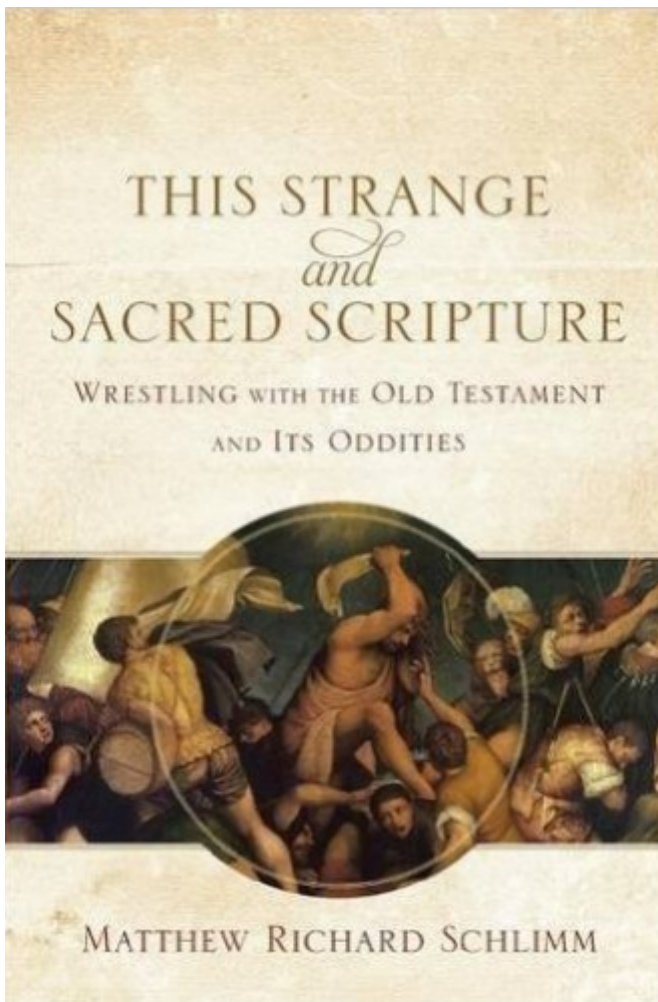


Old Testament

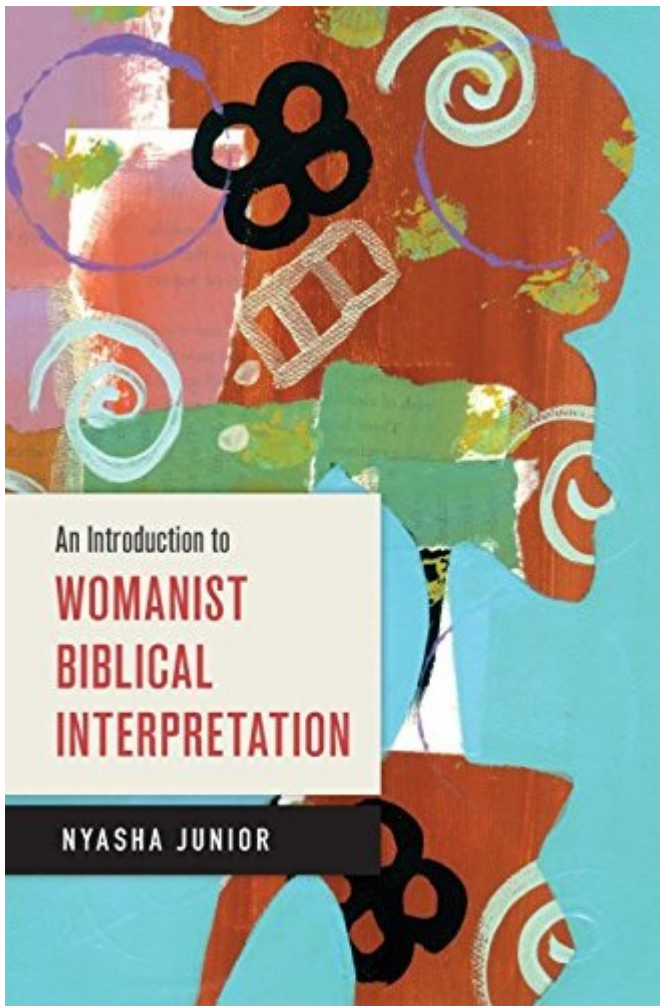
selected by [Jacqueline Lapsley](#) in the [May 11, 2016](#) issue

In Review



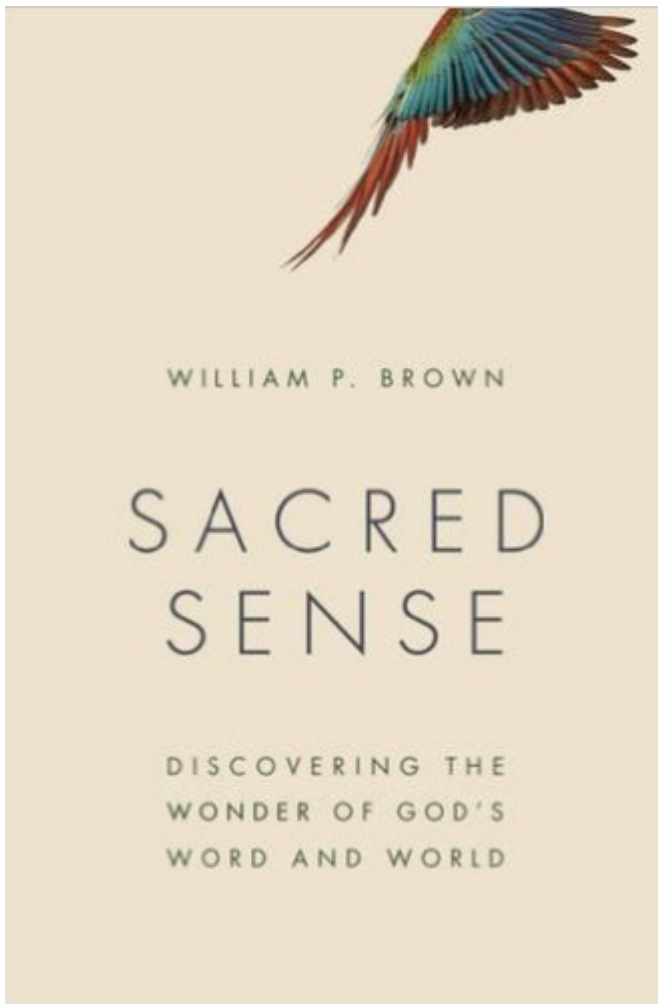
This Strange and Sacred Scripture

by Matthew Richard Schlimm
Baker



An Introduction to Womanist Biblical Interpretation

by Nyasha Junior
Westminster John Knox



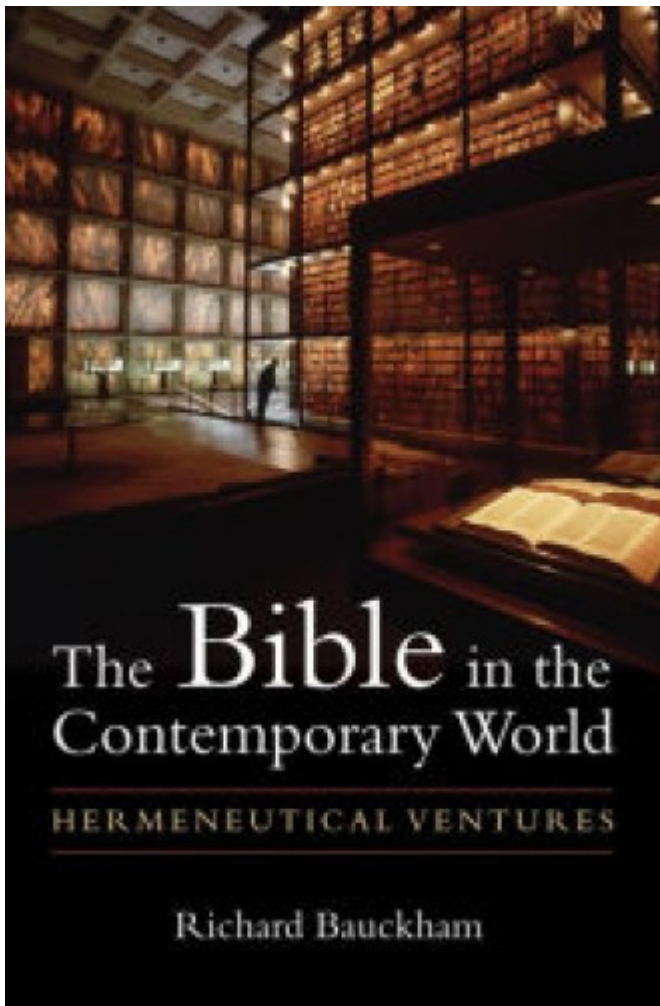
Sacred Sense

by William P. Brown
Eerdmans



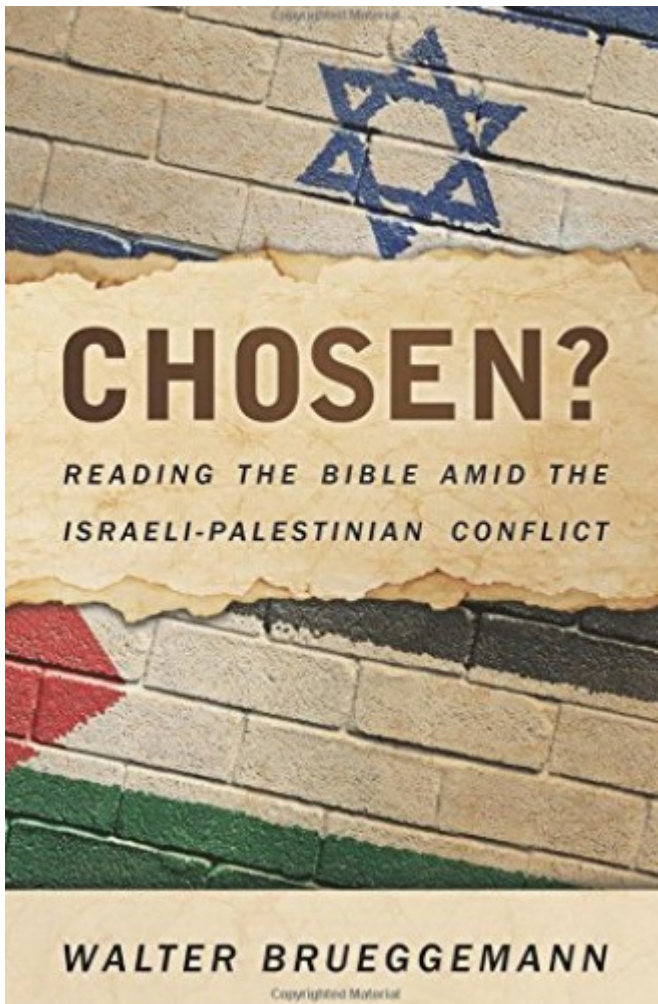
On Biblical Poetry

by F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp
Oxford University Press



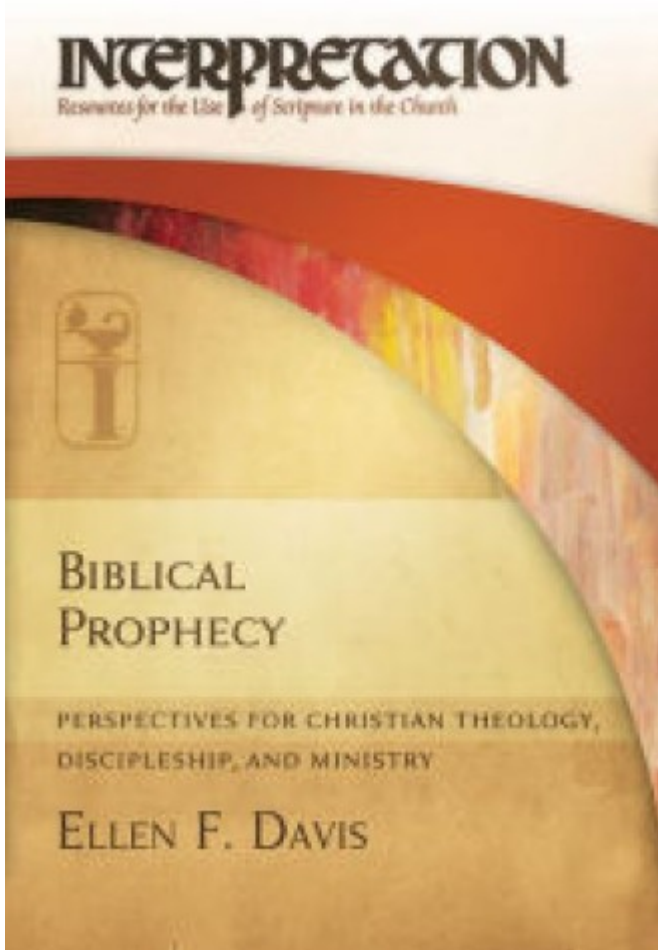
The Bible in the Contemporary World

by Richard Bauckham
Eerdmans



Chosen?

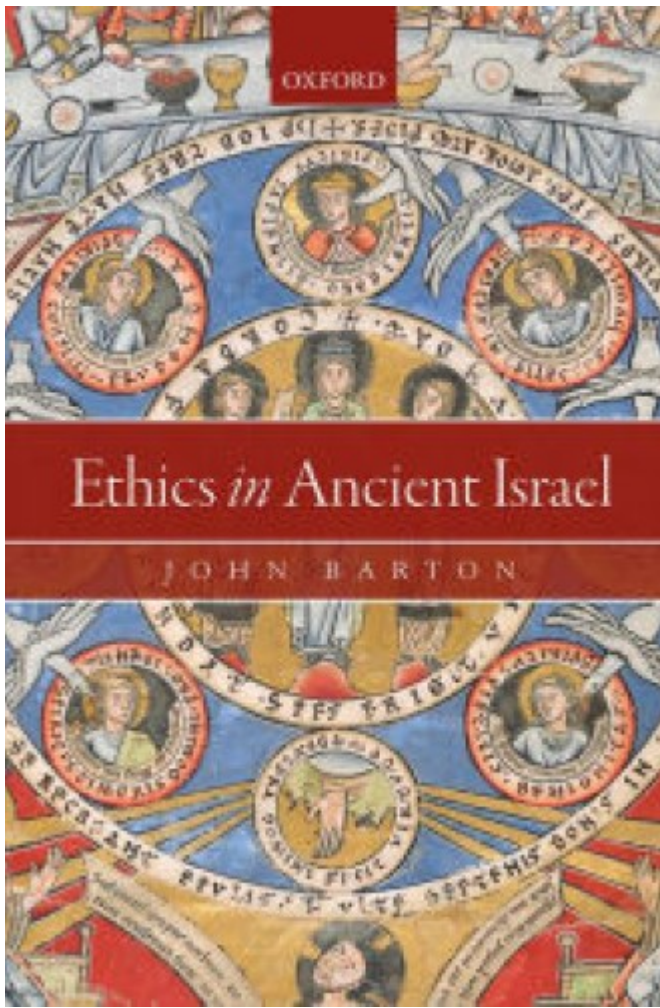
By Walter Brueggemann
Westminster John Knox



Biblical Prophecy

By Ellen F. Davis

Westminster John Knox



Ethics in Ancient Israel

by John Barton

Oxford University Press

Pope Francis

Encyclical on Climate Change & Inequality

On Care for
Our Common Home

*"An urgent call to action."
—The New York Times*

Introduction by Naomi Oreskes

Encyclical on Climate Change and Inequality

by Pope Francis
Melville House

***This Strange and Sacred Scripture: Wrestling with the Old Testament and Its Oddities*, by Matthew Richard Schlimm.** The Old Testament is deeply and sometimes distressingly strange to modern Christians (as it was also to many ancient readers). Schlimm does not explain away the bizarre or unsettling; rather, he shows how it is sometimes in the very peculiarities of scripture that we can find illumination. I have successfully used this book with first-semester seminary students. It is engagingly written and full of wisdom.

***An Introduction to Womanist Biblical Interpretation*, by Nyasha Junior.** This primer on womanist biblical interpretation is clear and accessible. The historical chapters alone are worth the price of the book. Junior provides a succinct, cogent

account of the rise of feminism and womanism over roughly the last 150 years, with special attention to the interpretation of scripture. One cannot be an informed, or compelling, interpreter of scripture today without moving beyond the white, largely male scholarly discourse that continues to dominate the field. Junior proves a skilled guide into these rich interpretive worlds.

***Sacred Sense: Discovering the Wonder of God's Word and World*, by William P. Brown.** Though I am a fan of what biblical criticism can do to illuminate scripture, it has sometimes sucked the wonder out of the text. This slim volume offers a stark and refreshing contrast. In brief chapters on texts from Genesis to Revelation, Brown uses his considerable gifts as an interpreter of the Bible to help us rediscover its enchantments.

***On Biblical Poetry*, by F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp.** Though not beach reading by any stretch, this study rewards anyone who wants to move beyond the simple idea that Hebrew poetry is “characterized by parallelism.” Dobbs-Allsopp offers sophisticated and illuminating discussions of the way that poetry makes meaning, as well as implications for how we might understand it as scripture.

***The Bible in the Contemporary World: Hermeneutical Ventures*, by Richard Bauckham.** These essays put biblical texts and Christian traditions into conversation with the critical issues facing all of us: consumerism, environmental degradation, poverty, and globalization, among others. Bauckham elegantly illumines the way the Bible speaks its critical voices into the most disordered aspects of our common life.

***Chosen? Reading the Bible Amid the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, by Walter Brueggemann.** Many Christians want to have an informed opinion about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and especially to understand how the Bible fits into arguments over this contentious issue. In this slender volume, Brueggemann succinctly names the key issues and perspectives and then shows how the Bible sometimes muddies, but may also usefully contribute to, an informed perspective.

***Biblical Prophecy: Perspectives for Christian Theology, Discipleship, and Ministry*, by Ellen F. Davis.** A supplement to the Interpretation commentaries, this volume takes a broad view of biblical prophecy. Davis begins with Abraham and continues well into the New Testament. Present-day concerns are front and center, including a final chapter on interfaith relations with Islam. Davis's well-known clarity,

insight, and theological acumen are all on display here.

Ethics in Ancient Israel, by John Barton. “Old Testament ethics” is often associated with holy war and other unsavory ideologies. Barton shows that the ethical perspectives of ancient Israel reflected in the Old Testament are much more diverse, and more interesting, than such stereotypes allow. This work is descriptive rather than prescriptive; yet it demonstrates how nourishing the “moral philosophies” of the Old Testament can be for Christians.

Encyclical on Climate Change and Inequality: On Care for Our Common Home, by Pope Francis. One doesn’t have to be Roman Catholic or agree with everything in this highly readable encyclical to be enriched by it. Grounded in rich exegesis of the early chapters of Genesis, this book calls for us to abandon the “misguided anthropocentrism” that devastates creation and exacerbates inequality. Integrating economic and scientific theory with theology and sound biblical interpretation, Pope Francis argues cogently for why we should care what happens to our planet and to all who live on it.