

MOORE, MICHAEL S., *WealthWatch: A Study of Socioeconomic Conflict in the Bible* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2011), pp. xvi + 304. \$35.00. ISBN 978-1-61097-296-3.

‘The purpose of this book is to help postmodern Westerners understand what the Bible has to say about wealth and possessions’. Whether his purpose will be achieved by this learned but baffling, wide-ranging but strangely selective disquisition is doubtful. Separate chapters are devoted to ‘socioeconomic conflict motifs’ in Mesopotamian epics, the Pentateuch, 1 and 2 Maccabees and the Qumran sectarian literature, and the parables in Luke. Except for the Qumran literature, only narrative texts are explored. They are seen as ways of enabling readers to understand economic conflict in their own contexts, and the ‘big problems’ of acquisition (without cost), bribery, corruption, slavery, primogeniture and the ‘deprivation myth’. What the Torah

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teaches about these matters is expressed as the ‘Yahwistic imperative’: ‘creation = acquisition *plus* protection’. M. has some important insights, but his structure and style do not help the reader to grasp them. Typically, a story will be paraphrased, or only half told, and its economic aspects emphasized, but without making clear what the lesson is. Half of every page is occupied by footnotes, some useful, some irrelevant, some properly belonging to the main text. Will this book solve the problems of the intelligent ‘soccer mom’ who is introduced on the first page? I think not.

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