

"On Fraternal Affection," speaks only of "brothers," he applies the same virtues and ethos in his presentation of two sisters who die together resisting a tyrant in his "On the Virtues of Women." In a similar way, Paul gives the label "sister" to specific women (Rom 16:1; possibly Phlm 2) and speaks of the "brother or sister" as he develops casuistic rules for divorce in the case of the marriage of believers to unbelievers. James also provides early evidence of viewing women in the church as "sisters" (2:15), as does the Paulinist author of 1 Tim 5:2, irrespective of their being embedded in some male Christian as wife or daughter. Such texts continue to recommend the view that female Christians were indeed part of the siblinghood of Christ, and that the generalizing of "brotherhood" to include female members remains appropriate.

Among the three articles in Part III, Dale Martin's contribution would probably be the most helpful for students of the NT and early Christianity. He cautions us against reading our modern notions of "healthy sexual desire" into Paul's affirmation of marriage as a pure concession to human weakness ("it is better to marry than to burn," 1 Cor 7:9), and offers an insightful discussion of Paul's distrust of passion (desire) itself in the context of Greco-Roman philosophical treatments of "desire." His presentation of Rom 1 and 1 Thess 4 does not, unfortunately (and no doubt of necessity, given constraints of length), treat the complexities of the exegesis of those texts, with the result that this reader, at least, remains more conscious of possible objections than convinced by Martin's argument. I have also found in my own study of certain Hellenistic philosophical discussions (particularly Hellenistic Jewish texts like *Epistle of Aristeas*, *4 Maccabees*, and Philo) that it is not the experience of passion that is deemed shameful or problematic, but only allowing those passions to govern one's actions. While I therefore appreciate Martin's caveat against viewing passion within marriage as positive for Paul, I find it still possible to speak of passions as indifferent in and of themselves and as sources for shame or condemnation only when they are allowed to drive the person to illicit or vicious behavior (however that is defined within the culture of the author, e.g., Jewish or Christian or Roman).

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† Murphy, Frederick J. *Fallen is Babylon: The Revelation to John*. The New Testament Context, ed., Howard Clark Kee and J. Andrew Overman. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1998. xx + 472 pp. Paperback, \$30.00.

Frederick J. Murphy, better known for his work in the Jewish context of Jesus and first-century Christianity, here tries his hand at the most challenging document in the Christian canon. His commentary on Revelation exhibits his purpose, in harmony with the purpose of the commentary series, to illuminate the reader's understanding of Revelation by situating it in its various contexts, including historical, social, religious, and literary. His particular area of interest, not surprisingly, is to focus on the Jewishness of Revelation and of the Christian perspective that Revelation reflects. After nearly sixty pages of introductory comments, Murphy offers more of a section-by-section commentary than a verse-by-verse treatment.

Murphy's book is remarkably clear and well-written, it is interesting and readily understandable. As such it stands in contrast with the new commentary of David Aune (in the Word Biblical Commentary series), which is difficult reading and more useful as a reference work for specific details related to the text and its larger context. Murphy's attention to clarity, naturally, sometimes includes glossing over the hard issues in favor of clarifying more basic ones. As an example of his writing style note the interesting way he unpacks Pliny's letter to Trajan for readers who may not be familiar with it (13):

Pliny's letter shows how a Roman governor looked at Christianity about twenty years after Revelation was written, in a province that shared a border with Asia. Pliny confesses ignorance on how to deal with Christians. Despite his long and distinguished public career, he had never been present at the interrogation of a Christian and does not even know whether being a Christian in itself should be punished or whether proof that some other crime has been committed is necessary.

While Murphy is well-read in the literature there is also plenty of evidence that he has carefully examined the Greek text of Revelation as well. His observations about the text are keen and sober; so are his judgments about what he chooses to accept and reject in previous commentaries. This, combined with the interesting and readable writing style, makes Murphy's commentary a good choice as a first reader for students wishing to embark on the study of Revelation without wading through the many wild speculations that are associated with this book.

Murphy, of course, takes a number of positions that will be controversial (as all interpreters of Revelation must). Murphy sees Revelation as a symbolic book focused entirely on the situation of Christians in first-century Asia Minor and their anticipated future. Any positive references to things Jewish in the book are intended to be understood in terms of those who believe in Jesus. Murphy is not a big fan of Ramsay and Hemer in his interpretation of the churches. He believes that the white horse of Rev 6 does not represent Jesus or anything positive the two witnesses, on the other hand, represent the witnessing church. In all these positions he will have his supporters and his detractors.

Although my overall impression of the commentary is positive, I do have some points of concern. Murphy strikes me as being fairly confident in his opinions, even when he does not offer a solid grounding in the text. As may be necessary in a relatively brief (compared to Aune and Beale) work, he seems to settle matters fairly quickly and superficially at times. An example is his handling of the debate over genre. A general concern is the degree to which he is dependent on the views of Adela Yarbro Collins, especially in the Introduction (note references throughout and particularly laudatory comments on pp. 18, 43 and 48). While he could hardly have chosen a more competent mentor, the degree of his dependence raises the question whether this work reflects a genuinely fresh and unique contribution to the subject.

In conclusion, this book provides a good introductory overview to a critical interpretation of the book of Revelation in its larger context. It is easy to read and interestingly presented, but rarely breaks new ground. It is, therefore, an excellent first commentary for those who would like a sober and sensible overview of the

issues without having to wade into in-depth scholarly discussion right from the start.

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Paulien, Jon. *The Millennium Bug*. Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 1999. 128 pages. Paperback, \$9.99.

Professor of New Testament Interpretation at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University in southwest Michigan, Jon Paulien has written three popular bestsellers on the subject of getting ready for the end of the world. *Present Truth in the Real World* (1993) focused on how to understand and reach secular-minded people with the gospel message of Christ's soon return. *What the Bible Says About the End-Time* (1994) presented a Bible-oriented study of end-time events from the book of Revelation and offered practical advice on how not to be deceived by speculative doomsday theories. Paulien's newest book, *The Millennium Bug* (1999), examines various theories and panic scenarios regarding the Y2K crisis and offers balanced counsel about how a last-day people who know Jesus can face the future unafraid. All three books reflect the Paulien trademark: thorough research balanced by a popular style that is Bible-based, practical, faith-building, and nonsensational.

Amidst all the fear, sensationalism, and Y2K anxiety promoted in the media, Paulien's *Millennium Bug* offers a balanced, restrained look at the challenges and opportunities faced by all of us as the third millennium approaches. Chapter 1 ("Y2K: The Year 2000 Surprise") grabs the reader's attention by portraying numerous worst-case scenarios wherein everything goes wrong with computers, jets, cars, phones, and banks on January 1, 2000. In chap. 2 ("A Decade of Titanic Excitement"), Paulien provides a succinct overview of events leading up to the Y2K "panic" in international crises, climate change, technology, media hype, and religion. Chapter 3 ("Going Beyond the Evidence") examines biblical, Ellen White, and Adventist historic warnings against date-setting. Chapter 4 ("The Year 1000: Is It Déjà Vu All Over Again?") analyzes the myths and reality of the Y1K "panic" as Europeans faced "the night of the world" in 999. Chapter 5 ("Adventist Faith and the Year 2000") examines various conjectures and logical fallacies in the "millennial week" theories of Adventist expositors from William Miller to Warren Johns. Chapter 6 ("A.D. 2001: Then What?") offers six principles on how to maintain a balanced perspective between expectation and endurance while awaiting the *parousia*. Finally, chap. 7 ("Be Ye Therefore Ready") gives pastoral advice on how neither to overplay or ignore end-time messages and the need to avoid using either shame or fear tactics to get others ready. The secret is in Paulien's final section "How to Know Jesus."

Although *Millennium Bug* does not purport to be a scholarly work, the amount of research it represents is impressive. Its 265 endnotes fill twenty-eight pages, about twenty-two percent of the book's 128 pages. This is a distinct departure from his two earlier works. *Present Truth* contained only twenty-three endnotes in its 253 pages while, *End-Time* had thirty-five endnotes for its 159 pages. Like *End-Time*, however, *Millennium Bug* is thoroughly based on biblical exegesis and the writings of church cofounder Ellen White. But *Millennium Bug* also contains a range of up-to-the-minute citations to popular