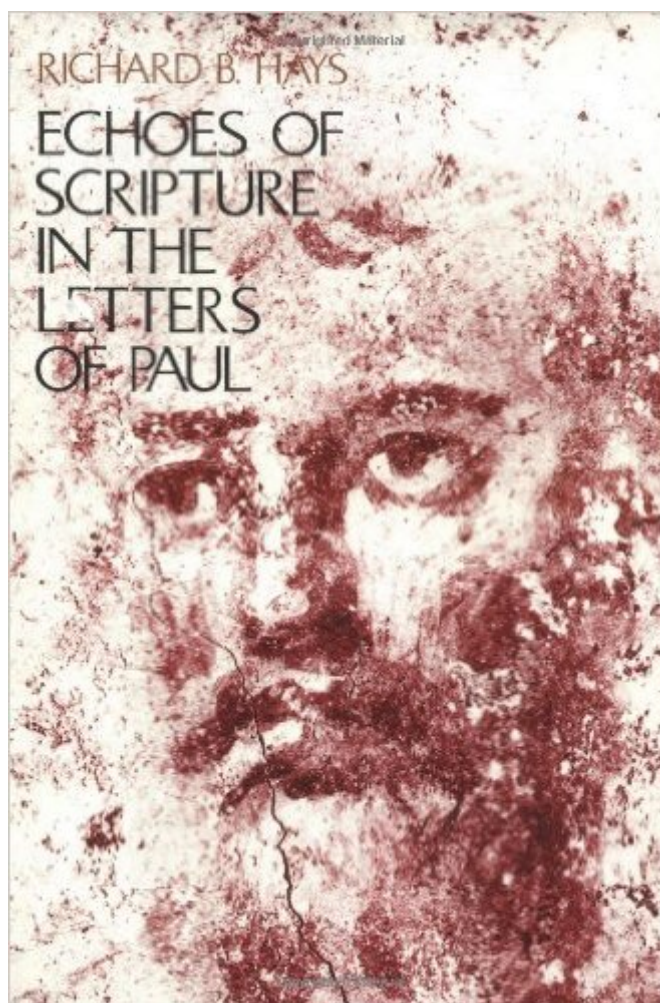


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Echoes Of Scripture In The Letters Of Paul



Synopsis

Paul's letters, the earliest writings in the New Testament, are filled with allusions, images and quotations from the Old Testament. This book investigates Paul's appropriation of Scripture from a perspective based on recent literary-critical studies of intertextuality.

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Customer Reviews

Is Scripture an unchanging word, fixed in the past, or is it dynamic, alive, taking on new meanings as it addresses competent readers in the present? Who is a competent reader? And, Richard Hays asks, "If the word is so alive and active on the lips and in the hearts of the community of faith, how then must we read?" These are questions that, directly or indirectly, occupy most of *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, where Hays examines some of Paul's highly innovative scriptural readings. He treats Paul's letters as "hermeneutical events," in which Paul reinterpreted Scripture for his churches. More than is usually recognized, Paul made use of intertextuality, embedding fragments of Scripture in his own discourse; in most cases he did so allusively, rather than by direct citation - the reader has to listen to the echoes of the original text in what Paul has written. Often enough, the echo is too faint to be noted. Of one instance Hays writes, "Any reader who knows where the words come from will surely smile in recognition of the point; most readers will miss the point altogether." The immense value of this study lies in its potential to lead earnest readers to a keener appreciation of Paul, as Hays uncovers suppressed allusions in a number of examples taken from Romans, First and Second Corinthians, Galatians, and Philippians. The effect is almost always

surprising; sometimes one wonders at Paul's subtlety; at other times one asks whether it is really Hays' ingenuity that has conjured up an echo that did not occur to Paul. As it turns out, it does not matter. Hays argues that to limit the interpretation of scriptural echoes to what Paul intended is to create artificial limitations and restrict the hermeneutical freedom which Paul himself employed.

Reviewed by "The Midrash Detective," Ed Vasicek, Author of *The Midrash Key: Pinpointing the Old Testament Texts from Which Jesus Preached* Dr. Hays has written an amazing academic book evaluating Paul's hermeneutic. This book is not for the layman. I rarely give a 5 Star rating to a book that I disagree with on some key points, but this is an exception. I purchased this volume in my quest as "The Midrash Detective," trying to locate the Old Testament "mother texts" the New Testament writers sometimes built upon. I did pick up a few possibilities, but that is not primarily what this book is about. Although the author is not theologically liberal, he is not a conservative evangelical (like myself) either. As a result, he downplays the supernatural revelatory inspiration experienced by Paul the apostle and views Paul more as an interpreter of Scripture rather than writing under the supernatural guidance of the Spirit Himself. Although I emphasize the human thought process in the Scriptural authors, Paul is not just a great teacher and interpreter; instead, he is laying the foundation of the church (Eph. 2:20) in a way no moderns can nor should. Yale Prof. Richard Hays avows that Paul's hermeneutic is to be normative for us, and offers some guidelines that should help us avoid taking too much liberty with subjective interpretation. I would argue that the Scriptures can be spiritual alive and the "word near us" by way of application. Imaginative interpretation leads to nothing but theological error, situation ethics, and a denial of absolute truth.

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