

the context of the overall biblical story of Israel, its key images and concepts, its understanding of God, and its moral teaching. This is a helpful and clearly written text that is respectful of the Old Testament in its own right and also of its role as an essential backdrop for the New Testament.

**Paula Gooder, *Journey to the Manger. Exploring the Birth of Jesus.***

Minneapolis: Fortress Press ([www.fortresspress.com](http://www.fortresspress.com)), 2016. Pages, xviii + 158. Paper, \$18.98.

Here is a fine book on the infancy narratives that provides both an informed analysis of these beloved texts and reflection on their meaning. The author, Paula Gooder, is a theologian of the Church of England and a popular spiritual writer. She begins by succinctly documenting the complex weave of history, Old Testament reflection, and Christology that make up these opening chapters of the gospels of Matthew and Luke. But, she notes, the central purpose of these gospel texts is to throw light on the identity of Jesus and to anticipate major themes of the respective gospels as a whole. Her study moves through the successive segments of the infancy narratives, commenting on the biblical text and offering solid reflection about their meaning for Christian life today. Here is sound spiritual reading for the Advent and Christmas season.

**David Bentley Hart, *The New Testament. A Translation.*** New Haven: Yale University Press ([www.yalebooks.yale.edu](http://www.yalebooks.yale.edu)), 2017. Pages, xxxv + 577. Paper, \$35.00.

To undertake a new translation of the New Testament on one's own is truly a daunting project, but one that David Bentley Hart, an Eastern Orthodox scholar and theologian at the University of Notre Dame, has managed. He is convinced that translations by groups or teams (as is usually the case) lead to "diplomatic" compromises, and that most modern translations are significantly influenced by traditional doctrinal concerns or customary language. His goal is to provide a "piteously literal translation"—one that hews as closely as possible to the Greek of the New Testament. With few exceptions, he notes, the Greek found there was raw and inelegant but gained its force by the passion and conviction of the biblical authors rather than by the finesse of their grammar or literary style. Readers will experience here a fresh and at times startling reacquaintance with the New Testament text as rendered in Hart's translation. Equally valuable is Hart's long and eloquent introduction, which includes not only an informative description of the translator's challenges but also an essay on the radical nature of early Christian views concerning wealth (an essay that was originally published as a *Commonweal* article). A "Concluding Scientific Postscript" presents a detailed defense of some of Hart's translations of key New Testament terms.

**Karina Martin Hogan, Matthew Goff, and Emma Wasserman, eds., *Pedagogy in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity.*** Atlanta: SBL Press ([www.sbl-site.org/publications](http://www.sbl-site.org/publications)), 2017. Pages, xxii + 401. Paper, \$49.95.

This collection of scholarly essays, part of the "Early Judaism and Its Literature" series, originated as the work of a study group of the Society of Biblical Literature