investigation. Ten scholars treat this passage from several points of view. The first part of the book includes perspectives from Jewish, Christian, and Islamic traditions. The second part looks at readings from Kant, Hegel, and Kierkegaard. Next Kafka, Levinas, and Derrida are examined. Finally, a look at how the contemporary reader might view the drama is offered. Each essay demonstrates how the meaning of this biblical story continues to challenge our understanding of God, faith, and family loyalty. The essays are well researched and written. Though intended for a general audience, this book is not meant for the beginning reader.


This is the second volume of a two-volume commentary on the book of Psalms (See the January 2014 number of The Bible Today for a review of vol. 1). The series to which it belongs is written with an eye to the average reader rather than serious students of the Bible. As with the first volume, this book seeks to help readers immerse themselves in the religious wealth of the psalms. It provides ways of speaking to God in praise, thanksgiving, trust, or petition. Goldingay leads the readers through a prayerful rather than a literary or historical reading of the respective psalm. He then identifies current issues or concerns that might correspond to something within the psalm.


Hancock’s investigation of the story of Esther sets out to fashion a new paradigm for examining the social phenomenon of gender in the ancient world. Along with issues of power, she sees the gender issue as intertwined with questions of occupation, family identity, and marital partner. This is a study of social history in which the author employs literary and historical sources. While she draws on feminist scholarship, she does not limit her inquiry to standard gender presuppositions or patterns that, she maintains, can obscure significant ancient political realities. She successfully challenges the claim that men always control public space while women are relegated to private space. She also shows that while Esther might not be the rule, she certainly is not the unique exception. This is a very readable and enjoyable book.


Genesis 6 reports that “sons of God” descended from heaven and mated with the daughters of human beings. Over the years this story intrigued both Jewish and Christian imaginations. From it developed the traditions of the “watchers” / the “fallen angels.” Fourteen essays by as many scholars address this tradition as found particularly in Second Temple and early Christian writings, at a time when mythological and cosmological speculation was widespread. The book begins with essays