March 1975

Personal Adventure in Prophecy (Book Review)

Wayne A. Kobes

*Dordt College*, wayne.kobes@dordt.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/pro_rege

**Recommended Citation**

Kobes, Wayne A. (1975) "Personal Adventure in Prophecy (Book Review),"
Available at: https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/pro_rege/vol3/iss3/7

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the University Publications at Digital Collections @ Dordt. It has been accepted for inclusion in Pro Rege by an authorized administrator of Digital Collections @ Dordt. For more information, please contact ingrid.mulder@dordt.edu.
gramming, which provide the viewer and
listener with a brief, but apparently effec-
tive, encounter with the claims of God.
Along with the use of commercial spots is
the use of well-known religious personal-
ities in talk shows such as Johnny Carson,
David Frost, and Dick Cavett.

Of the four models presented by
Ellens, he concludes that the future success
of religious broadcasting lies in the Instruc-
tional and Leaven models. Although he
confesses that “Spots, interviews, life-situa-
tions drama, and documentaries may not
teach much theology well, they may be the
only chance” (p. 139).

Models of Religious Broadcasting is an
excellent little book on the religious broad-
casting techniques used today. Ellens gives
a careful analysis of each of the techniques
and the problems each presents. Except
for the first two chapters, this book makes
interesting reading.

A Personal Adventure in Prophecy,
by Raymond McFarland Kincheloe. Whea-
ton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers,
Reviewed by Wayne Kobes, Instructor in
Theology.

Bible commentators have always ap-
proached the Book of Revelation with some
hesitation, being aware of the complexity of
interpretation and of the variety of views
which previous interpreters have held. Ray-
mond Kincheloe in this book attempts to
guide his readers into a fuller understanding
of the principles of biblical interpretation so
that the Book of Revelation can be clearly
understood. Kincheloe’s book is therefore
better understood as a study guide than as a
commentary on Revelation.

At the beginning Kincheloe makes
clear his basic starting points in his study.
He believes that Scripture was written to be
understood, that each book has a message
for modern man as well as for the original
readers, and that the Bible is verbally in-
spired and fully authoritative. In addition,
he clearly states that his treatment of Reve-
lution is from a premillenarian, modified-
futuristic viewpoint. Yet Kincheloe affirms
that it is not his intention to impose his
interpretations on his readers.

However, I have no inten-
tions of forcing my views upon
the unsuspecting reader. My
main objective is to encourage
the reader to become an inde-
pendent investigator of truth.
(p. ix)

With his purpose clearly articulated,
Kincheloe sets down basic principles of
interpretation. He calls on his readers to
look for the basic structure of the book
under study. It is refreshing to find a writer
encouraging his readers first to put aside all
their commentaries and carefully to listen
to the book itself. Kincheloe instructs his
readers to begin by reading the entire book
at one sitting, trying to find the structure
by which the author arranged the material.
And just how does one uncover this struc-
ture? Kincheloe writes:

...a new day dawned when I
discovered that each of the sixty-
six books could be approached in
a methodical way; that under the
guidance of the Holy Spirit we
can find the actual viewpoint of
the author; that this viewpoint
reveals the author’s basic pattern;
and that the composition of the
books of the Bible follows the
same basic laws and yields to the
same structural analyses as any
other kind of writing. (p. viii)

The author goes on to list various “laws of
relationship” between paragraphs and sec-
tions of the book. However, the reader
may find some of these to be less than help-
ful, and even “forced.”

In the rest of the book Kincheloe
applies these principles specifically to the
book of Revelation, guiding the reader
chapter by chapter. It is striking that
after asserting that the books of Scripture
yield to structural analysis like any other kind of writing, that Kincheloe then proceeds to refer to a “unique type of inspiration” for Revelation which differs from all other biblical writings (p. 19). The author states that this book was written by Christ himself and was not colored by John’s personality. However, here as elsewhere Kincheloe’s premillenarian, modified-dispensational approach shapes his application of his “general principles” of interpretation.

The average reader will find some helpful suggestions for biblical interpretation at the beginning of the book. Kincheloe’s stress on turning to Scripture to let it speak is a needed stress. Yet, he presents Revelation as “the only book in the whole Bible that gives a full chronological picture of future events...” (p. 18). According to Kincheloe, Revelation presents “the heavenly viewpoint of the future” (p. 7). In the application of his principles of interpretation, the author’s own views so dominate that the reader is confronted with a thorough-going premillenial interpretation.

In the last half century the pendulum of debate on this matter has swung from interpreting Paul as a Hellenizer of the Christian Gospel to understanding him in the light of his Jewish training and background. Hanson takes us a step farther. He is rankled by those who, while stressing the Old Testament roots of Paul’s thought, have accused the apostle of taking liberties with the Jews’ accepted readings of Israel’s sacred writings. Demonstrating thorough familiarity with the labyrinthine Jewish Scriptural and rabbinic traditions of Paul’s day, the author proves in the first six chapters that Pauline usage of Old Testament citations is assiduously faithful to accepted readings and adheres to rabbinic methodology.

If after scholarly scrutiny Hanson’s work stands up, as I suspect it will, attacks on Paul’s integrity by respected New Testament scholarship will be out of vogue—a development which will be welcomed by theologians who have consistently maintained a high view of the Scriptures.

Hanson’s approach is inductive in the first six chapters. Here he scrutinizes specific passages in the Pauline corpus, mainly in Romans and Galatians, to illustrate Paul’s method and to expose his thought on topics such as Christ’s conquest of the powers (Col. 2:14-15), Abraham’s justification (Rom. 4), and Isaac’s birth with promise (Rom. 9:6-13 and Gal. 4:21-5:1). In his chapter on the latter issue, he formulates a conclusion which he deems valid in general: Paul’s “theology is not rabbinic but Christian, but his methods are entirely rabbinic” (page 102). Throughout these chapters Hanson touches on issues relating to Paul’s method and theology which receive systematic treatment in the last half of the study.

While the early chapters are difficult reading for all but the experts in this field, the last six chapters offer exciting insights with deep implications for our understanding and interpretation of Paul. How Paul employs rabbinic sources, when and why he does so, his use of typology and rejection of allegory, his recognition of the pre-existent

---


The publisher’s dust-jacket judgment that “serious students of theology—especially those in the field of New Testament studies—will welcome this fascinating and erudite investigation...” manifests keen market analysis. Although Hanson, professor of theology at the University of Hull, England, has produced a highly technical study which will probably stir discussion only in New Testament circles, he has shed new light on a perennially important theological issue: the origin and nature of Paul’s thought and theological method.