

# CHOICE

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Phone: (860) 347-6933 Fax: (860) 704-0465  
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## HUMANITIES

### Religion

Josh Messner Product Manager, Books  
Fortress Press/Augsburg Fortress  
100 S. 5th St  
Suite 600  
Minneapolis, MN 55402

*The following review appeared in the July 2012 issue of CHOICE:*

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Theissen, Gerd. **The New Testament: a literary history**, tr. by Linda M. Maloney. Fortress, 2012. 311p bibl index afp  
ISBN 9780800697853, \$49.00

This is an important book by Theissen (Univ. of Heidelberg, Germany), a prolific and creative New Testament scholar. Not a traditional introductory work, this volume aims to trace the history of the 27 Christian writings that eventually became the New Testament canon in the fourth century. The author distinguishes four phases in the process, using new terms he has coined: "Charismatics" (Jesus and Paul) deals with "Q," Mark, and "authentic" Paul; the "Pseudepigraphic Phase" ("Deutero-Paul," the Catholic epistles, the Synoptics, John, and the noncanonical gospels); the "Functional Phase" (the uses in the churches of texts such as Acts, the Revelation to John, and Hebrews); and the "Canonical Phase" (on the way to a collection of authoritative writings). Throughout the book, Theissen shares his expert knowledge, always of interest to readers, of early Christian history and individual Christian writings. He includes 50 pages of notes, a 20-page bibliography, and an index of scripture references. This book is a must read for all serious students of the New Testament. **Summing Up:** Highly recommended. Graduate students through professionals/practitioners. -- I. Birdwhistell, Georgetown College