivered his Areopagus speech. In that sense, Paul's audience, including the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers, were idol worshipers in the first Adam who broke the covenant of works. So, Paul's speech was an invitation to believe in Jesus Christ. This was an invitation not only to receive the good news of the gospel with repentance but also to receive the last Adam, who is the mediator of the covenant of grace. In other words, if we look at the text in light of the bipolar distinction between the covenant of works in the first Adam and the covenant of grace in the last Adam, we will have more profound insights and better perceive the implications of the *epistemological antithesis* between believers in Christ and unbelievers in idol worship.

In this perspective, the concepts of "God's universal lawsuit" and the "seditious covenant-breaking" of idolatry need clarification against the background of mission to the Gentiles. This could be achieved by identifying them as expressing *God's universal covenant lawsuit in the New Covenant Age against idol worshipers who broke the covenant of works in the first Adam*. This said, I highly recommend Pardigon's well-researched and well-written book to students of the Bible for a deeper understanding of God's redemptive history and the method of evangelism and apologetics in the age of global mission.

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Elijah Hixson and Peter J. Gurry, eds. *Myths and Mistakes in New Testament Textual Criticism.* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2019.

Elijah Hixson, junior research associate in New Testament Text and Language at Tyndale House, Cambridge, and Peter J. Gurry, assistant professor of New Testament and codirector of the Text and Canon Institute at Phoenix Seminary, have enlisted the aid of several young scholars in New Testament textual criticism (or related disciplines) to offer a helpful book that seeks to address the myths and mistakes that attend New Testament textual criticism.

In the introduction, the editors set forth the purpose of this book, namely, to correct wrong approaches that have been taken by apologists who have set out to defend "the Bible and … its credibility" (1). The editors' desire to dispel such approaches is motivated by their conviction that Scripture is truly "God's special revelation" and thus ought to be defended—but, they argue, such defense must be accurate to avoid creating further doubt about the reliability of the Bible. Some examples they mention include "outdated information," "abused statistics," and "selected use of evidence" (5–12). The editors are then careful to state that this book is primarily concerned with matters of New Testament textual criticism; it is not meant to replace a general introduction to the subject.

In chapter 2, Timothy N. Mitchell addresses what autographs are and how long they survived. He engages the opposing views of Matthew Larsen and Craig Evans. Larsen completely rejects the idea of a finished autograph, whereas Evans argues against the existence of major changes between the autographs and the first copies. In light of Greco-Roman publication habits