Isaiah 47:7" [249-250], "'Son of Man, Can these Bones Live?': The Exile" [251-266], "Dinah and Shechem, Tamar and Amnon" [485-495]).

The second volume focuses on "Poetry and Orthography"—areas of research that Freedman has impacted in a major way. The selection of articles in this volume avoids duplication of other articles reprinted in two previous volumes—namely, *Pottery, Poetry, and Prophecy: Studies in Early Hebrew Poetry* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1980) and, with A. Dean Forbes and Francis I. Anderson, *Hebrew and Aramaic Orthography* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1992); yet it focuses on the same areas. There are articles that deal with poetry ("Archaic Forms in Early Hebrew Poetry" [5-12], "Psalm 29: A Structural Analysis" [70-87], "The Poetic Structure of the Framework of Deuteronomy 33" [88-107], "Prose Particles in the Poetry of the Primary History" [171-182], "Acrostic Poems in the Hebrew Bible: Alphabetic and Otherwise" [183-204], "Deliberate Deviation from an Established Pattern of Repetition in Hebrew Poetry as a Rhetorical Device" [205-212], "Another Look at Hebrew Poetry" [213-226], "The Structure of Isaiah 40:1-11" [232-257], "Patterns in Psalms 25 and 34," [258-269]); orthography ("The Massoretic Text and the Qumran Scrolls: A Study in Orthography" [13-28], "The Orthography of the Arad Ostraca" [39-43], "Orthographic Peculiarities in the Book of Job" [44-60], "Some Observations on Early Hebrew" [61-69], "The Spelling of the Name 'David' in the Hebrew Bible" [108-122], "Orthography [of the Paleo-Hebrew Leviticus Scroll]" [123-170]); and other studies related to Semitic languages ("The Pronominal Suffixes of the Third Person Singular in Phoenician" [1-4], "A Second Mesha Inscription" [29-30], "The Use of Aleph as a Vowel Letter in the Genesis Apocryphon" [31-38], "On the Death of Abner" [227-231]).

The major strength of these two volumes is that they have made available to the individual in a convenient format a collection of works from various sources during the better part of three decades. Many are accompanied by references to their prior reappearances. The only minor weakness is the lack of subject, author, and text indices that would have provided an added benefit to researchers. The fine editorial work is a tribute to John R. Huddlestun, who has fittingly honored Freedman and provided a benefit for all who relish the technical aspects of biblical and Ancient Near Eastern studies.

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Geisler, Norman. *Chosen but Free: A Balanced View of Divine Election.* Minneapolis, MN: Bethany, 1999. 256 pp. Hardcover, $16.99.

My Presbyterian brother-in-law assures me that few of his denominational colleagues still subscribe to a belief in predestination. My friends at Westminster are still hard-core TULIP-fanciers, however; and a growing number of evangelical pastors, teachers, and seminaries are embracing the more extreme varieties of Calvinism's most distinctive doctrines: [T]otal depravity, [U]nconditional election, [L]imited atonement, [I]rresistible grace, and [P]erseverance of the saints.

Norman Geisler's new book, *Chosen But Free*, aims to halt these shifts away from the traditional evangelical/fundamentalist "once saved, always saved" position. It is also meant to combat the influence of R. C. Sproul's recent books

supporting Calvinism. Geisler hardly needs an introduction. He has written over forty books, primarily in apologetics; he is president of Southern Evangelical Seminary; and he has served as president of the Evangelical Theological Society.

Although I myself prefer an Arminian approach and disagree with many of Geisler's statements and readings of texts, I strongly recommend this book. Anyone who is a strict Calvinist should read it. Anyone who isn't should read it. Anyone who has students who ask about the meaning of election should read it, so that he or she knows the options and the texts used to support them. Geisler is a scholar writing to an intelligent audience, but nearly all of the book is quite accessible to an educated layman or student (a useful approach for all of us who wish to be understood).

The body of this book is only 133 pages, but it is followed by twelve substantial appendices in ninety pages, which many readers will turn to at once. There Geisler argues that extreme, TULIP-loving Calvinism developed after Calvin and that Calvin himself was not a Calvinist but rather more moderate, almost like a Baptist. Geisler explains free will, argues for unlimited atonement, condemns double-predestination, insists that regeneration and faith occur simultaneously, disagrees with Jonathan Edwards' argument against free will, and condemns Calvinistic voluntarism (the idea that things such as double-predestination are right merely because God wills them). These appendices make for rousing reading and provoke extensive marginal notes.

Geisler begins the book with a sound chapter establishing the biblical teaching on the sovereignty of God. He follows with a chapter explaining the entrance of sin into God's creation and evaluating the extent to which God can be held responsible for it. His conclusion is that the existence of sin is strong evidence for the working of free will as part of God's sovereign intent.

At present, Geisler sees four approaches to election and free will: extreme and moderate Calvinism and extreme and moderate Arminianism. He sees moderate Calvinists and Arminians as cousins, who don't look related but end up at the same homecoming. By "extreme Arminianism" Geisler has in mind the "Openness of God" faction, such as Clark Pinnock and Richard Rice, whom he sees as having jettisoned God's sovereignty almost entirely. Chapter 6 is devoted to combating these ideas. However, although I too disagree with this group, I do not find his arguments very convincing. For example, Geisler uses verses establishing God's *moral* immutability to argue that God is *impassible* and never changes his mind. (This idea was borrowed from Plato and grafted into Christian doctrine.) The chapter is worth reading, but much more thoroughly and satisfactorily covered in Geisler's book *Creating God in the Image of Man?: The New "Open" View of God—Neotheism's Dangerous Drift* (Minneapolis: Bethany, 1997). This latter book includes a useful chart that shows the many distinctions between the "Openness of God" school and Process Theology.

Geisler devotes two chapters to biblical support for and against extreme Calvinism, and for most readers this will be the most useful part of the book. By "extreme Calvinism" he means those who believe in total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace, and perseverance of the saints. He examines the major texts used to support these doctrines one by one, and marshals other biblical texts to show that in their extreme form they are mistaken (even though he will later argue that he accepts all of them in a modified and more correctly

understood form). I found Geisler's readings of these texts devastatingly persuasive, but I admit my bias. When students ask questions about these texts, I'll be glad to have this book handy.

After reading chapters on the extreme forms of Calvinism and Arminianism, I was eager to read the chapter called "A Plea for Moderation." I expected a sound biblical synthesis of the texts and a new appreciation for God's sovereignty and our election within a world where free will is operative. Instead, Geisler presents the Baptist case for "eternal security" (i.e., "once saved, always saved") and tries to explain away the numerous texts supporting the conditionality of salvation. After reading Geisler's careful refutation of extreme Calvinism, I was shocked by his arguments for his own position. Every one of them was weak and easily refuted. It is amazing that such a pervasive doctrinal edifice should be built on such a shallow biblical foundation.

One section of the chapter is called "True Believers Lose Rewards, Not Salvation" (124). Thus, when Paul writes in 1 Cor 9:27, "I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize," that prize is not, Geisler says, eternal life, but how much treasure or prestige he will get in heaven (125). So Paul is doing all this in the name of greed for future gain and glory! In a similar book for a general audience, *Eternal Security: Can You Be Sure?* (Nashville: Nelson, 1990), Charles Stanley actually claims that when Jesus speaks of people being cast into outer darkness, where they weep and gnash their teeth (Matt 25:30), "It is simply a figure of speech describing their low rank or status in God's kingdom" (127). This, I think, is not sound exegesis.

Geisler uses what we might call an "Eternal Security Syllogism." Major premise: no one who has truly believed can be lost. Minor premise: person X has left the church, turned away from God, and lives in open sin, after twenty years of apparently Spirit-filled service, during which he claimed to be born again. Therefore, person X never believed. This is nonfalsifiable circular reasoning. Where's the "eternal security"? If people think they have been born again, claim they have been born again, act as if they have been born again, and then fall away and never return, so that it turns out that in fact they never were born again but only thought so, what assurance can there be for others who think and act the same? Evangelical assurance of salvation, "once saved, always saved," may be true and yet still give no assurance of present salvation. By Geisler's definition, in fact, we don't know if a person is really born again until the person perseveres to the end and goes to heaven.

I was astonished when I found that Geisler comes to the same conclusion as mine: moderate Calvinists and Arminians may argue, but they end up in the same place.

Of course, there are some significant differences between moderate Calvinists and moderate Arminians, but they do not negate the similarities. One of those differences was discussed above, namely, whether "once saved, always saved" is accurate. But even here, in actual practice, the similarities are greater than many think. The vast majority of proponents of both views hold that if a professing Christian turns away from Christ and lives in continual sin, this is evidence that he is not saved. The difference is that the moderate Calvinists claim that he was never saved to begin with, and the moderate Arminians believe that he was. And both believe that the unrepentant who continue in sin are not true believers (130).

Many of my Bible students are moderate Calvinists. When they heard this authoritative quotation and realized the implications, they were dismayed. This is not the jingoistic assurance their pastors taught them.

Geisler offers some explanations that are useful for reconciling foreknowledge with free will. First, a great example. Imagine an M.Div. student who feels he'd better get married, because he'll soon be a pastor. There are actually two girls he's been seeing off and on. Both are lovely, talented, and would make good wives for a pastor. He loves them both. He's heard through the grapevine that one girl likes him, but she doesn't want to marry him. He's heard through the same grapevine that the other girl has been seen kissing his photo and drawing hearts around his initials. To which girl will he propose? Geisler says that's how it is with God. He *loves* everyone, but he *knows* who will say yes and *elects* to save them, and only them.

Second, if God *knows* who will say yes and *elects* to save them, and only them, then why did Christ die for everyone? Why is the Holy Spirit still active in those who will be lost? Why should we work to bring the lost to Christ, since Christ knows those who are his and will save them regardless? In essence, Geisler's answer is that God is bound to continual action by his own foreknowledge. He has to do what he foresees himself doing so that those he foresees accepting salvation will in fact accept it. He knows that even though the Holy Spirit works on Bill until the moment of Bill's death, Bill will continue to refuse salvation. However, God only knows what must and will be, so it is imperative that this actually come to pass. God doesn't say, "I know that *if* I worked on Bill all his life he would still say no, so I'm not going to waste my time." In the judgment Bill might say that wasn't fair. Instead, God knows that he actually will work on Bill and Bill actually will refuse his grace. But he goes ahead and works on Bill anyway.

It really is wonderful that grace should be poured out on those who will always refuse it. It's as if a mother knows her son is a criminal at heart, who will desert her and die in prison, yet in spite of this and because of this she continues to lavish her love on him, because the time is so short and he's her son. Then too, because of that grace there are times when even the most wicked can be led to do God's will, as when an evil customs official, to his own bewilderment, lets a truckload of Bibles past his borders. For me, these insights alone were worth the cost of the book.

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Greenspahn, Frederick E. *An Introduction to Aramaic.* SBL Resources for Biblical Study, no. 38. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999. xi+230 pp. Paperback, $54.95.

Formerly, a teacher of Biblical Aramaic had a choice of only two standard textbooks in English (Franz Rosenthal's *A Grammar of Biblical Aramaic* and Alger F. Johns's *A Short Grammar of Biblical Aramaic).* Thanks to Greenspahn's *An Introduction to Aramaic,* that number has now grown to three. Rather than intending to supplant the first two, the author's desire is to prepare students to use the existing textbooks "easily and profitably" (xi).

The main thrust of this book is not academic but pedagogic, since it was not intended to be a reference grammar but "a kind of workbook, organized around