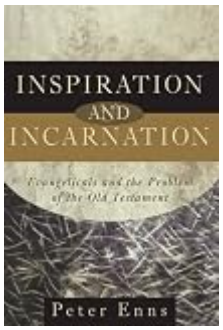
BOOKS I HAVE READ: INSPIRATION AND INCARNATION

Posted on May 27, 2013 by Eddie

Categories: Reviews, Theology



If truth be told, I wasn't planning to read this book, but on balance, I'm glad I did.Â Inspiration and Incarnation: Evangelicals and the Problem of the Old TestamentÂ by Peter Enns looks at three big questions related to the Old Testament.

There is a lot of similarity between some Old Testament stories and contemporary stories; for example the Genesis story of the flood bears a lot of resemblance to the Babylonian Gilgamesh epic. Does this mean that the Old Testament is no more inspired or sacred than related texts?

There are times when the Old Testament seems to disagree with itself. Some of the Proverbs are contradictory and at times the details of stories in Chronicles differ from the same stories in Samuel and Kings. What does this mean for our understanding of the nature of the Old Testament?

The New Testament sometimes quotes the Old Testament in ways that the original authors could never have envisaged. What does this have to say about the way in which weÂ interpretÂ Scripture?

I've seen treatments of these questions before, but to be honest, most of them just tend to explain the questions away which might feel comforting, but it is far from satisfactory.

Enns takes the questions very seriously and certainly doesn't try to explain them away. He sees challenges like these as helping us to really understand the nature of the Bible as a book with both divine and human origins. It is the human side of the equation that means leads to the issues that Enns is dealing with. It is not that Scripture is flawed, but that it reflects the cultural contexts out of which it arises. A longish chapter is devoted to each of the questions and Enns demonstrates how the issues that we find difficult about the Bible actually arrive naturally out of the culturalÂ milieu out of which it arises. It is good stuff.

If you have questions about the Old Testament or are interested in the nature and inspiration of Scripture, you could do far worse. This isn't the easiest book to read; it takes a bit of concentration, but it is well worth the work involved.

For those who are interested there is aÂ Kindle Edition.