

Book Reviews

The Body of Jesus: A Spatial Analysis of the Kingdom in Matthew.
By Patrick Schreiner. New York: Bloomsbury/T&T Clark, 2016, 188 pp,
\$85.40. hard cover

What is the nature of the kingdom of God? This is a question that has bared the brunt of theological contemplation for thousands of years. While there has been much debate in this regard, a common consensus seems to be that the kingdom represents the concept of God's sovereign rule, and only secondarily, if at all, has any spatial considerations. Even those who do affirm that the kingdom has a spatial aspect, rarely do they specify how or in what way. Patrick Schreiner's, *The Body of Jesus: A Spatial Analysis of the Kingdom in Matthew*, helpfully pushes back against this common understanding and also provides a way in which to understand the kingdom's spatial aspect as set forth in Matthew's gospel.

Schreiner divided his work into three parts:

Part I: Space: The Final Frontier

Part 2: Jesus vs. Beelzebul

Part 3: Word-building with Words

Part 4: People, Presence, and Place

Schreiner's argument has a clear progression. In part one, he presents an apology for the work, particularly the benefit to be had in a spatial analysis of Matthew. Part one concludes with an explanation of critical spatial theory. Schreiner then proceeds in the remainder of his work to apply critical spatial theory to the gospel of Matthew, focusing on both the deeds of Jesus (the Beelzebul Controversy and the Spirit in Matthew), and the words of Jesus (the five major discourses). Finally, in Part 4 Schreiner brings two major themes of Matthew together (the kingdom and the presence of Jesus) in light of critical spatial theory. In this review, I will give a brief summary and evaluation of each chapter. I will then conclude with some general observations of the work as a whole.

In Chapter 1, Schreiner discusses the "Eclipse of Space" in biblical studies, or more specifically, the general lack of consideration given to the spatial

aspect of the kingdom in Matthew's gospel. For several reasons, including the tendency to emphasize on the kingdom as God's rule, the dominance of time, a dualistic tension within Christianity, and a constricted view of space, the realm aspect of the kingdom has been largely ignored, or pushed into the future eschaton (10). However, according to Schreiner, critical spatial theory provides a way to grasp the kingdom as realm and so bring balance to the study of this important theological concept. Schreiner thus states his thesis in two ways. First, "*Theologically*, Jesus' mission is the reordering of the earth with his body as the nucleus" and second, "In *metaphysical* terms, the spatial aspect of the kingdom is located in the human body, and human bodies create 'imagined' kingdom spaces by social living" (14).

There is no doubt an emphasis on God's sovereign rule in Scripture, as well as the temporal aspect of this rule. Jesus came "in the fullness of time" and in Christ the end of the ages has dawned. However, it is true that, as Schreiner will later discuss, a sovereign reign cannot take place without a place over which to rule. While this has generally been acknowledged, the spatial reality of the kingdom has not been given the attention it deserves. Schreiner's work is an important step in that direction.

In Chapter 2, Schreiner gives his reasoning for choosing Matthew for his spatial analysis. He focuses here on the two themes of the heaven/earth distinction in Matthew, as well as Jesus as Immanuel. Both of these themes seem to be realm oriented, and thus call for a spatial analysis.

What makes Matthew particularly unique in this regard is that it clearly emphasizes the kingdom as the sovereign rule of Christ as well. I would argue that the entire narrative is about Jesus, the promised king, taking back God's rule upon the earth through his obedient life, his death, and his resurrection. In Matthew 4 Satan offers Jesus all the kingdoms of the world because they were his to give. In Matthew 28, Jesus receives all authority in heaven and on earth. The resolution has Jesus on the throne and Satan displaced as the ruler of this world. We find the same idea playing out in the Beelzebul controversy of Matthew 12, a text which holds a central space in Schreiner's argument. What makes his work important is that he demonstrates the importance of space when talking about sovereign rule. Jesus is actually wrenching a realm from the clutches of the Evil One as he gains his sovereign rule over both heaven and earth.

In Chapter 3, Schreiner explains "critical spatial theory." Rather than

understanding space as a merely physical phenomenon, Schreiner argues that space also includes ideological and imaginative aspects. Here we are introduced to the three categories of space which provide a foundation for understanding Matthew's view of space and place. These categories are first space, or the dominant understanding of space as physical; second space, which refers the ideological aspect of space; and third space, or the imaginative aspect of space. Schreiner argues that in expanding our view of space to allow for the second and especially third categories, we perhaps gain new and important insight into Jesus' mission of bringing his kingdom to earth.

It is here that it becomes apparent that in what is perhaps the greatest strength of Schreiner's work could potentially be found a weakness as well. Students of the Bible will likely find critical spatial theory to be uncharted territory in their thinking and especially their understanding of Scripture. In this chapter Schreiner delves into topics such as the definition of space, the metaphysics of space, the history of thought regarding space, etc. If the reader is not careful, they may very well forget they are reading a book on Matthew. However, this chapter is vital to Schreiner's work and it is beneficial to read it carefully in order to grasp what exactly is being argued throughout the book. One important point it contains is that how we understand space (as physical) has not always been the dominant view. The church fathers had a more relational view of space that would fall into the second and third space categories. This is important to note because the reader may be tempted to dismiss the argument as being an imposition of modern categories upon the text of Scripture which the authors never would have considered. While the categories presented are indeed modern ones, the ideas which they represent have been discussed and affirmed throughout history. Whether or not they are impositions on the text is not decided by this fact alone, but it at least provides incentive to hear the argument with an open mind. Therefore, while this chapter can seem tedious at times, it is quite interesting and indeed vital to grasping the Scriptural analysis which comes later.

Chapter 4 then applies critical spatial theory to Jesus' confrontation with the Jewish leaders in the Beelzebul Controversy (Matthew 12). Schreiner draws on the name of Baal as well as the Ugaritic Baal Epic to show that this conflict is not just about the rule of Christ over against Satan, but the realm over which they rule. Critical spatial theory helps interpret this account "by showing that when Jesus speaks of boundaries and space he is reordering

both physical and social space” (71). The “house” of Satan is not just physical, but includes the key elements of oppression and social ostracism, as illustrated clearly by the blindness and muteness of the demon oppressed man. Schreiner states,

Jesus’ household was contesting the seed of the serpent’s household in first space and second space terms. By doing so, Jesus was rejecting the household of Satan, and creating his own imagined place (third space). He criticized the system of Satan by attacking Satan’s house and imagining new meanings or possibilities for spatial practices (71).

The application of critical spatiality to the Beelzebul Controversy is a unique and helpful way to analyze the passage. Particularly strong is Schreiner’s argument that the kingdom advances through the bodies of those whom Jesus frees from demonic possession through the power of the Spirit. The language of Jesus plundering Satan’s possessions and of gathering and scattering seem to make this point. I do question the strength of the argument made from the verb *φθάνω*. Schreiner argues the word should be understood in light of the spatial dimension of the kingdom as “extend, reach, or attain.” He then goes on to conclude that the kingdom is extending through bodies possessed by the same Spirit that is at work in Jesus. In light of the overall discussion this is an attractive view. However, I just wonder how the entire phrase *ἔφθασεν ἐφ’ ὑμᾶς* should be read in that regard. It seems more likely that the phrase indicates the arrival of the kingdom in Jesus’ ministry, rather than its extension through bodies. Schreiner’s reading is not impossible, but I’m not yet persuaded this is what Matthew has in mind. While I didn’t see this as a general pattern in Schreiner’s work, it may be that here is an example of a tendency in a work like this to squeeze a meaning from a text that fits the argument, but may not likely be what the author intended. I should say Schreiner is not dogmatic here, and only states that this is what Matthew “might be indicating...” (73).

In Chapter 5, Schreiner continues his discussion of the Beelzebul Controversy, focusing on the Spirit. He then expands his discussion to the role of the Spirit in Matthew as a whole. Before discussing the Spirit, Schreiner argues that exorcisms are bodily oriented and spatial. They are body oriented in that they necessarily involve bodies. The demon takes over a human body,

and the exorcism frees that body from demon possession. They are spatial in the sense that the change that takes place in an exorcism involves the heavenly and earthly kingdoms. The status of the citizen is being transferred from one domain to the other.

In arguing for a spatial sense to the Spirit discussion in this text, Schreiner helpfully surveys the role of the Spirit in Matthew, arguing that Matthew ties the Spirit to the new exodus in significant moments in Jesus' life. Schreiner looks at the genealogy, the birth of Jesus, the Baptism/Temptation account, the exorcism (the Beelzebul Controversy), and Jesus' death. Regarding the genealogy, Schreiner argues for an allusion to the Spirit in the words *βίβλος γενέσεως* (82-4). It is indeed true that these words likely allude to the creation account in Genesis, and since it is the Spirit who is moving in Genesis 1:2, it is perhaps appropriate to see an allusion to the Spirit's work here at the beginning of Matthew's narrative.

On the other hand, while it seems likely that Matthew wants us to think new creation as we begin reading his story, I'm not yet convinced this text ought to be taken as a connection in Matthew of the Spirit to the new exodus. Similarly, with regard to Jesus' death, Schreiner argues for a reference to the Holy Spirit in 27:50 when Jesus gives up "His spirit." He follows Charette in arguing that Matthew's "unique language" coupled with the "extraordinary phenomena" that take place immediately following indicate at Jesus' death the Spirit is released (86-7). Again, I think Schreiner's argument makes sense and I could be convinced, but it seems more likely to me that Matthew is simply referring to the release of Jesus' own spirit in death. Still, Schreiner's discussion of the Spirit in the birth of Jesus and in his baptism and temptation set solid groundwork for his argument with regard to the spatial nature of the Spirit's work in Jesus' exorcism in the Beelzebul Controversy, which argument I find convincing and helpful in understanding how the kingdom has "come upon" the earth in a spatial sense. Particularly helpful is the spatial progression Schreiner points out with regard to the temptations, with the wilderness representing rejected space, the temple representing sacred space, and the mountain representing sovereign space (88-91).

The wilderness, though ideologically rejected space (second space), become a place of possibility (third space) as Jesus conquers where Israel failed. Similarly, the presence of Satan at the temple indicates its rejection as sacred space. Yet, Jesus' victory over Satan at its pinnacle indicates that

he has taken back authority over God's dwelling place in his own body. He is the new temple. Finally, we see the extent of the Devil's sovereignty over the earth in the third temptation, and yet again Jesus demonstrates his intent to seize all authority when he succeeds in resisting the Devil's temptation by refusing to bow to his authority. So, in the temptation account, Jesus indicates his mission to seize back the space of the entire earth, so that all authority in both heaven and on earth will be his.

In Chapter 6, Schreiner begins discussing the words of Jesus in his first three discourses. Through his words, Jesus is building worlds. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus' words call the disciples to be salt and light upon the earth, and so change their world. In the missions discourse, Jesus sends out his disciples as space changers, bringing peace by healing the sick, casting out demons, and even raising the dead. Finally, in the parables, Matthew tells of enacting the kingdom upon the space of the earth.

Chapter 7 continues analyzing the words of Jesus in light of spatial theory by examining the final two discourses in Matthew. In the community discourse of Matthew 18, Jesus is creating "meek space" by disrupting the natural response to tension and conflict by commanding forgiveness and humility. In contrasting the community of Jesus with the communities of the world, both second space and third space are created, which will in turn impact first space. In the last discourse, Jesus "contests the most important sacred space in the ancient world, the temple" (19). With words, Jesus predicts the destruction of the temple, and in its place "sets himself up as the *axis mundi*, where heaven and earth collide" (121).

In chapters 6 and 7, Schreiner sets forth a fascinating and I think helpful way to read the discourses in Matthew. They are not simply words, rather they are words that create new space. They are vital in our understanding of how Jesus is bringing about his kingdom upon the earth. Jesus' words build worlds as they create imagined space, thus changing minds and actions, which in turn change the physical space in which his people live as they put his words into practice.

In Chapter 8, Schreiner examines Matthew 19:28 and 18:20, arguing that both taken together speak of the New World as having spatial significance connected to communal themes. Jesus' physical presence with his people is accomplished through his communal body. His people have become his family, and their physical presence upon the earth create new spaces and

ultimately will create a new place wherein heaven and earth meet.

Chapter 9 argues for the kingdom of God as third space. Thus, “In Jesus’ words and his deeds, he evokes images of the kingdom. They speak not only to the intellect, but to the imagination” (158). Through the imagination, Jesus’ words change his people internally, and their words and actions in turn change the world externally, thus creating new space. Those who receive and act upon Jesus’ words “critique the social structures of the day with their own expanding world” (159). In Chapter 9, Schreiner also ties the categories of critical spatiality to the temporal concept of an already/not yet kingdom, first and second space being linked to the “already” and third space being linked to the “not yet” (161).

On the whole, I found this work insightful and instructive for the interpretation of Matthew’s Gospel. Schreiner has provided a new way to view the expansion of the kingdom in Matthew through the utilization of critical spatiality. My only criticism would apply to anyone endeavoring to read the Biblical texts through a new or unfamiliar grid, and that is the tendency to squeeze texts into that grid that perhaps don’t belong. I saw very little of this in Schreiner’s work as a whole, and pointed out the few cases where I think it could have been the case.

The spatial understanding of the kingdom has indeed taken a backseat in Biblical studies, and Schreiner has provided a way of brining it to the forefront of the discussion. I would recommend this work to any student of Scripture who has wrestled with questions regarding the kingdom of God, questions which have been asked throughout church history. Schreiner’s spatial inquiry into Matthew’s story of the kingdom provides new (yet also ancient) answers to these questions which move the conversation forward in a unique and most helpful way.

MATTHEW J. McMAINS

PhD Candidate, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

The Lost Sermons of C. H. Spurgeon, Volume 1. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2017. By George, Christian, 400 pages. \$59.99

Charles Spurgeon once accused a student of plagiarizing one of his own sermons. During the inquisition, the student confessed to using Charles Simeon's outline. In the moment of conflict, Spurgeon recalled that he also had lifted his sermon outline from the great preacher. Similarly, preachers from his day until now have benefitted (and borrowed) from the sermons of Charles Spurgeon. His use of metaphor combined with his ability to coin a phrase leaves few who can stand in his company. But how did the preacher become so masterful at his craft?

In *The Lost Sermons of Charles Spurgeon*, editor Christian George provides valuable answers to this question as he introduces the reader to the young preacher's earliest sermons. As Assistant Professor of Historical Theology and Curator of the Spurgeon Library at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, George is uniquely qualified to spearhead this work of supplying the church with these sermons. George's work is not merely academic, but proof of a deep interest in the life and labor of the famed preacher.

The sourcebook for this work is a handwritten notebook filled with the outlines that Spurgeon used while preaching. In cooperation with Spurgeon College, this series of sermons will survey nine notebooks, amassing a total of 400 sermons and filling 1,127 handwritten journal pages, all with the aim of fueling continued Spurgeon scholarship. The first edition contains seventy-six sermons. The title of the book hints that these sermons were "lost," but they were indeed never lost, simply—unpublished. Spurgeon disclosed in his autobiography his hope to publish these volumes, but other ministry endeavors combined with ailing health did not allow for its completion. This initial collection of sermons is a welcome addition to the renaissance of Spurgeon research as it displays the early ministerial development of the Prince of Preachers.

Part one of the book contains introductory matter, including a supportive timeline overlay of Spurgeon's life along with contextual entries. George offers a colorful description of the Victorian era that provides the necessary historical setting to understand the sermons. Additionally, George addresses the congruencies and disparities between Spurgeon and his time. The section concludes with a detailed analysis of the sermons, surveying word count,

percentages of texts used from specific testaments and books, as well as a word cloud of topical frequency.

Part two of the book consists of the heart of this work: outlines of the first seventy-six sermons preached by Charles Spurgeon. Spurgeon calls these outlines “skeletons,” and on the title page of his journal confesses they are “only skeletons without the Holy Spirit” (60). The layout of the book includes a high-resolution facsimile of the original manuscript on the left page, with an exact rendering in type on the facing page. This inclusion of both old and new creates a wonderful presentation that allows the reader to get as close to the writing of Spurgeon as possible, with the benefit of an organized outline also readily available.

This volume’s strength is its detailing of Spurgeon’s early development as a preacher as well as George’s careful examination and commentary on each sermon outline. The sermon outlines show the preacher growing in his grasp of Scripture and his concern for doctrine while consistently maintaining the crux of his preaching: the free grace offered in the gospel of Christ. The manuscripts reveal a young preacher demonstrating strong conviction and intentionality aimed at the glory of God and the joy of the listener. The outlines include reference to the many times Spurgeon “uses the brains of other men” in his homiletical process. George outperforms the role of editor in cross-references to other sermons and presentation of related works to help his reader attain a full understanding of Spurgeon. George shows how Spurgeon consulted the work of John Gill, George Whitefield, and Charles Simeon to help build out sermon content, as well as how his vocabulary grew from the hymnody of John Newton, Isaac Watts, and others. These editorial notes aid readers feeling overwhelmed at the content Spurgeon created.

Some may propose a weakness regarding the source material of the first volume of *The Lost Sermons of Charles Spurgeon*: Spurgeon’s methodology of preaching a single disconnected verse at a time. This may appear to uncover a church led by Spurgeon which did not hear the “whole counsel of God.” However, analysis of this volume reveals Spurgeon’s incredible distribution as forty-four percent of his sermons originated from the OT, and fifty-five percent from the NT. Further analysis shows that twenty-four percent of his OT sermons were from the Psalms, a book dear to his heart as evidenced by his later work, the *Treasury of David*. This specific critique must acknowledge its survey of a brief window of the preacher’s tenure; certainly these books

of Scripture were addressed in future sermons.

The Lost Sermons of Charles Spurgeon, Vol. 1, will certainly prove to be a treasure to the church and a help to preachers. While many look at Spurgeon's mountain of published work and sense comparative diminution, this collection of sermons helps preachers and writers see the cumulative effect of the regular discipline of faithfully communicating truth. On some cold Saturday night in the study of the preacher, surely one of these "skeletons" will serve to frame the thoughts and warm the heart of the pastor, thereby completing the joy of the editor, who aims to guide readers not just to Spurgeon, but *through* Spurgeon to Jesus Christ (xxiii).

MATTHEW BOSWELL

Greek for Everyone: Introductory Greek for Bible Study and Application.

By A. Chadwick Thornhill. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2016, 272 pp.

\$24.99, paperback.

A. Chadwick Thornhill received his PhD from Liberty University. He serves at Liberty's School of Divinity as the chair of theological studies where he is an assistant professor of apologetics and biblical studies. He is the author of *The Chosen People: Election, Paul and Second Temple Judaism* (IVP, 2015), and has taught beginning Greek at Liberty since 2007.

Dr. Thornhill says that his goals in writing *Greek for Everyone* were to lay "a foundation for those who lack formal training in the biblical language to gain insights from the original language of the New Testament," and to provide "an exegetical framework to help guide the way in which those insights are developed" (214–215). The book begins in chapter 1 by teaching the student how to pronounce Greek letters and words (he prefers a reconstructed first century pronunciation rather than Erasmian). In chapter 2 he discusses word meanings and semantic range, as well as how language is structured into levels of meaning such as words, groups of words, sentences, and pericopes, with the highest level being the whole discourse. In chapter 3 he defines grammatical units such as phrases, clauses, and sentences, and then shows the functional meaning of the major conjunctions. Then in chapter 4 he introduces his readers to some of the tools they will need to study the text,

such as interlinear Bibles, lexicons, and parsing tools.

Chapters 5–13 contain the bulk of the book's grammatical information. Chapter 5 explains the grammatical information communicated by verbs and nominals, such as tense, aspect, mood, case, and so on. Chapters 6–7 discuss the main functions of the cases, and chapter 8 discusses the main uses of the article, pronouns, adjectives, and prepositions. Chapters 9–13 deal with verbs and verbals, including indicative mood verbs (chapter 9), imperatives (chapter 10), subjunctives (chapter 11), infinitives (chapter 12), and participles (chapter 13). For each of the chapters dealing with verbal forms, he discusses the main uses of the various tenses (especially highlighting the importance of verbal aspect) and the significance of the verbal form under consideration (e.g., subjunctive mood, participle, etc.).

Chapters 14–18 contain practical information on the use of Greek in Bible study, in addition to addressing other hermeneutical issues. Chapter 14 explains how to trace the flow of thought by attention to matters of coordination and subordination and word order, and introduces the reader to some of the basic concepts related to discourse analysis and how to block diagram passages of Scripture. Chapter 15 explains how to compare English translations, including a very concise introduction to textual criticism and an introduction to the translation issues that often result in differences among the various translations. Chapter 16 discusses various contexts (historical, social, cultural, literary, intertextual, and canonical) that should impact how we interpret Scripture. Chapter 17 provides a discussion of word studies, including an explanation of several common mistakes (e.g., etymological fallacy, word-concept confusion), and a few helpful theoretical categories (e.g., synonymy, synchronic linguistics). It helpfully includes specific instruction on how to do word studies in the form of three basic steps: (1) selecting a significant word, (2) examining the lexical data using critical lexicons, and (3) making a judgment about which possible meaning is most contextually appropriate. The book concludes in chapter 18 with various topics related to the interpretive process such as the proper attitudes that interpreters must have when approaching Scripture, some recommended resources (such as background resources and commentaries), and some guidance in how to apply the biblical text to the modern context.

Thornhill knows that this text will not actually teach people to read Greek. His goals for the reader who completes this book are modest: "We have the

ability to understand some grammatical frameworks and interact with good exegetical commentaries and essays. We even have some ability to evaluate those resources. We have not, however, developed proficiency with the language” (213). In light of these goals, the book does not teach the *forms* of the language, but the *meaning* conveyed by the grammar. So in chapter 7, for example, while he gives examples of words in the genitive and dative cases, he is focused on the most important *meanings* of the genitive and dative cases rather than their morphology. In place of teaching readers the forms of the language, he gives them the following method for identifying grammatical information: (1) “identifying a particular word in our interlinear text,” (2) “identifying its meaning through a lexical tool,” (3) “finding its grammatical information through an analytical lexicon or parsing tool,” and (4) “studying its grammatical force through scholarly works such as commentaries, books, and journal articles” (44). Readers should probably know this up front so that their expectations are framed accordingly.

This approach to teaching Greek certainly has a place. Despite the fact that every Christian or Christian teacher who interacts with the NT in a serious way will encounter issues related to the original language, it is undoubtedly true that not every Christian or Christian teacher will have the opportunity to *learn* Greek. Given this approach, Thornhill’s presentation includes a number of beneficial components.

First, the approach is above all practical, and in light of the intended goal of helping the reader use the knowledge to engage the text, it strikes its target. For example, Thornhill shows the reader a clear method for how to study the grammar without knowing the forms (see above), and follows it throughout the book. He also provides instruction on many of the major tasks that students and teachers of Scripture will actually use when sitting in their study with their Greek NT, such as how to do word studies (chapter 17), how to track the main argument and flow of thought (chapter 14), and how to compare English translations (chapter 15). Ironically, this kind of explicit teaching in methods and skills is often lacking in more traditional grammars that are more rigorous in their treatment of issues of syntax and morphology.

Second, he emphasizes the structures larger than the word or clause level. In contrast with many beginning grammars which are almost exclusively focused on grammar at the word and clause level and seem to address the larger structures of the language only in passing, Thornhill makes this a

prominent part of his book. For example, in chapter 2 he frames the study of Greek in terms of all of the levels of meaning, which in this reviewer's opinion is a very helpful move, as it provides a context in which the discussions of verbal and nominal grammar can be placed. Another way that he helpfully pushes the reader above the word and clause level is in teaching the conjunctions based on their function rather than simply providing translational equivalents (25–26). Finally, after the bulk of his grammatical discussion, he caps off his grammatical treatment by instructing readers how to distinguish independent from dependent clauses for the sake of determining the main idea of biblical texts.

However, while the scope of the book and the emphasis on skills and methods are excellently done, the book has a few weaknesses. First of all, some of the grammatical discussions either lack clarity or have inconsistencies. One example of this is his discussion on verbal aspect. On p. 37, where he introduces verbal aspect, he says that imperfective aspect “views the action in progress, or from an up-close perspective.” Later, in his chapter on the indicative, he describes imperfective aspect as “an up-close perspective” (74 and 76), but when he puts the tenses and aspects into chart form at the end of the chapter, he describes imperfective as “in progress” (85). This is confusing because it treats “up-close” and “in progress” as synonymous ways of describing aspect, which they are not (though they might complement each other).

This is compounded by his description of “perfective” aspect (which is his name for the aspect that is expressed by the Greek perfect tense). In one place he describes this aspect as expressing “a *completed action* or a *state* that is given additional focus” (81, emphasis his), while in another place he describes it as expressing “up close” action (85). This leaves the reader wondering why perfective aspect is described in different ways in different sections of the book, and whether “up-close” action is indicated by imperfective aspect, perfective aspect, or both. (Should the reader then consult another source to gain clarity regarding what kind of action perfective aspect indicates, they will likely there find that it is the aspect of the aorist tense and give up!)

Another example of inconsistency is how he handles participial clauses. In chapter 3 (“Phrases, Clauses, and Conjunctions”), he defines a clause as “a group of words containing a subject and predicate in which the predicate contains a finite verb” (23). He continues: “Thus the major difference between a clause and a phrase is that clauses contain a verb that can create a complete

thought, while phrases, though they may contain verbals (i.e., participles and infinitives), do not contain a finite verb” (ibid.). However, on p. 121, where he discusses dependent clauses, he says there “are four main kinds of dependent clauses in Greek: *relative, infinitival, participial, and subordinate conjunction*” (emphasis his). Here and elsewhere the reader is left confused over contradictory or unclear definitions of grammatical details.

A final area that could use some improvement (though this is more of a minor criticism) is the focus of the book. Both the title and the subtitle lead the reader to expect that the content of the book will revolve around the topic of Greek language and its use in Bible study and application. However, the author includes some sections that are more properly hermeneutical and not directly connected to Greek. One example is chapter 15 (“Bridging the Contexts”), where the author includes a concise summary of Second Temple history and numerous other details that are important but not related to the use of Greek. The author’s stated intention to help readers apply what they have learned in their study of the Greek text could be achieved more effectively by limiting the discussion of hermeneutical issues to those topics that are directly related to the use of the Greek language in interpretation. Other helpful information could be placed in an appendix or dealt with in a separate volume in which they could receive adequate attention.

In sum, Thornhill has given us a handy introduction to Greek for those who have not learned the language. Despite some of its shortcomings, those who are responsible to teach in the church and yet for whatever reason legitimately cannot take an actual course in Greek could have their exegetical skills sharpened through the use of this book. Though, as Thornhill himself acknowledges, readers will not actually have proficiency with the language, nevertheless they will be better equipped to use the resources that are available to them. In addition, it could be profitably used by students who are about to take a course in Greek at the Bible college or seminary level. Having worked through this book in advance, one would have a much better grasp on the concepts involved in the study of Greek and be much less likely to get lost as they work through the details of the language in a college-level course.

NOAH W. KELLEY

Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, NC