

Brief Notice

1 Kings to Malachi, vol. 4 of *Studies in Scripture*, edited by Kent P. Jackson (Deseret Book, 1993)

About a decade ago, a series was initiated “to point readers to the scriptures themselves.” This new volume may be the finest in the series. It contains forty-four chapters, each usually devoted to a single biblical book. LDS readers will benefit from many of the insights into the Old Testament that are presented here, especially those drawn from latter-day revelations and the Joseph Smith Translation.

The chapters are written by twenty-one contributors. Jackson wrote seven, while David Rolph Seely wrote nine. Unlike the authors of some of the earlier volumes in this series, the men and women who contributed to this book are nearly all recognized teachers and researchers in Old Testament materials and have brought linguistic, historical, and geographic insights to this work. Seely’s contribution is especially substantial. His historical notes, explanation of Hebrew words, and doctrinal insights engage the lay reader as well as the scholar, particularly in his explanation of the formulas used by the author(s) of the book of Kings.

Five chapters touch on more general themes. For example, the chapter by Catherine Thomas blends the pattern of Old Testament apostasy directly into the New Testament experience in a thought-provoking way. However, generalizations about Jewish theology are not easily formulated, since no monolithic Judaism has ever existed.

Jackson’s explanation of biblical chronology is a fine treatment of a subject that haunts biblical scholars and frustrates most readers of this ancient scripture. Jackson’s humility in acknowledging the ambiguity of dates prior to Abraham’s time is commendable, although his charts are difficult to follow in spots.

While this volume does not offer the kind of comprehensive treatment of the text that one finds in a verse-by-verse commentary, it is a commendable addition to serious LDS literature on the Old Testament. The very brevity of its chapters becomes an asset for the lay reader.

—Ann N. Madsen