

Reviews

Snyder Belousek has presented a careful and thorough analysis of marriage in relation to the question of same-sex union in this book. In addition, he has done so sensitively, being careful to avoid attacking either party and drawing out points that present challenges to traditionalists as well as innovationists. The work deserves to be read by both. That being said, for those who find themselves in broad disagreement with the chapter where Belousek details his approach and assumptions, setting out the basis for his thesis, the work will feel like it has less to offer. Despite this, I would commend it to readers as a fine example of sensitive argumentation from a person with a different starting point to their own. Thus, whether you find yourself in agreement with the traditional or innovationist camps you would do well to consider the arguments he presents and the implications and challenges he puts forward.

Philip D. Foster

Associate Editor, *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology*
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David Alan Black and Benjamin L. Merkle, eds., *Linguistics and New Testament Greek: Key Issues in the Current Debate* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2020), xi + 276pp, ISBN 978-1540961068. £21.99

This book aims to bring the study of New Testament Greek up to speed with current developments in linguistics in order to aid and inform biblical exegesis. It is made up of ‘eleven papers delivered at a conference called Linguistics and New Testament Greek: Key Issues in the Current Debate, held on the campus of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary on April 26–27, 2019’ (p. 3). It may be profitably read by any person with some training in New Testament Greek.

The book begins with a preface to the volume by one of the editors, David Alan Black, titled “Where Did We Come From?” The preface orients the reader well, with a description of the origins of this book and a brief history of the relationship between linguistics and NT Greek. The preface is followed by the eleven chapters based on the aforementioned conference papers. It then concludes with a postscript by the other editor, Benjamin L. Merkle, titled “Where Do We Go from Here?” This postscript



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acts as a summary to the volume and directs the reader to avenues for future developments in the field.

The eleven core chapters cover a wide range of issues. The first, by Stanley E. Porter, summarizes the various linguistic schools and how they have been used in NT Greek studies. This seems like the logical place to start in such a volume, although it may be a challenging introduction for some readers as it is, essentially, an overview of the major linguistic theories and how they differ. The next ten chapters (authors' name in brackets) cover the following areas:

2. Aspect and Tense in New Testament Greek (Constantine R. Campbell)
3. The Greek Perfect Tense-Form: *Understanding Its Usage and Meaning* (Michael G. Aubrey)
4. The Greek Middle Voice: *An Important Rediscovery and Implications for Teaching and Exegesis* (Jonathan T. Pennington)
5. Discourse Analysis: *Galatians as a Case Study* (Stephen H. Levinsohn)
6. Interpreting Constituent Order in Koine Greek (Steven E. Runge)
7. Living Language Approaches (T. Michael W. Halcomb)
8. The Role of Pronunciation in New Testament Greek Studies (Randall Buth)
9. Electronic Tools and New Testament Greek (Thomas W. Hudgins)
10. An Ideal Beginning Greek Grammar? (Robert L. Plummer)
11. Biblical Exegesis and Linguistics: *A Prodigal History* (Nicholas J. Ellis)

In general, the chapters are excellent in quality and helpful for developing the understanding of readers about NT Greek functions. Aubrey's chapter (3) on the perfect tense was particularly useful, attempting to show how the competing approaches to describing the perfect tense can generally be seen as drawing attention to different ways the tense is used and functions in NT Greek.

Runge's chapter (6) on constituent order has a number of insightful findings. It will help the student of NT Greek to come to terms with the word orders that are unusual and those which are normal. This will assist people to navigate when and where different types of emphasis are being used. However, Runge also helpfully draws attention to the fact that



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‘analysis of constituent order is impossible apart from careful attention to the discourse context’ (p. 144). As such, a competent knowledge of the relevant historical and cultural background is highly important for the exegete in understanding the words in front of them.

Buth’s chapter (8) on pronunciation in NT Greek studies was also insightful. Many may feel like getting pronunciation right is relatively unimportant. However, Buth shows how a working knowledge of the pronunciation of the time can actually inform text critical decisions. Unfortunately, as Buth acknowledges, the actual work of bringing about change in pronunciation is an uphill struggle. As useful as it is, any movement here needs to overcome the long-standing status quo. I would encourage people to read Buth’s arguments and seriously consider changing teaching to conform to a more accurate view of the pronunciation of NT Greek.

Although I have only commented on a few of the chapters here, I would recommend them all. They will stretch and challenge many of us and can teach readers to be more faithful exegetes. I was particularly impressed by a number of authors who were able to step outside their own personal viewpoints to draw attention to what is helpful in the views of others. Only occasionally did one feel like there was a lack of effort to understand opposing views and to recognise how they can still contribute to biblical exegesis. However, the knowledgeable reader can generally identify when this is occurring and take those criticisms with a grain of salt.

Philip D. Foster

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