

REVIEWS

The Spirit of God in the Torah: A Pentecostal Exploration. By Steffen G. Schumacher. Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2021. 462 pp.

Steffen G. Schumacher, a faculty member of the European Theological Seminary in Kniebis, Germany, offers an exploration of the Spirit in the books of the Torah through a Pentecostal lens. Offered as his “scholarly” attempt at contributing to the Pentecostal understanding of the Spirit in the Old Testament, Schumacher extensively investigates Pentecostal literature and utilizes the concept of *Wirkungsgeschichte* in his analysis of Pentecostal hermeneutics. He also offers themes for constructive Pentecostal pneumatology after applying a Pentecostal literary-theological method to nine Spirit-related texts in the Torah. He distinctively provides a dialectic between literary-theological scholarship and contemporary scholarship of non-Pentecostals and Pentecostals on the Spirit in the Torah.

Schumacher progressively presents his propositions by first offering an extensive literature review on the Spirit of God in the Torah from 1878 to the present. Second, he provides a Pentecostal reading method that includes the concept of *Wirkungsgeschichte* in Chapter 3, a literary-theological approach to Spirit-related texts in Chapter 4, and a thematic-dialectic process of constructing Pentecostal pneumatology in Chapter 5. Third, he concludes his discourse by highlighting the significant contributions of his study in Chapter 6.

Schumacher’s extensive study in Chapter 1 includes notable authors like Hans Hinrich Wendt, who first presented a biblical theological investigation of *ruach* in 1878 (5). Notable amongst Wendt’s discussion is his view of the *ruach* as a “moving spiritual power that reveals itself externally” rather than as “a dormant possession of the individual” (6). Other authors, like Wilf Hildebrandt, Christopher J. H. Wright, and John R. Levinson, were among recent scholars conducting *ruach* studies with a pneumatological approach (84). Schumacher joins the conversation by also going through the pneumatological route, but delimiting his scope (the Torah) and affirming a Pentecostal approach to his contribution to the academic discussion of the Spirit.

After an extensive literature review, Schumacher examines Pentecostal hermeneutics in Chapter 2. Here Schumacher admits that Pentecostal reading (at least by those impacted by Holiness Revivalism) is influenced by Arminian theology and the Wesleyan view of sanctification (88–89). He mentioned Howard M. Ervin as the first Pentecostal scholar to articulate the need for a Pentecostal hermeneutic. Ervin claimed that through “a Pentecostal encounter with the Holy Spirit, a believer respects the

witness of Scripture more and reads it within the pneumatic continuity of the faith community” (93). Schumacher also highlights Lee Roy Martin, a Holiness-Pentecostal theologian, who demonstrated the emerging “Wesleyan-Pentecostal literary-theological method” in his writings (97). Schumacher concludes the chapter by profiling the contours of Pentecostal hermeneutics.

In Chapter 3, Schumacher traces the *Wirkungsgeschichte* of early Pentecostal periodicals and literature. His goal was to “highlight early Pentecostal interpretation . . . and to explore the way the results shape the interpreter as a Pentecostal reader/hearer” (132). Accordingly, early Pentecostal writings used perspectival approaches in biblical interpretation. For instance, *The Pentecostal Holiness Advocate*, a publication of Holiness Pentecostals, pervadingly emphasized concepts of holiness and sanctification in their readings of the Spirit in the Old Testament (183). While the publications of the Assemblies of God, USA (i.e., *The Christian Evangel*, *The Weekly Evangel*, *The Pentecostal Evangel*) and Pentecostals of the Finished Work tradition generally read the Spirit in the Old Testament “in light of the NT and their personal experiences with the Spirit (which, for them, confirm the NT)” (217). Schumacher concludes that a Pentecostal reading affirms that biblical interpretation is always contextual (223).

In Chapter 4, Schumacher utilizes a Pentecostal literary-theological reading of Spirit-related texts in the Torah, within the framework of “faithfulness to the Spirit, to Scripture, and the community” (225). His reading manifests the role of the Spirit in God and Israel’s relationship (362). Despite the strength of the reading method, Schumacher may be in danger of relying too much on secondary references to support his suppositions. To improve this chapter, the author may have provided more robust internal evidence to augment textual theological claims.

After extensive reviews and literary-theological analyses, Schumacher converges his data by offering a constructive pneumatology of the Spirit in the Torah (363). His reading reveals a sovereign, powerful, cooperative, and intimate Spirit, which significantly affirms the Pentecostal pneumatological consensus. He ends his monograph with dialectical overtures offering multiple silhouettes from which a wholistic Pentecostal pneumatology may emerge.

Overall, Schumacher’s study is relevant to the development of Pentecostal pneumatology. Using a literary-theological method in studying Spirit-related texts in the Torah offered new avenues for understanding the Spirit in Old Testament texts. His unabashed use of a Pentecostal framework and a technique appropriate for analysis of the Torah resulted in a highly academic Pentecostal output. Many Pentecostal scholars will benefit from the extensive literature reviews and his critical analysis of Pentecostal hermeneutics. His exploration of periodicals and literature from both streams of Pentecostalism (i.e., Holiness and Finished Work) also widens the contextual relevance of his propositions.

In the final analysis, one can commend the theological framework of “faithfulness to Scripture, to the Spirit, and the community” because it included essential elements in the hermeneutical and theological undertaking. First, faithfulness to Scripture ensures the observance of proper exegetical methods. Second, faithfulness to the Spirit presumes the continuity of the Spirit’s charismatic activity. Third, faithfulness to the community recognizes the contextual horizons of its interpreters (i.e., the Pentecostal community) and offers opportunities for dialogue, accountability, continuity, and convergence. Schumacher’s entire monograph remained faithful to this framework, producing a distinctly Pentecostal offering to the development of pneumatology in the Torah.

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