

John Goldingay. *Job for Everyone*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2013. 215 pages. \$16.

In *Job for Everyone*, one volume of John Goldingay's 17-volume *Old Testament for Everyone* series, the author combines sound exegetical scholarship with spiritual theology—in the tradition of Eugene Peterson and Diogenes Allen—to produce a study volume that is accessible to anyone and everyone, as the title implies. One strength of *Job for Everyone* is that Goldingay does not clog the reader's mind with twenty-first century side-arguments like identifying the historical Job. Instead, the author encourages the reader to receive the narrative as those of First Testament times likely received it—one that illustrates and explains some of the intersections between humanity and God. In this, *Job for Everyone* and the *Old Testament for Everyone* series functions as an Old Testament complement to N. T. Wright's 18-volume *New Testament for Everyone* series.

Goldingay's stated purpose is to encourage Christian readers to spend more time with the Old Testament or *First Testament*, which he reminds us was for Jesus and New Testament writers "a living resource for understanding God, God's ways in the world, and God's ways with us" (1). The Book of Job "does not focus on God's dealings with Israel over the centuries" (3), it looks more at those issues that cause us to struggle with our faith, which is why we study Job.

Job for Everyone is written for serious inquiry and not for casual reading. Each chapter begins with the author's own translation of the pericope under consideration. These translations prove helpful in understanding the original text. The author's translations are followed by a short contemporary illustration designed to link the meaning of the text to everyday experience. He uses stories that any twenty-first century reader would recognize, like the recent financial crisis of 2008, long-term illness, or the tragedies that we are likely to encounter on the evening news. The translation of the text and the author's short illustrations are followed by a substantive reflection on the text that includes cultural/ historical contexts, biblical customs, and linguistic notes on the Hebrew text. To understand Job's story it is important that we understand the difference between the *adversary* and *Satan* in Old Testament literature. These are presented in an easy-to-read narrative style that is characteristic of John Goldingay's many volumes about Old Testament books. On the back cover, the publisher makes an appropriate recommendation that the book be used for "daily devotions, group study, or personal visits with the Bible" (back cover).

The author of *Job for Everyone* supplies details often overlooked when we study Old Testament books from such historical distance. Though Job likely predates the Abrahamic covenant and the promise of the Messiah, we often mistakenly read Job through the lens of covenant. Similarly Goldingay reminds us that it would be a misrepresentation of the text for us to superimpose New Testament ideas about death and resurrection upon Job's frequent wish to die.

John Goldingay also does a good job of humanizing the characters and distilling the issues they face. Job is *Everyman*, so much like any Christian attempting to live an upright life. He is both admirable and pitiable at the same time. Admirable in the sense that he holds to his confession of faith—in spite of personal anecdotal evidence that imperils what he believes to be true about God. Job is pitiable in the sense that he is suffering without the comfort of his friends

or community. His three friends, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite are more intent on remaking Job in the mold of their theological presuppositions than in sitting in sorrow with their friend. Job's wife does not understand his faith, and his community has decided to focus more on the spectacle of his suffering than on his humanity.

Job is also one who suffers, like so many of us, without having all the information. One key to understanding the entire volume lies in conversations that took place at a "heavenly committee meeting" where Job was not present. Why *did* Job serve God so joyfully? Was it his prosperity? Was it good health, or a good name in his community? Or, was it something else?

Job for Everyone is about so much more than the question of theodicy. The themes of Job include bad theology, poverty and wealth, the nature of God, and more. In *Job for Everyone*, Goldingay reminds us of the significance of the book of Job in contemporary conversations.

Safiyah Fosua, Wesley Seminary at Indiana Wesleyan University, Marion, IN