
Pro Rege

Volume 4 | Number 4

Article 14

June 1976

Gospel of John: An Expositional Commentary, v. 1, John 1:1-4:54 (Book Review)

James A. De Jong
Dordt College

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



Part of the [Christianity Commons](#), and the [Higher Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

De Jong, James A. (1976) "Gospel of John: An Expositional Commentary, v. 1, John 1:1-4:54 (Book Review)," *Pro Rege*: Vol. 4: No. 4, 28 - 28.
Available at: https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/pro_rege/vol4/iss4/14

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the University Publications at Dordt Digital Collections. It has been accepted for inclusion in Pro Rege by an authorized administrator of Dordt Digital Collections. For more information, please contact ingrid.mulder@dordt.edu.

phrases upon which to bestow praise or blame. That is hardly possible here, but a few items may be mentioned: (1) It is good to see the term "virgin" used in Isaiah 7:14 (cf. the discussion of E. J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah*, I, pp. 286-289), as is (2) the use of the term "sprinkle" in Isaiah 52:15. On the other hand, (3) Isaiah 9:2, 3 uses the present tense, prompting one to ask, "If they are now seeing a great light" (the Son of God), are they still "walking in darkness?" While there is admittedly a problem of rendering Hebrew verbs into the tenses characteristic of Indo-European languages, the choice here seems ill advised. (4) The use of "crushed" to translate *שָׁבַר* (rendered "bruised" in the KJV, ERV, and ASV) in Isaiah 53:5 and 53:10, although sanctioned by Brown, Driver, Briggs' *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, seems to suggest an oppression of such force as to contradict John 19:36b, "A bone of him shall not be broken." In the experience of the reviewer, whenever a person has been reported as having been crushed, bones were invariably broken, usually with compound fractures. In the light of John 19:36b, "bruised" would be better.

All things considered, *The Book of Isaiah From the New International Version* is an excellent translation for general use, a work that deserves to be read in the home and from the pulpit.

The Gospel of John: An Expository Commentary, Vol. 1, John 1:1 - 4:54, by James Montgomery Boice. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1975. \$9.95. Reviewed by James A. De Jong, Assistant Professor of Theology.

This volume marks the debut of an ambitious and important project. It is ambitious because Mr. Boice, minister of Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, promises that this 443-page series of expositions on the first four chapters of John's gospel will be followed by four others of similar size and scope. It is important because it represents a genre of Christian literature badly needed today and because it stands in the solid tradition of Spurgeon, Ironside, Barclay, and Stott.

The fifty-six expositions in this volume were first given from the author's pulpit and on his radio program, "The Bible Study Hour." While not theologically technical, they are theologically informed. They are clearly written, limited to roughly seven pages each, and filled with contemporary examples and applications.

Their greatest strength is a lucid and reliable explanation of John's text. They lend themselves easily to devotional usage. So employed, they stand to enrich one's faith by means of a thorough exposition of one of the New Testament's most beautiful books.

In chapters sixteen through twenty-three, Boice gives extended treatments of baptism and witnessing. He wishes to focus on the meaning of baptism rather than on the controversy regarding infant versus adult baptism. One ought to realize, however, that the two can never be completely separated. For what is at stake in this controversy is two theologies or meanings of baptism, and the emphasis Boice gives baptism as a sign and seal of God's grace is more compatible with the position of infant baptism. The author's treatment of witnessing stresses its verbal dimension as opposed to witnessing in deed, though he concedes that the two are both imperatives given to all Christians. The latter remains undeveloped as a theme in his expositions, however. Yet John's designation of "sign" as applied to Christ's miracles provides a crucial theological foundation for the importance of witnessing in deed. Despite these qualifications, Boice's study and its sequels, if they are at all comparable to this volume, deserve wide circulation and use in Christian circles.

Amsterdamse Emigranten, onbekende brieven uit de prairie van Iowa (1846-1873), by Dr. J. Stellingwerff, Buyten en Schipperheyn, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 1975, 395 pages. Reviewed by Kornelis J. Boot, Assistant Professor of Languages.

The author is the head librarian of the Free University of Amsterdam. The book consists mainly of 110 original letters from immigrants who lived in the prairie of Iowa and of their friends and relatives who remained behind in Amsterdam. Rev. H. P. Scholte led these immigrants to carve a place of refuge out of the wild Midwest. Rev. Scholte was not only their pastor, but also engaged in real estate, banking, school supervision, and politics. There are many accounts of the early settlers in and around Pella which make the book an interesting story of human events. But this is not the main thrust of the book.

Between the lines we discover the forces which motivated them to emigrate and how they intended to realize their objectives. First of all, the author introduces us to the leaders of the seceders in Amsterdam who also advocated