

Biblia y Ecología. Nuevas Lecturas en un Mundo Herido. Edited by Carmen Yebra Rovira and Estela Aldave Medrano. Asociación Bíblica Española Monografías Bíblicas 84. Estella: Verbo Divino, 2024. Pp. 486. Price €35.00 (pbk) / €21.99 eBook. ISBN 9788410630352. ISBN eBook 9788410630369.

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In July 2023, the Spanish Biblical Association held an international conference in Madrid on 'Bible and Ecology: New Interpretations in a Wounded World'. This volume shares the fruits of the conference, discussing a wide range of Old and New Testament texts from an ecological perspective. The editors are from the Pontifical University of Salamanca (Carmen Yebra Rovira) and the Aragon Regional Centre of Theological Studies (Estela Aldave Medrano). All of the chapters have been reworked for publication. While most of the twenty-one authors are Spanish, there are also contributors from Argentina, Britain, France, and Italy. Well-known contributors from the English-speaking world are three leading British experts on biblical ecology: David Horrell (Exeter), Katharine Dell (Cambridge), and Hilary Marlow (Cambridge). The volume is very much

up to date, with David Horrell's introductory chapter referring to scepticism about climate change among some voters in the 2020 US election. The twenty chapters in this book offer a contemporary view of the environmental challenge, addressed from multiple biblical perspectives. The volume seeks to use fresh avenues to illuminate the reality of our wounded world and propose ways for a healthier relationship with it, as well as providing a better knowledge of the biblical texts, along with new research perspectives, including dialogue with other disciplines.

After a brief prologue by Carmen Bernabé Ubieta, two chapters make up the volume's first section ('Posing the Question'). David Horrell outlines the development of ecological hermeneutics, starting from Lynn White's provocative 1967 article on 'The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis', which blamed the first chapter of Genesis for the ongoing environmental destruction. Among other milestones, Horrell then refers to the Earth Bible Project led by Norman Habel, as well as the Exeter Project. Thereafter, Katharine J. Dell proposes a synthesis of ecological theology for the Psalter, based on a triangular relationship between God, humanity, and nature. To this end, she reads selected psalms in light of deep ecology, noting the principles of interactive processes, flourishing through diversity, and the maintenance of life.

The second section ('Sinking Roots into the Beginning') includes three studies addressing ecological themes in Genesis and other fundamental biblical texts. Using Michel Foucault's ideas of heterotopia and dystopia, José Albert Garijo Serrano contrasts the images of the fertile Jordan valley and of the desolate land of Sodom (Gen 13:10; 19:12–19). Thereafter, Ianire Angulo Ordorika explores the rich ecological image of the plantation, often used to present the ideal of the believing community in the Old Testament and Qumran literature, as well as sometimes in the New Testament (which prefers the image of the temple). Enrique Gómez García then dialogues with recent theologians in discussing the first two chapters of Genesis, proposing that we move from the theological paradigm of 'dominion', through the idea of 'stewardship', to the model of 'the community of creation'.

The third section ('Listening to the Voice of the Prophets and the Sages') offers six chapters with new interpretative approaches to prophetic, sapiential, and poetic literature. Hilary Marlow provides an ecojustice interpretation of Amos, showing how the prophetic text illustrates the connection between poverty and environmental degradation. Thereafter, Nuria Calduch-Benages supplies an interpretation of Lady Wisdom in Sirach 24 from an ecological perspective, especially by investigating the floral and arboreal imagery, emphasising creation's beauty, diversity, and flourishing. Emanuelle Pastore then explores the link between the regeneration of the land through water and trees in Ezekiel 47 and the regeneration of the human community within Ezekiel 40–48. Thereafter, Ignacio Pizarro traces the food images in Ezekiel 33–48, indicating their role in the restoration of the land. In light of the 2020 document by Pope Francis on the ecology of the Amazonian region (*Querida Amazonía*), Mariana Zossi offers an ecological interpretation of King Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the tree (Daniel 4), calling for conversion to bring justice for the poor but also recovery to the environment devastated by despotic power. Finally, Víctor Herrero de Miguel engages in a kind of 'ecological poetics' based on chapter 4 of the Song of Songs, where the poetic images from the animal, mineral, and plant world invite us to admire the unique beauty of every creature.

The fourth section ('Ecology and the New Testament') has three chapters on the Synoptic Gospels and one on the Apocalypse. First of all, Lorenzo Gasparro considers the ecological impact of the plant metaphors used by Jesus for God's kingdom, especially the wheat and the tares (Matt 13:24–30) and the mustard seed (Mark 4:30–32). Thereafter, José Manuel Hernández Carracedo, arguing for an 'integral ecology', analyses the first-century socio-environmental impact of the Jerusalem Temple, depicted as devouring widows' houses. Next, Mariela Martínez Higuera studies the meaning of good and bad fruit in the gospels and explores how Matthew's metaphors of trees and fruit can point to what she calls an 'eco-koinonia'. Finally, Marida Nicolaci supplies an ecofeminist investigation into the laments in chapters 8–18 of the Book of Revelation, in light of prophetic traditions in the Bible and some Greco-Roman omen texts. Her focus on the victims of the Roman imperial system, both human and physical or environmental, enables her to rescue the ideology of this biblical book from all forms of oppressive domination, in favour of an approach leading to sustainable and open relationships.

The last section ('Broadening Horizons') includes four very different chapters that widen the discussion. First of all, Jaime Vázquez Allegue offers an eco-palaeographic exploration of the materiality and conservation of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Juan Luis Montero Fenollós then explores the geographical environment, using the example of the biblical city of Tirzah, identified with Tell el-Far'a in the central mountains of Palestine, once the capital city of King Omri (1 Kings 16:23). The chapter includes helpful photographs and maps. Next, Alfonso Vives Cuesta and Silvia Nicolás Alonso jointly review the polyvalent religious imagery of the lion in Mesopotamian, Egyptian, and biblical literature, showing the crucial role played by apex predators in ecosystems as well as in religious imagery. Lastly, Inmaculada Rodríguez Torné introduces animal theology, involving a decentralisation of the human species within the cosmos, so as to restore all creatures to their rightful place in a reflection on creation. She depicts human beings in Genesis 1 as governors on behalf of the Creator but in Genesis 2 as the Maker's gardeners. In the volume's epilogue, Julio Trebolle considers biblical theology along with the Qumran astronomical texts. He argues for a new theological paradigm that is not based solely on anthropology and history, but instead integrates the whole of creation and nature as well.

The volume's structure and organisation are very suitable for its purpose. The opening Table of Contents clearly identifies the topics covered in each chapter, while the chapters themselves include many helpful subheadings. The writing style is clear, and any Hebrew or Greek words are transliterated. The volume usefully ends with a substantial bibliography, though it would have been advantageous to have also added an index of topics.

Besides addressing texts from many parts of the Bible, including some passages often neglected in ecological discussions, it is noteworthy that a couple of chapters also consider Qumran texts (Ordorika, Trebolle) and ancient Near Eastern or Greco-Roman background (Nicolaci, Vives and Nicolás). However, because of the volume's sharp focus on biblical passages concerned with ecology, only a few chapters directly address scientific issues (Vázquez, Montero) or current events (Horrell, Zossi). While several chapters focus on plants (Ordorika, Calduch-Benages, Pastore, Zossi, Herrero, Gasparro, Martínez), two consider the theology of animals (Rodríguez, Vives and Nicolás).

Previously when I was teaching an undergraduate course on Ecology and the Old Testament, I was looking for a similar volume covering the range of Old and New

Testament texts from an ecological perspective. Hitherto the best example has been the *Oxford Handbook of the Bible and Ecology*, edited by Hilary Marlow and Mark Harris (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022). A comparison of the Spanish volume with the Oxford Handbook will highlight similarities and differences. While both these volumes are almost 500 pages long, the Oxford Handbook has 30 chapters, often summarising current scholarship, while the Spanish volume has 20 chapters, offering longer and often innovative investigations of particular passages and issues. While both volumes include a parallel historical survey of scholarship by David Horrell (comparable in scope but often different in content or emphasis), the Oxford Handbook has four other methodological essays. Both volumes have chapters on key passages and themes in Genesis, Psalms, Song of Songs, the Synoptic Gospels, and Revelation. Whereas the Oxford Handbook also has chapters on Leviticus, Deuteronomy, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Minor Prophets, Book of Job, John, and Paul, the Spanish volume has chapters focusing on Amos, Ezekiel, Daniel, and Sirach. However, the Spanish volume lacks the Oxford Handbook's thematic studies on topics such as stewardship and image of God, as well as contemporary issues. Overall, while the two volumes could be considered competitors, in fact they are better regarded as complementary, illustrating the current upsurge of interest in the topic.

Overall, the Spanish volume includes many well-informed chapters addressing diverse aspects of biblical ecology. Rather than merely summarising earlier scholarship, the rich and varied chapters include some innovative investigations of neglected passages or themes. Some of the chapters offer more detailed investigations of the biblical text, which could be a concern for some readers, but in fact they make a unique contribution to the scholarly discussion. Although the volume consists of separate chapters, as a whole they offer a range of perspectives on the shared theme, attesting a lively sense of engagement with biblical ecology. If an English translation of the Spanish volume can be produced, it would be helpful for postgraduate (or 3rd year undergraduate) students of biblical studies with an ecological focus, as well as for clergy and religious ministers seeking to reflect on the environmental crisis in light of faith.