

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Faculty Publications, Classics and Religious Studies
Department

Classics and Religious Studies

January 2002

Review of The Bible at Qumran: Text, Shape, and Interpretation, edited by Peter W. Flint

Sidnie White Crawford

University of Nebraska-Lincoln, scrawford1@unl.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/classicsfacpub>



Part of the [Classics Commons](#)

Crawford, Sidnie White, "Review of The Bible at Qumran: Text, Shape, and Interpretation, edited by Peter W. Flint" (2002). *Faculty Publications, Classics and Religious Studies Department*. 7.

<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/classicsfacpub/7>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Classics and Religious Studies at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Publications, Classics and Religious Studies Department by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

The Bible at Qumran: Text, Shape, and Interpretation, edited by Peter W. Flint. Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001. Pp. xv + 266. Price: \$22.00. ISBN 0-8028-4630-0.

This volume is another contribution to the Eerdmans series Studies in the Dead Sea Scrolls and Related Literature. The essays are loosely gathered around the topic "The Bible at Qumran," and the editor has divided the articles into two groups. Part 1, "The Scriptures, the Canon, and the Scrolls," includes articles by J.A. Sanders, B.W. Waltke, E. Ulrich, C.A. Evans, and the editor, P.W. Flint. The contributors to Part 2, "Biblical Interpretation and the Dead Sea Scrolls," are J.C. VanderKam, C.A. Evans, J.E. Bowley, J.M. Scott, M.G. Abegg, and R.W. Wall. Unlike other volumes of collected essays in this series, which have highlighted the work of a single author or published the proceedings of a particular conference, this collection has a more disparate origin. Some contributions were given as papers at the Dead Sea Scrolls Institute of Trinity Western University (Bowley, Ulrich, VanderKam and Wall), one (Waltke) is reprinted from *The New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), and the rest (Abegg, Evans, Flint, Sanders and Scott) were invited for the volume.

There are several excellent individual contributions to this volume. In particular the articles of Flint, VanderKam and Abegg stand out. Flint's essay, "Noncanonical Writings in the Dead Sea Scrolls: Apocrypha, Other Previously Known Writings, Pseudepigrapha," argues cogently for new definitions of the terms "Apocrypha" and "Pseudepigrapha" in light of the Qumran discoveries. His proposed definition of "Apocrypha" is especially sound: "Jewish works of the Second Temple period that are excluded from the Hebrew Bible but are included in the Old Testaments of some, but not all churches" (p. 86). Flint goes on to an excellent discussion of which texts, whether canonical now or not, had scriptural status and authority in the Qumran community. The article by VanderKam, "The Interpretation of Genesis in 1 Enoch," does a good job of exploring its topic in a semi-popular mode, and would be an excellent assignment in an undergraduate classroom. "4QMMT, Paul, and 'Works of the Law,'" by Abegg, makes use of 4QMMT to illuminate the thought of the Apostle Paul. Abegg's conclusion is that in 4QMMT obedience to the Law is not "the entrance into a relationship with God," but is the consequence of that relationship and the way it is maintained. Further, 4QMMT's position is essentially in

agreement with Paul's in Galatians. Abegg illustrates how the Qumran discoveries are (or should be) changing the face of NT scholarship.

The chief weakness of this volume is that the essays do not hang together as a collection. Some address the topic of the book, the Bible at Qumran, squarely (i.e., Ulrich, Flint, Bowley, Scott and Abegg), while the others make little or no mention of the Qumran literature (i.e., Sanders, Waltke, Evans, VanderKam and Wall). Several of the articles (i.e., Sanders, Waltke, Wall and Evans' first article) have a strong Christian theological bias, jarring in a volume that purports to focus on Qumran. Perhaps a better title would have indicated the wider scope of the essays, which really encompass the Bible and its shape and interpretation from second temple times through the second century CE.