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### Review of 'Contagious Holiness: Jesus' Meals with Sinners,' by Craig L. Blomberg

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**Review of 'Contagious Holiness: Jesus' Meals with Sinners,' by Craig L. Blomberg**

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through the work of Jesus. In a final, somewhat eclectic chapter, W. considers the relation of Jesus to Paul, Paul's understanding of his apostolic task, and the relation of that apostolic work to the life of the contemporary church.

Those familiar with W.'s work will find here a compact review and further exposition of themes he has dealt with in other publications. Those unfamiliar with his work will find a good introduction both to his understanding of Paul and to the way he goes about establishing it. In either case, one will read the book with profit.

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CONTAGIOUS HOLINESS: JESUS' MEALS WITH SINNERS. By Craig L. Blomberg. Edited by D. A. Carson. New Studies in Biblical Theology 19. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2005. Pp. 216. \$20.

The declared purpose of the New Studies in Biblical Theology series is, from an evangelical perspective, "to instruct and to edify, to interact with the current literature, and to point the way ahead" (9). Blomberg's book masterfully accomplishes these aims, offering an enlightening analysis of Jesus' table fellowship for Christian academics and laypersons alike.

B. frames his study around recent challenges to the consensus view that Jesus' table fellowship with sinners is historically reliable. Scholars have questioned the authenticity of the Gospel presentations, arguing that the meals were patterned after Greco-Roman symposia and were thus largely the literary constructions of the Gospel writers (22). Others have questioned whether Jesus actually dined with "tax collectors and prostitutes," arguing that these slanders were used against unconventional persons rather than true social outcasts. To shed light on these debates, B. first conducts an in-depth analysis of table fellowship in the OT and the intertestamental periods, and then analyzes key texts in the Gospels.

B.'s analysis offers strong support for the consensus view, but the true value of his work lies in his insight into the

reason behind Jesus' unorthodox behavior. According to B., Jesus practiced what B. calls "contagious holiness." Unlike many of his contemporaries, Jesus did not assume he would be contaminated by associating with sinners; instead, he believed his purity would "rub off on them and change them for the better. Cleanliness, he believe[d], is even more 'catching' than uncleanness; morality more influential than immorality" (128).

B.'s study concludes with reflections on how contemporary Christians might apply "contagious holiness" in their own lives, arguing that, as disciples of Jesus, Christians have a duty to extend hospitality to the stranger, the outcast, and the enemy. Citing his own experiences overseas, the outreach efforts of the "Scum of the Earth" church in Denver (of which he is a member), and other Christian ministries, B.'s application of "contagious holiness" is a promising resource for Christians living in a post-9/11 age.

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THEOLOGY, RHETORIC, MANUDUCTION, OR READING SCRIPTURE TOGETHER ON THE PATH TO GOD. By Peter M. Candler Jr. Radical Traditions. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans. 2006. Pp. xi + 190. \$26.

Candler advances the John Milbank/Catherine Pickstock hermeneutics of recovery of medieval theology and suspicion of univocal Derridean notions of "the book" by arguing for "new ways of reading the *Glossa Ordinaria* and the *Summa Theologiae*, as informed by Augustine's account of rhetoric" (165). Drawing on Walter Ong, Michel de Certeau, Alasdair MacIntyre, and others, C. contrasts a classical "grammar of participation" with a modern, deistic "grammar of representation" (21-40). The former, using illuminated manuscripts, invites us along a heaven-bent itinerary. The latter, adumbrated by Rudolf Agricola and Philip Melancthon, maps reified data in printed books, infecting the mindset of both Protestant reformers (16) and post-Tridentine Catholic apologists (71).