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In this volume, fourteen contributors take on sections of the Bible and examine what it teaches us about disability. In the process, they relate how interpretations have created, changed, and illuminated views on disability in the Judeo-Christian traditions. And, most importantly, they raise questions for further work and thought.

This is not a verse-by-verse exposition; nor does it comment on every passage in the Bible. In general, the contributors wrestle with large sections of the Hebrew and Christian scripture. Their approach is interdisciplinary, drawing insights from medical anthropology, linguistics, sociology, and general religious studies. Thus a theme emerges of using human experience filtered through disability to examine the writings handed down to us. Both medical and social-cultural models of disability are included. The medical model is used less, as the conditions mentioned in ancient documents are often difficult to equate with modern diagnoses. There are also many conditions mentioned in the biblical accounts that are not always thought of as disabling today. Therefore, social and cultural considerations, such as exclusion, community, and stigma still hold great relevance and receive the most attention.

The articles are arranged in more or less canonical order, beginning with the Creation. A primary question concerns what it means to be

made in the “image and likeness” of God. Most commentators have understood the image and likeness as being not only physical: humanity also shares a spiritual and mental likeness, and represents the divine through the commission of dominion. Typical of the detailed work in this volume, it is argued that all of humanity is part of the Creation, and thus all humans share in being good. Disability is not excluded from being part of this relationship, and further, is part of the created order.

Infertility plays a prominent role in these early books that record the origins of ancient Israel. The social pressures of infertility, such as adoption and concerns about pure lineage and cause, are still with us. Divine sovereignty and causation are concerns with infertility, and the matter of God causing impairments extends into Exodus. In this book, the speech disability of Moses is clearly attributed to divine action, but not all questions are settled. While some are offended to think that a god would cause disability, the encounters of Moses and YHWH reveal that Moses is not treated differently. Variability, including disability, is part of being human, and the needs for accommodation are granted without prejudice.

In the face of this we come to Leviticus and Deuteronomy, with widespread proscriptions and stigmatizations of disability. Although the ideal

body is representative, there is tension: Moses is acknowledged as disabled and a leader. In those seemingly endless lists of dull rules, one finds ableism mocked when humans use it as a standard. Justice is oriented to restoration, not punishment; injuries are compensated by value. Protections are enacted for disabled people, a rarity in the ancient world. And while imperfect bodies are stigmatized by their exclusion from the priesthood, an abled body is a divine gift and still relative in comparison. In the end, the tension of disabled bodies, exemplified in Moses, stands as contrast to the rules. The enabling God also sends disability, but ethical regulations provide protection and dignity.

Physical abilities, such as walking, shouting, looking, and hearing continue to be normalized as we move through the Former Prophets. Descriptions of battle do not mention injuries. Is this because disabilities do not matter, or are they overlooked in the summary? Here, there are parallels to general statements of nondiscriminatory policies, or some of the modern disabled-for-a-day simulations, which give mention, but fail to share the reality of day-to-day life.

Post-exilic writings deal with identity after the exile. That identity is often symbolized in the disabled city of Jerusalem. While there are often links to non-normative physical conditions, there are no rules on a hard-and-fast relationship. Punishment is diverse and complex, and the conditions described, such as loss, change, and guilt, parallel those of people with disabilities. This is especially true of social constructions, which have, for most disabled people, become a more comprehensive and satisfactory way of understanding disability. It is similar with the mostly older wisdom literature: direct references are fleeting, and parallels are not always favorable to disability. However, despite a tendency to fostering ableism, these do reflect on limitations and legitimate a theology of protest. They also demonstrate, as in the case of Job, that disabled people

can find divine favor. Coupled with the Psalter, they reflect on the diversity of human experience, God's protection, and subtle disruption of ableist views.

As divine intermediaries, the prophets continue this line of thought. Restoration is relief of disabling conditions, and disability images permeate the discussions of evil-doers, but God also protects and cares for the humble. Leaders are called to be just and care for all equally. Isaiah in particular introduces the paradox of the disabled servant who is also a healer. As with much of the Hebrew scripture, disability is often a literary device, used to investigate areas of concern that are not always explicit.

The Gospels are a primary source of interest with their healing stories and the interpretations that spring from the rationales recorded. This ableist approach distracts from many points, such as that Jesus was born into a family based on love, not genetics, and one that included scandalous women. But the Markan stories can be troubling: everyone who encounters Jesus is healed. Jesus is gracious, but impairment and salvation seem far apart. This remains problematic, even though the words of Jesus separate sin and disability, and the story ultimately reveals a disabled Jesus who appears with wounds. The stories of Luke-Acts address the entire person's well-being, not just bodies. Healing is accompanied by social restoration, showing the social dimensions of disability. Healing also trumps laws, such as the Sabbath. It is a blind man who knows Jesus is the Messiah, and a short tax collector is accepted socially. And at the end, Jesus is also isolated and bears the stigma of wounds. As with many ancient documents, there is no disability agenda as such, but it is also clear that the divine gifts are available to outcasts. Similarly, the Johannine writings include disabilities as part of creation, and to denigrate such conditions is to denigrate the creator. Typical of the insights that fill the book is the exposition of healing of the paralytic man in chapter 5. There are odd

details, but the most problematic part, Jesus' charge to the man to stop sinning, is turned around to a society that refuses to grant access and full personhood. Jesus goes beyond Caesar. Perhaps our institutions should take note and go beyond the basic ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) requirements, instead of opposing them. After all, in chapter 11, the returned Lazarus is turned over to the community's care.

Paul is often an object of interest for his unspecified "thorn," and it is the chapter on his letters that particularly impresses. These letters of Paul and his school show an awareness of impairment and roles, which makes the social-cultural model of disability most relevant. Those who are strong uphold status, and this was important duty of the times. Here we come to a central point that is worthy of emphasis in the study of disability and religion: Paul's championing of Jesus as the crucified one was revolutionary. Crucifixion removed all social status, and Paul's proclamation that God accepted and honored Jesus indicates divine solidarity with the marginalized. This liberatory move has been obscured by typical interpretation and even by the obsession with the nature of that "thorn."

It is this acceptance, far more than his death, that reveals the work of Jesus. Followers of Jesus meet in weakness and accept their shared vulnerability. In this light, the later letters fall into place: Galatians is an exasperated response to those who want to reinstate competition and discard their experience. Here, knowledge of the ways of ancient rhetoric reveals the contrast and again champions the Crucified One. The discussion with the Corinthians of body parts becomes a comic satire that emphasizes the misdirection of the world's order of power. All bodies are impaired, and disability is an inescapable part of existence.

As the Gospel of John states, if one wrote down everything, the world could not contain the books, and that is true of this volume. Its combination of surveying historical

(mis-)understandings, exegesis and creative thought, and suggestions for going further make for an exceedingly valuable collection, of which only a few highlights can be shared here. It will be useful to biblical scholars, those working day-to-day with disabled people in churches, pastoral staff, and disability advocates in secular or religious fields. And it keeps the promise of being good news that "gospel" implies, as contributor Kerry Wynn writes, "If Scripture is not good news for people with disabilities, it is not good news for anyone" (p. 121).

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