

DAVID J. A. CLINES, *Joban Papers*, Hebrew Bible Monographs 102 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2023), Pp. xv + 440. Hardback. £75.00.

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David Clines, the prolific expat Australian biblical scholar, completed his monumental Job commentary in 2011, 22 years after the first volume was published in the Word Biblical Commentary series. He also published many articles on various aspects of Job both before and after the completion of the commentary, and this present volume gathers together many (if not all) of those papers. While there is little new here, *Joban Papers* provides a valuable addition to the commentary to provide a complete collection of Clines's life's work on the book of Job.

This collection spans essays published from 1979 through to Clines's death in 2023. The fact that this is a collection of essays from a single author on a single book of the Bible conceals the diversity that appears within this volume. It ranges from personal introspection (as found, for example, in "Writing A Job Commentary") to almost playful ("Why is there a Book of Job ..."). Some of Clines's work, such as his appropriation of post-modern hermeneutics, will almost certainly date more quickly than other parts. For example, in the essay "Deconstructing the Book of Job" it is hard not to be left with the impression that Clines has not so much deconstructed the book of Job but instead deconstructed his own personal reading of the book of Job. Much of his strategy for deconstructing Job derives from the epilogue's restoration of Job to his blessed state—but what if the problem raised by the epilogue is not the restoration of Job but the fact that it took so long for Job to be restored? Different readings of Job are less susceptible to the logic Clines's employs here and thus demonstrate the subjectivity of the analysis.

There is, however, a broad array of material in this volume, and no-one is going to agree with everything Clines writes. And there are gems to find within its pages. The paper entitled "In Search of the Indian Job" reads almost like a detective story, providing an account of Clines's work tracking down the truth of the claimed parallels to Job found in the Indian legendary tale of the pious king Hariścandra. To spoil the outcome of the investigation, Clines discovers that Francis I. Andersen, alone among modern commentators, was correct to note that "there is very little resemblance to Job in this story" (227). All scholars would do well to read this paper as a cautionary tale of the danger of relying on claims made by other scholars without checking sources!

Some of the material betrays its age. Clines's early discussion of verb modality in the chapter "Verb Modality and the Interpretation of Job 4.20–21" from 1980 reflects its time of composition and would, doubtless, benefit from input of the last four decades of research into the biblical Hebrew verbal system. Furthermore, some of the ideas Clines has will not likely have a great deal of ongoing impact. His suggestion that the "redeemer" of Job 19:23–27 that will speak for him in heaven is his "cry" is one example. Another is his suggestion that the

Elihu speeches are misplaced. While his argument is reasonable, the reader may also wonder if such juggling of the extant text is actually necessary!

The last chapter, “My Main Proposals for Interpreting Job,” is a new paper which conveniently summarises Clines’s own view as to the major contributions he has made to Job studies. Of these it is perhaps the analysis of the distinctive features in the arguments of Job’s friends which is most compelling. Whatever the reader’s response to these and others of Clines’s distinctive contributions to Joban studies, they are sure to come away provoked, stimulated, and more knowledgeable about the book of Job.

The breadth of this volume provides something for every student of the Book of Job to learn from, disagree with, and simply enjoy. Taken in conjunction with his *magnum opus*, the three-volume commentary which occupied some decades of his life, these two works embody a comprehensive and essential resource for any student of the Book of Job. Furthermore, Sheffield Phoenix’s pricing for the volume—with the offer of half price to scholars—makes it surprisingly affordable in a world where academic publishing so often puts books out of the reach of individuals.

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ISAAC KALIMI, *The Book of Esther between Judaism and Christianity: The Biblical Story, Self-identification, and Antisemitic Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023). Pp. xvii + 410. Hardback. AU\$188.95.

At first glance, this monograph is about the reception of the book of Esther in the Christian and Jewish traditions. It is that, but Kalimi covers a wide array of topics beyond what the title might imply: literary (especially stylistic) approaches to Esther, the question of its historicity, the book’s absence from Qumran. Thus, Kalimi touches on many areas of interest in contemporary Esther scholarship.

The first part of the book is wide-ranging. However, its backbone is Kalimi’s argument that the central purpose of Esther is to respond to the fear of total annihilation, and that its primary theological idea is that God stands with Israel. In chapter 4, Kalimi connects this theological idea with its Biblical precedents (especially Deuteronomy 31–32). Later, Kalimi connects the fear of total annihilation to the anti-Semitic topos that the Jews have their own laws (chapter 6). He compares Haman’s accusation in Esth 3:8 not only with Daniel, but several Greek and Roman historical sources. Thus, Kalimi presents Esther as responding to a well-attested historical scenario.

In this vein, Kalimi also discusses the historicity of Esther. Although he is critical of a naïve defence of the book’s historicity (84–86), he also rejects