

Cornelis Bennema, *A Theory of Character in New Testament Narrative*.

Minneapolis: Fortress Press (www.fortresspress.com), 2014. Pages, xvii + 216.

Paper, \$39.00.

This is a very interesting and constructive book on how to view “characters” in the New Testament narratives. An interest in the role and function of characters within a narrative has been a by-product of the modern literary critical approach to study of the gospels. Often, as Bennema notes, scholars have claimed that characters in the New Testament texts fit into Greco-Roman patterns, in which characters are “flat,” that is, without much definition or development and with no insight into their inner life—a pattern very different from the role of characters in modern literature. Bennema challenges this assumption and demonstrates that characters in New Testament narratives are more complex and can be evaluated along a spectrum of traits. To accomplish this, the author develops a grid of various character traits and functions and, with this grid, measures specific characters in Mark, John, and the Acts of the Apostles.