Reverberations of the Exodus in Scripture, edited by R. Michael Fox, is a collection of essays by evangelical authors dealing with the exodus, broadly construed, in the context primarily of the Protestant biblical canon. In Fox’s brief introduction to the volume as a whole, two key issues are highlighted. First, E. P. Sanders’s Paul and Palestinian Judaism has proven to be a catalyst for the reexamination of the Pauline corpus and, as a byproduct, the New Testament as a whole from a (Hebrew- and Aramaic-speaking) Jewish perspective, in contrast to what had been a field dominated by Greco-Roman considerations (xi–xii). Second, Michael Fishbane’s Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel has demonstrated convincingly that the Hebrew Scriptures already had a long history of inner-biblical interpretation before the New Testament (or rabbinic) texts began their further interpretative reception of these earlier texts (xiii). These two considerations, although not expressly stated for most of the essays, lay the foundation for the broad consideration of the exodus within a Protestant biblical canon: “What emerges from this study is a stronger sense that, when the NT writers made use of the exodus, they were reusing and re-appropriating a story that already had a long history of being reused, re-appropriated, and re-actualized by communities who viewed themselves as the people of God and the heirs of his covenant promises” (xiv).
Eugene H. Merrill’s “The Meaning and Significance of the Exodus Event” (1–17) explores the exodus as a historical event that gives rise to further reflection within the history of Israel and early Christianity. To accomplish this goal, Merrill explores the exodus in its canonical, historical, and theological contexts (3). By canonical he means its synchronic placement within the larger corpus of the Torah, in particular after the text of Genesis (4). Historically he places the exodus “in the so-called Middle Kingdom period (1570–1320),” with Moses’s birth being placed with precision in 1526 (6). The theological context is distinct from the canonical context in that references to the historical event within the Old Testament as well as its paradigmatic significance are explored as diachronically distinct references and interpretations of the historical exodus event.

“Joshua and Israel’s Exodus from the Desert Wilderness” (18–34), by Hélène Dallaire and Denise Morris, demonstrates from a literary standpoint parallels between the exodus in broad terms in the Torah and the book of Joshua, “what Michael Fishbane calls ‘reflexive historiography’” (20). With the compelling demonstration of parallels on multiple levels between the Torah and the book of Joshua, the authors conclude, “The book of Joshua is structured in such a way that the exodus is remembered, paralleled, alluded to, or mentioned in nearly every chapter. It is impossible to escape its influence on the book” (33).

Daniel J. Estes’s “The Psalms, the Exodus, and Israel’s Worship” (35–50) focuses on the intertextual relationship between Exod 14–15 and the book of Psalms. As a part of his introduction Estes discusses the relationship between Julia Kristeva’s literary theory of intertextuality and Fishbane’s concept of inner-biblical exegesis, seeing their intersection as a valuable resource for the study of biblical textual relationships (37). By demonstrating several concrete verbal links between Exod 14–15 and Psalms and analyzing conceptual similarities and differences, Estes concludes, “the exodus experience was a crucial element in the content of the historical memory of Israel” (49); further, “the exodus experience also may well have functioned in a paradigmatic fashion for the expression of Israel’s communication to YHWH” (50).

Nevada Levi DeLapp’s “Ezekiel as Moses—Israel as Pharaoh: Reverberations of the Exodus Narrative in Ezekiel” (51–73) examines the intertextual relationship(s) of the book of Exodus and Ezekiel, viewing Ezekiel as an example of the reception history of Exodus (51–54). In this sense, after examining both typological and verbal similarities between these texts, DeLapp concludes, “Their intertextual relationship invites readers to view the prophet Ezekiel as a New Moses and to see the people of Israel as both a recapitulation of their rebellious ancestors and as a New Pharaoh/Egypt” (72).
In “Promise and Failure: Second Exodus in Ezra-Nehemiah” (74–93), Joshua E. Williams argues for Ezra–Nehemiah as a second exodus (74–75). Williams points out that, although there are several similarities between the exodus proper and Ezra–Nehemiah, other connections are also prominent (87). In this regard, “the correspondences between Ezra 7–9 and Neh 8–10 to Jer 30–33 make it clear that Jeremiah’s picture of restoration forms part of the backdrop to the book” (88). This leads to Williams’s conclusion “that Ezra-Nehemiah presents the return from exile as an anticipated, but ultimately unsuccessful attempt to fulfill prophetic expectation of a second exodus” (74; see also 90–93).


Thomas N. Willoughby explores several verbal and typological connections between the book of Exodus, Ezek 36, and John 1–4 in “ ‘The Word Became Flesh and Tabernacled among Us’ : A Primer for the Exodus in John’s Gospel” (121–38). He concludes that the exodus theme can be used in helpful ways to lend fresh interpretation not only to issues in John 1–4 but also to the book as a whole (137–38).

David Starling’s “Ephesians and the Hermeneutics of the New Exodus” (139–59) argues that Eph 1–3 develops a new exodus hermeneutic that explains not only the exhortations of Eph 5 but also the uses of Ps 68:18 in Eph 4:8–10 and Exod 20:12 in Eph 6:2–3 (141). Starling understands the strongest connections not so much with the exodus proper as with texts already using the exodus paradigmatically, such as Hos 9:1–3; 11:10–11; Mic 7:15–17; Ezek 20:33–38; Isa 43:16–21; and 51:9–11 (143). After exploring several of these connections, Starling concludes, “there is evidence that Paul encourages his readers to understand the story of Christ as a typological echo of the original exodus and a fulfillment of the OT hopes and promises of a new exodus” (158).

In “περὶ τῆς ἐξόδου … ἐμμηνόεσεν, ‘He Spoke about the Exodus’: Echoes of the Exodus in Hebrews” (160–86), Radu Gheorghita seeks to demonstrate the significance of the exodus in the book of Hebrews not so much through concrete verbal connections as through thematic material in common between the two texts. In particular, the themes of the exodus proper, the “aftermath” of the exodus, and Moses all become the key thematic considerations of Gheorghita’s study.

Robin Routledge’s “The Exodus and Biblical Theology” (187–209) closes the volume by considering three themes connected to the exodus “motif” from a biblical theology perspective: how the exodus defined both the people’s relationship with God and their
national identity (188–94); how this relationship should impact how the people live (194–200); and how the exodus became paradigmatic of God’s redemption of his people (200–208).

As a general concept the volume is to be applauded for trying to take seriously the role of the interpretation of scripture in the development of scripture and seems to reflect a major portion of the historical process that has given rise to them. Scholars from a broad representation of traditions, for example, James Sanders, Brevard Childs, Rolf Rendtorff, Michael Fishbane, and John Sailhamer, are all in print noting the role of the interpretation of scripture in the development of scripture (among other things). Further, the essays that try to bring clarity to the term intertextuality are a welcome corrective to the often vacuous use of the term that points to a nondescript relationship between texts (see also Georg Steins, Die “Bindung Isaaks” im Kanon (Gen 22): Grundlagen und Programm einer kanonisch-intertextuellen Lektüre [Freiburg: Herder 1999], 45–83; and Jordan M. Scheetz, The Concept of Canonical Intertextuality of the Book of Daniel [Cambridge: James Clark, 2012], 1–35). The application of these concepts to the exodus demonstrates, albeit in an obvious way, how other projects of a similar nature could develop.

While reading the volume a few issues continually arose. First, although the exodus is definitely referred to as a historical event in the biblical text, its typological or paradigmatic significance is actually already defined in the description of the exodus itself (Exod 13:11–16). Most of the essays indicate that the exodus became paradigmatic in its use in some other text outside of Exodus. This is clearly not the case: the exodus is already viewed paradigmatically in the book of Exodus’s description of the exodus. Second, the key question of the direction of textual dependence is assumed throughout many of these essays without a clear explanation of the underlying reasons. An explanation would be helpful, especially because many of the assumptions are contrary to present scholarly consensus. Third, related to the previous issue, is the question of whether the parallels are there because of literary dependence or because there is an overarching author, source, compiler, or redactor. Fourth, although there are certainly areas of overlap in the theoretical approaches of Julia Kristeva and Michael Fishbane, their differences are significant. For Fishbane, sorting out the direction of interpretive dependence is an important problem to solve, while Kristeva believes this to be the banal practice of intertextuality and sees a necessary reciprocal impact of texts on one another, regardless of which one came first. Even with this critique, the volume will be helpful to those working on intertextuality, inner-biblical exegesis, and, of course, the exodus.