

David M. Stark. *Singing and Suffering with the Servant: Second Isaiah as Guide for Preaching the Old Testament*. Arbeiten zur Pastoraltheologie, Liturgik und Hymnologie 101. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2022. 311 pages. \$138.

The Servant Songs of Deutero-Isaiah have been of momentous significance for Christian theology ever since the Gospel of Matthew was composed. David Stark's *Singing and Suffering with the Servant* is a nuanced and substantive resource for preachers drawing on Isaiah to explore dynamics of domination, resistance, and resilience. This volume is assiduously researched, demonstrating Stark's erudition in homiletics and biblical studies.

Chapter 1 argues that the Hebrew Scriptures have been neglected in much contemporary Christian preaching and homiletical scholarship. Evangelical expository preachers, Hebrew Scripture scholars who preach, and many highly visible preachers, including Teresa Fry Brown, Wilda Gafney, Kenyatta Gilbert, and Howard-John Wesley, regularly engage the First Testament in the pulpit. Nevertheless, Stark is right to flag the implicit neo-Marcionism lurking in some ecclesial and theological-school cultures.

Chapter 2 offers an analysis of post-Holocaust homiletics, focusing on six influential scholars from Presbyterian, evangelical, United Methodist, Episcopal, Lutheran, and United Church of Christ traditions. Stark's treatment is generally judicious, though some of his critiques might not do justice to every dimension of the works under review (see pp. 44–45, 47–48, 67–70). He alerts readers to attenuation of the authority of the Hebrew Bible through facile metaphorization, the supersessionism of moves promoting the displacement of the Hebrew Scriptures in promise-fulfillment schemata, and distortions engendered by sermons that force Christian doctrinal claims onto Hebrew Bible texts. Affirming strengths wherever he can, Stark also offers incisive criticism of logical flaws and missed opportunities he spies in the works under consideration. Graduate students in homiletics will learn much from the analyses here.

Chapter 3 argues that the “language of preaching” in Deutero-Isaiah (114) allows for open-ended trajectories of interpretation as regards the focus of Judean resistance (Babylonia? Persia?) and the identity of the Servant. That insight is not new to biblical studies, where layered voicing and textual polyvalence have been theorized for years, but it bears underscoring for homiletics pedagogy. Stark avers that Deutero-Isaiah provides a valuable model for preaching because the prophetic scribe holds historical referentiality lightly, amplifying the power of older traditions in mysterious poetic speech intended to address the present circumstances of the listening community. The sermon studies on offer here are rich. Stark urges preachers to move beyond historicist interpretation and narrowly christological readings of the Servant Songs; his analysis of a sermon on Isaiah 42 by Óscar Romero is scintillating in this regard. Also compelling is his framing of the Servant's testimony in Isaiah 49 via the work of Anna Carter Florence and Lucy Rose, and he does a brilliant job of limning key points about “prophetic weariness” (148) in sermons by Pauli Murray and Charles Campbell on Isaiah 50. Stark lifts up inner-biblical allusiveness as treasure for dialogical homiletics. Since many Scripture texts brim with inner-biblical allusions, this gestures toward wonderful terrain for homileticians to explore.

Chapter 4 focalizes the work of Alexander Deeg as exemplifying a sophisticated homiletical sensibility shaped by Jewish-Christian dialogue. Stark commends the rabbinic praxis of honoring a text's surplus of meaning through polyphonic debate. He identifies a challenge of Christian lectionary-based preaching: interpreting a Hebrew Scripture text through a perceived thematic link to the Gospel lection can distort the witness of the First Testament reading. The appalling resurgence of anti-Semitism in the United States and Europe is abetted by the reality

that in some Christian contexts, anti-Judaism has never been effectively repudiated. Reparative work is urgently needed. Here, Stark reflects on the importance of imaginative reading, bold preaching that disrupts prejudice, and Jewish-Christian dialogue as salutary for the postcolonial church.

Chapter 5 highlights Black Church preaching traditions. Stark is committed to interrogating the tacit privilege accorded to works by white scholars of Anglo and European heritage in North American theological-school curricula. In his detailed review of African American homiletics, readers learn from the wisdom of Donna Allen, Dale Andrews, William Barber II, James Forbes, Kenyatta Gilbert, Cleophus LaRue, Otis Moss III, Luke Powery, Gardner Taylor, Lisa Thompson, William Turner Jr., and more.

Researchers will lament the lack of a Scripture index, and eagle-eyed readers will find some typographical errors. But these are minor quibbles. In this superb book, Stark illuminates issues vital not only for preaching but for ecclesiology and pastoral theology. This volume will be indispensable for homileticians working on Isaiah, anti-Judaism, and biblical theology.

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