

Samuel E. Balentine

The Lure of Transcendence and the Audacity of Prayer

Selected Essays

[Die Verlockung der Transzendenz und die Kühnheit des Gebets. Ausgewählte Aufsätze.]

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The discourse of prayer responds to the abiding lure of transcendence. From Gilgamesh to the primordial human beings in Eden to Odysseus, the quest for ultimate truths has summoned forth all manner of human effort – courageous, desperate, pious, impious, successful, failed, invited, forbidden – and like all such lures, one can never be certain whether the glimmer of transcendence is that of a bright and shining star that illuminates the shadows or only a shiny object that seduces one into an inescapable darkness (a fishing lure, for example). In this study, Samuel E. Balentine demonstrates how prayer's invocation of God transgresses the limits of human beings. The author shows how inviting, let alone commanding God to speak may be the »acme of bardic pretention,« but in the ancient world such transgression characterizes the audacity of prayer.

Survey of contents

Part I. The God of Prayer: »I Am Not a Human Being«

1. Isaiah 45: God's »I Am,« Israel's »You Are«
2. »I Am a god and Not a Human Being«: The Divine Dilemma in Hosea
3. Written on the Heart, Erased from the Mind: Rewriting Moral Agency in Jeremiah

Part II. Enthroned on the Praises, Laments, and Penitence of Israel

4. Enthroned on the Praises and Laments of Israel
5. Jeremiah, Prophet of Prayer
6. The Prophet as Intercessor: A Reassessment
7. My Servant Job Will Pray for You
8. »I Was Ready to Be Sought Out by Those Who Did Not Ask«

Part III. Prayer as a Vehicle of Theodicy

9. Prayer in the Wilderness Traditions: In Pursuit of Divine Justice
10. Prayers for Justice in the Old Testament: Theodicy and Theology
11. »You Can't Pray a Lie:« Truth and Fiction in the Prayers of Chronicles

Part IV. Preaching and Praying the Prayers of the Hebrew Bible

12. Preaching the Prayers of the Old Testament
13. »Turn O Lord! How Long?«
14. Praying East of Eden

Part V. Retrospectives and Prospectives

15. Prayer in the Hebrew Bible: Retrospectives and Prospectives

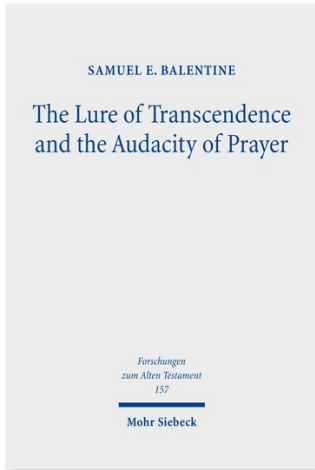
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