

I would say that the aim of the editors has been realized well, in that they have brought together a series of interesting, useful, and perceptive essays by a significant panel of authors on different topics, especially as these topics revolve around the interests of the honoree, G. E. Mendenhall. It is a well-prepared book which serves as a fitting tribute to one of the more outstanding figures in American biblical studies today. It can indeed be recommended for its in-depth coverage on the topics treated.

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LaSor, William Sanford. *The Truth About Armageddon: What the Bible Says About the End Times*. New York and San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1982. xiv + 226 pp. Paperback, \$7.95.

William S. LaSor is Professor Emeritus of OT Theology at Fuller Theological Seminary and has authored or co-authored nearly twenty previous books dealing with biblical studies and related fields. Included among his earlier titles are handbooks of both NT Greek and biblical Hebrew. The present volume reveals LaSor's expertise with respect to both the biblical literature and the original languages in which that literature was written.

It is important to state early in this review that the title is somewhat misleading, inasmuch as only one chapter (chap. 11, pp. 135-149) out of a total of fifteen chapters treats "Armageddon" specifically. A few other chapters may be considered corollary to the discussion; but by and large, the volume treats materials far beyond what normally is considered to relate to "Armageddon."

Chaps. 1 and 2 deal with "The Present Concern with the End" and with a definition of "The End of the World." Chaps. 3-7 carry the following titles, respectively: "The Present Age," "The People of God," "The Servant of the Lord," "The Satanic Character of This Age," and "The Messianic Idea." What most readers will undoubtedly consider the portion of the book relating more specifically to "the end times" (a phrase from the subtitle) begins with chap. 8 on "The Second Coming of Christ." Then follow, in succession, chapters on "The Antichrist," "The Great Tribulation," "Armageddon," "The Millennium," "The Resurrection," "The Judgment," and "The New Heavens and the New Earth." The author, prior to preparing the manuscript for this volume, had presented the basic material as series of studies at two Presbyterian churches in California (see p. xii), and it seems obvious that in both that sort of context and in the book now published he has endeavored to provide a *broad* perspective as the basis for the much more limited and specific topic indicated in this book's title.

Aside from LaSor's evident competence in biblical studies, his organization of material in each chapter is also such as to deserve commendable mention. All fifteen chapters begin with a statement of "the problem," introducing the reader very quickly to the main issues currently under discussion on the respective topics. He then presents his own analysis under convenient and logical subtopics. All but the first and last chapters have as their final section of text a helpful "summary" (chap. 1 has instead a section entitled "The Present Task"). Finally, the chapters conclude with endnotes and then suggestions for additional reading. Following this main text are a bibliography (pp. 207-210), a "Subject Index" (pp. 211-220) and an "Index of Scripture Verses" (pp. 221-226). The two indexes are particularly comprehensive and useful for a book no larger than this. (Included in the latter index, incidentally, are brief subsections for "Apocrypha" and "Noncanonical Books.")

As an illustration of the type of coverage in a chapter, we may note chap. 3, "The Present Age." Aside from the "problem" and "summary" statements, the subtopics are "What Is an Age?," "This Is a Satanic Age," "This Is a Revelatory Age," "This Is an Age of Human Government," and "This Is an Age of Redeemable Men and Women." In this chapter, as elsewhere, LaSor refers constantly to the Scripture data as basic. But here, as also elsewhere, he is indeed familiar with current secondary literature. Scripture documentation is provided in footnote form (in only eleven pages of main text, chap. 3 has 71 such notes, sometimes with multiple Scripture references in the same footnote); the references to other literature and the presentation of general explanatory material appear in the endnotes.

As in-depth as this volume's coverage of the various topics is, it seems to me that there are occasionally significant gaps. For instance, in chap. 5, "The Servant of the Lord," it is curious that the only servanthip that is dealt with is that of redeemed human beings. The author's treatment of this limited aspect of the topic is admittedly perceptive (the concept of "servant and service" is treated from the standpoint of both Greek and Hebrew; and a number of aspects of servanthip, including "obedience" and the role and significance of suffering, are dealt with in an incisive and thought-provoking way); *but* where is the discussion of the Servant *par excellence*? It would seem that at least from the NT standpoint, any treatment of the topic "The Servant of the Lord" should have as central to its discussion—if indeed not the very beginning point of it—the person whom Scripture sets forth as the great Exemplar.

Similarly, in chap. 7, "The Messianic Idea," does not LaSor unduly restrict the backgrounds by treating only the *royal* aspect, while neglecting other roots of the concept? And is it precisely accurate to declare that "to attempt to remove the 'material' elements of the messianic age and leave only the 'spiritual' is to cut the doctrine from its Old Testament roots and

leave it as a structure more akin to Greek idealism" (p. 85)? Such a declaration, it seems to me, fails to take into account *all* the OT roots, as well as the meaning of the "remnant" concept in both OT and NT.

In the final chapters of his book, LaSor has to grapple more directly with a plethora of current views on eschatological topics. In doing so, he is not dogmatic; but readers will undoubtedly find various parts of his treatment here somewhat more debatable (possibly at times, even speculative) than the material in earlier chapters. Nevertheless, his arguments against a pretribulation rapture of the Christians (pp. 130-131) and his caution against removing the Gog prophecy of Ezek 38 from its contemporary setting (p. 139) seem to be particularly well taken. With respect to the former, however, I would question his prior discussion which views the several time periods of Daniel 7, 8, 9, and 12 from a *futuristic* standpoint (pp. 128-129); and with respect to the Gog prophecy, his critique of certain current lines of interpretation that connect "Rosh" with "Russia," etc., could have been strengthened by linguistic analysis, as well as further historical data. Also, his treatment of the "Armageddon" imagery of Rev 16:16 (toward the end of chap. 11), though basically cautious and balanced, could have benefited from considerations of the kind noted by William H. Shea, "The Location and Significance of Armageddon in Rev 16:16," *AUSS* 18 (1980): 157-162.

In conclusion, I would state that *The Truth About Armageddon* is a valuable production that treats an array of important related biblical topics, even though it has relatively little to say specifically about "Armageddon" as such. Its shortcomings, including those noted above, are, in my view, quite minimal in comparison with the richness of material and the perceptive analysis that are provided. The book's excellent organization and the author's clear and smooth writing style are further "plusses." Readers will certainly be rewarded by reviewing LaSor's incisive discussions of both Scripture data and current viewpoints. Even the exercise of looking up, in context, the wide array of Scripture references which he cites will provide an enriching experience.

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MacPherson, Dave. *The Great Rapture Hoax*. Fletcher, N.C.: New Puritan Library, Inc., 1983. (viii) + 210 pp. Paperback, \$5.00.

It is seldom that a reviewer has the opportunity to review three books by the same author, especially books that are in a sequence to follow up and extend earlier discussion of the same topic. In *The Great Rapture*