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Lincoln, Andrew. *Hebrews: A Guide*. T. & T. Clark: London, 2006. x + 129 pp. Paper, $29.95.

Andrew Lincoln, Professor of NT at the University of Gloucestershire, UK, is a prolific writer and has a well-deserved reputation for his widespread research interests in NT studies. Some of his previous publications include a commentary on *Ephesians* (Word Biblical Commentary); *The Gospel According to Saint John* (Black's New Testament Commentary); *Paradise Now and Not Yet*; and the coauthored monograph *The Theology of the Later Pauline Letters*. Lincoln is a vocal advocate of the book of Hebrews in his article "Sabbath, Rest, and Eschatology in the New Testament" in *From Sabbath to Lord's Day: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Investigation*.

Hebrews is a summary of the most important introductory questions found in any serious commentary on Hebrews. The monograph is modeled after the series "New Testament Guides" (Sheffield Academic Press), of which Lincoln is the general editor. Since Hebrews received peripheral attention in the study of the NT, according to him, this *Guide* is intended to help remedy that situation and to enable a greater appreciation of the distinctive voice of Hebrews within the NT canon (8).

Lincoln begins with a bibliography of the most important English commentaries and monographs on the epistle to the Hebrews, which are supplemented by Mark Goodacre's NT Gateway site (www.ntgateway.com). The book is divided into eight chapters; at the end of each chapter, Lincoln has further bibliographic references for expanded readings.

In the first chapter, "Hebrews in the Canon and in the Church," Lincoln draws the attention of the reader to the fact that the epistle was used in the West already in the first century by, for example, Clement of Rome and later by the Shepherd of Hermas, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and Gaius of Rome. The church in the East assigned Hebrews to Paul. While Hebrews was used in the West, it was deliberately not attributed to Paul. By the end of the fourth century, after an exchange of views, a consensus was established between the East and the West that Hebrews be included as the fourteenth of the Pauline letters (4). This was followed by a more hesitant approach reflected in its being appended to the end of the Pauline collection at the Synods of Carthage in 397 and 419 C.E. Mixed reception was given to the book of Hebrews during the Reformation: Luther reckoned Hebrews to be unapostolic and containing some "wood, straw or hay" mingled with "gold, silver and precious stones," while Calvin classified Hebrews as an apostolic, authoritative writing (5).

The second chapter deals with genre and rhetoric. Regarding the genre, Lincoln acknowledges Hebrews to be "a word of exhortation" (Heb 13:22). The Greek word (παράκλησις) can have a semitechnical sense, in which it refers to a discourse spoken by teachers or prophets in the community (10). In the context of the synagogue, such discourse took the form of a homily or sermon (Acts 13:15). Some of the oral features (e.g., the use of verbs for speaking; 2:5; 5:11; 6:9; 8:1; 9:5; 11:35) still appear despite the final written form. Concerning the rhetoric of Hebrews, Lincoln compares it with elements of Greco-Roman rhetoric and discusses some of the prominent rhetorical techniques used by the author (synkrisis, amplification, anaphora, alliteration, inclusio, chiasm, exempla, and hyperbole [19-21]).

Lincoln examines, in his third chapter, the structure of Hebrews. He correctly discerns between those who operate primarily in terms of content and those who

focus more on linguistics and semantic analysis. The former tend to divide up the epistle topically, often with headings about Christ's superiority. Such headings inevitably simplify the content of the sections, failing to do justice to the variety of material in them and to the way in which sections can, in fact, overlap in their treatment of themes and development of the argument (23). While Lincoln acknowledges the danger of structuring Hebrews according to theme/content, because it fails to do justice to the development of the argument, it seems all the more obscure that he advocates as the most helpful outline "one that attempts to combine the most salient features of both form and content" (24). Furthermore, when Lincoln displays his outline, he bases it on Greco-Roman rhetoric analysis (exordium, argumentation, peroration [24-5]). The problem with that is that Hebrews is resistant to being divided neatly into the three-to-five parts of the Greco-Roman speech. The linear outlines of deliberative or epideictic rhetoric do not do justice to the patterns of repetition of phrases and themes in the discourse, something Lincoln is aware of but attempts anyway. Moreover, the speeches in the classical handbooks were crafted in the judicial and political spheres, while the book of Hebrews has the characteristics of a Hellenistic synagogue homily. This form cannot be forced into the mold of classical speech, although Hebrews contains a wide range of features described in the Greek handbooks. Finally, he recognizes the transitional hortatory passages of chapters 4 and 10 (although he quotes Heb 10:32–39, instead of 10:22–24). He also fails to see that the parallel hortatory passages encompass Heb 4:11–16, not just 4:14–16, and, similarly, Heb 10:19–24 instead of 10:32–39. This is the contribution of C. L. Westfall (*A Discourse Analysis of the Letter to the Hebrews*, 238), a source which Lincoln obviously did not consult.

The fourth chapter takes on several background issues (authorship, recipients, date, and conceptual backgrounds). The fifth chapter deals with the occasion and purpose of the book. Out of the plethora of issues addressed, only the recipients should be considered more closely. Lincoln asserts that "the Christians addressed were primarily Jewish in their background, although that there were among them some Gentile former God-fearers, who were facing the same issues, cannot be ruled out" (38). However, as he goes on in the book, he gradually takes the side, almost exclusively, of the theory that the addressees of Hebrews were former Jewish Christians who had relapsed into Judaism (57; admitting it as the most plausible inference). However, it is the opinion of this reviewer that the readers were not in danger of relapsing into Judaism. This is evident, first, from the way in which the author refers to Jesus as "Christ." While the author of Hebrews argues a variety of things about Christ, he never disputes his messiahship or the fact that Jesus is the Son of God, but he takes both for granted (cf. 3:6; 4:14; 5:5, a messianic Psalm addressed to "the Christ," a designation used alternatively to Jesus; see also 4:14; 6:1). In Heb 1:6, Jesus is introduced as "the firstborn," a well-known designation for the Messiah (Rom 8:29; Col 1:15, 18; Rev 1:5). That such a name can be introduced without any attempt to justify its use supports the view that the readers were not questioning the messiahship of Jesus and consequently relapsing into Judaism. In Heb 2:3, the author does not warn against "neglect" of the "Lord," but neglect of the "salvation . . . declared first through the Lord . . . confirmed to us by those who heard him." The warning in 6:6—"since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God"—does not make sense if the audience is in danger of relapsing into Judaism. Their response would have been: "But we doubt that Jesus is the Son of God." Also the emphasis in 13:8 on the changelessness of Jesus Christ is quite irrelevant if the danger was a lapse into Judaism. It is only relevant if the danger is in accepting a view different from the

one that was presented by their leaders who told them the Word of God (13:7). Finally, if the "strange teachings" in 13:9 are Jewish teachings, as the context seems to suggest, then the "strange word" must mean "strange to Christianity," which would not be most fitting if the danger were that of lapsing into Judaism. Here Lincoln is too dependent on Lindars's view.

The sixth chapter handles the use of Jewish Scripture, discussing the author's use of the LXX text, rabbinic techniques, and hermeneutical perspectives. In discussing the continuity of the ceremonial and moral law, Lincoln states that "cultic and ceremonial aspects have become antiquated but as part of a larger whole, that of the first covenant and its law. When Hebrews refers to the law, it is to the entire Sinaitic covenant, including its ethical commandments." What is said about priesthood cannot be separated neatly from ethical issues because "priests offered sacrifices for sins, including transgressions of moral law" (78). If the ceremonial and ethical laws are one, as Lincoln asserts, and consequently obsolete, one has to ask how Lincoln explains the clear reference to the seventh commandment in Heb 13:4: "Let marriage be held in honor by all, and let the marriage bed be kept undefiled; for God will judge fornicators and adulterers." Hebrews 13:4 uses the noun μοιχόυς for adulterers, and Exod 20:14 the verb μοιχεύω. This is a clear reference to the ethical commandment, which is by no means obsolete, since it is reinforced with a predicative future of God's judgment. That this is not a common link to Greco-Roman moralists becomes clear by the adjective ἀμίαντος ("undefiled"), which reflects the common assumption that adultery defiles (Josephus, *Ant.* 2.4.5).

The seventh and eighth chapters deal with the theology of Hebrews and its continuing significance. For Lincoln, Christ as "the reflection of God's glory" (1:3) and Christ who "learned obedience through what he suffered" (5:7–8) are not two independent Christological traditions that have been loosely combined (85). The *Christus Victor* motif, in which Christ conquers the devil and frees humanity from slavery (2:14–15), shines through in the soteriology of Hebrews (90). Hebrews also shares in the Jewish eschatological belief in the resurrection of the dead (6:2; 11:19, 35) and the second coming of Christ (9:26-28; 10:25, 36, 37 [97]).

The monograph has a few typographical errors such as "and" instead of "und" (35) in the German title of A. von Harnack, and "apocalyses" instead of "apocalypses" (40).

The strength of this *Guide* lies in the fact that it gives a brief introduction to the book of Hebrews for the cursory reader. It also surveys critical background issues and draws attention to literary, historical, and theological matters. Finally, it provides the reader with short annotated bibliographies. Two indices conclude *Hebrews: A Guide*. While the book is a good introductory survey of Hebrews, anyone who is interested in that book can, for just a few dollars more, buy a good commentary that encompasses most if not all the issues dealt with in this monograph.

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Metzger, Bruce, and Bart Ehrman. *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 4th ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005. 384 pp. Paper, $40.25.

Since the publishing of the first edition in 1964, Bruce Metzger's *The Text of the New Testament* has been an essential introduction for readers interested in the textual criticism of the NT. That we now have a fourth edition after 40 years is a testimony both to the esteem accorded Metzger and the contribution of the original edition, but also to the