

### **Book Review**

Daniel Webber, The Coming of the Warrior-King – Zephaniah Simply Explained  
(Darlington, Evangelical Press, 2004) paperback, 190 pages. \$14.99

The growing series of “Welwyn” commentaries produced by Evangelical Press in Great Britain continue to present an excellent blend of scholarship, pastoral warmth and practical application in a manner that is useful to pastors for sermon preparation, yet also extremely accessible to laymen for personal Bible study. Whilst they vary in quality, this latest offering in the series on the book of Zephaniah is one of the finest yet published.

The author is a veteran pastor, Puritan scholar and the director of European Missionary Fellowship (EMF). Writing in a pastoral and extremely readable style, Webber deftly handles the prophet’s often complex interwoven themes of judgment and restoration, not softening the thrust of the warnings and applying them with precision to our current day. Each of the ten chapters subdivides nicely into smaller bite-size chunks for daily devotions and ends with “points to ponder” – applying the text meditatively to the heart. The commentary is based on the NIV, though it substitutes many preferred readings throughout, and there are sufficient footnotes to encourage deeper study. Of particular help is Webber’s treatment of the nature of Scripture and Biblical prophecy in the introduction. In a day when there is much confusion in this realm, the author’s sane explanation of the layers of prophecy within Scripture’s covenantal structure is most welcome.

Zephaniah may not exactly be a book that today’s Christians are crying out to study. Ministering during the dark final days of Judah’s kingdom, he brought the message of impending judgment at the hand of Jehovah, the “Warrior-king”. Although the message is sobering in its import for the prophet’s day and our own, Zephaniah also contains some of the Old Testament’s most beautiful words of promise and restoration. Webber’s commentary reinforces the startling up-to-date relevance of God’s Word in these often overlooked Minor Prophets. Serious scholars will want to look elsewhere for “meatier” textual studies, but here is an excellent place to begin for those who want something more in-depth than daily reading notes.

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