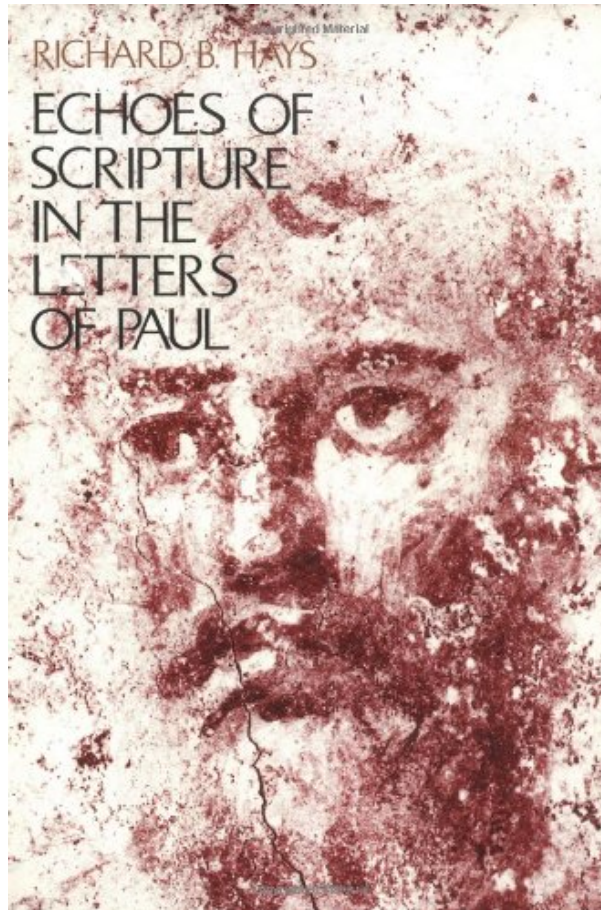
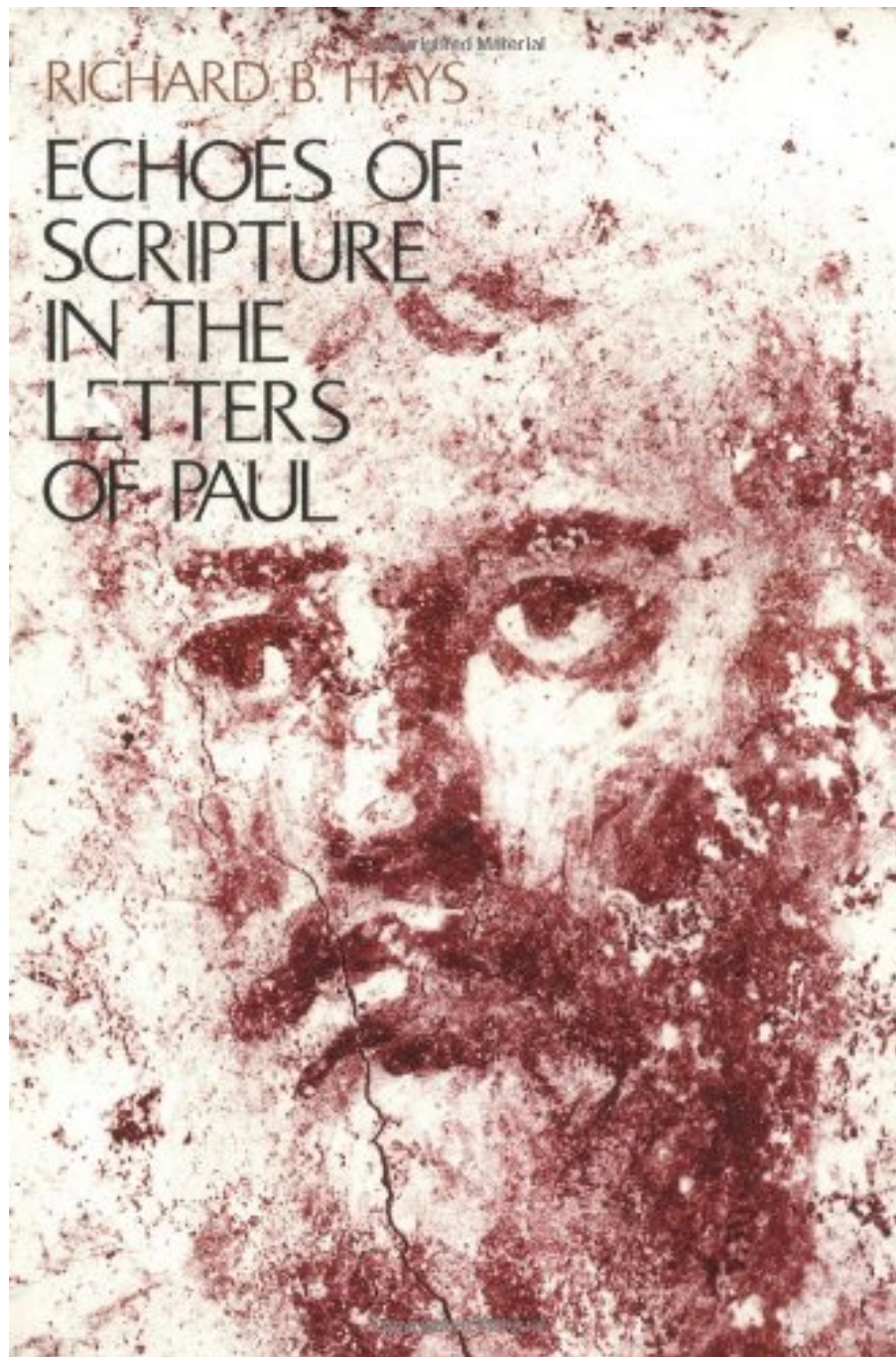


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Paul's letters, the earliest writings in the New Testament, are filled with allusions, images and quotations from the Old Testament. This book investigates Paul's appropriation of Scripture from a perspective based on recent literary-critical studies of intertextuality.

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1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

A Must Read!

By Herald Gandi

This book is so good that I wouldn't take any commentary or treatment of Pauline literature that came after this book seriously if they did not deal with this book. Hays is not just an excellent NT scholar, but also a brilliant writer. All these factors make it a must-read? for any serious student of Paul.

32 of 35 people found the following review helpful.

The word alive and active

By Bahij Bawarshi

Is Scripture an unchanging word, fixed in the past, or is it dynamic, alive, taking on new meanings as it addresses competent readers in the present? Who is a competent reader? And, Richard Hays asks, "If the word is so alive and active on the lips and in the hearts of the community of faith, how then must we read?" These are questions that, directly or indirectly, occupy most of *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, where Hays examines some of Paul's highly innovative scriptural readings. He treats Paul's letters as "hermeneutical events," in which Paul reinterpreted Scripture for his churches. More than is usually recognized, Paul made use of intertextuality, embedding fragments of Scripture in his own discourse; in most cases he did so allusively, rather than by direct citation - the reader has to listen to the echoes of the original text in what Paul has written. Often enough, the echo is too faint to be noted. Of one instance Hays writes, "Any reader who knows where the words come from will surely smile in recognition of the point; most readers will miss the point altogether." The immense value of this study lies in its potential to lead earnest readers to a keener appreciation of Paul, as Hays uncovers suppressed allusions in a number of examples taken from Romans, First and Second Corinthians, Galatians, and Philippians.

The effect is almost always surprising; sometimes one wonders at Paul's subtlety; at other times one asks whether it is really Hays' ingenuity that has conjured up an echo that did not occur to Paul. As it turns out, it

does not matter. Hays argues that to limit the interpretation of scriptural echoes to what Paul intended is to create artificial limitations and restrict the hermeneutical freedom which Paul himself employed. For one thing, "what he intended is a matter of historical speculation;" for another, "Scripture generates through Paul new figurations." The implicit point is that a modern interpreter of Paul can learn from him how to read Scripture imaginatively, yet faithfully. This is treated at length in the fifth and last chapter of the book. Before then, in the first chapter, Hays reviews different approaches to Pauline hermeneutics and proposes his own, taking leads from literary-critical discussions of the "phenomenon of intertextuality." The following three chapters are a tour de force of riveting interpretation. If I have to single out one major theme among several - and which Hays works over and over from different angles - it would be that Paul understood Scripture (i.e., the OT) as prefiguring the church; it was neither annulled nor superseded, but pointed to the gospel as proclaimed by Paul. Hays speaks of the transforming power of Scripture rightly understood. "The meaning of Scripture is enacted in the Christian community, and only those who participate in the enactment can understand the text." He passionately pleads the same point in the page before last, a fitting conclusion to an insightful and original work: "Community in the likeness of Christ is cruciform; therefore right interpretation is cruciform. ... Any reading of Scripture that requires of us something other or less than this is a false reading."

This remarkable book has not gone unquestioned by other scholars, and has generated lively debate among Paul's interpreters. Who should read it? There is more than a hint that Hays was writing for the academic community; but non-professionals familiar with biblical (or literary) studies can read it with profit and a sense of fulfillment. All readers must bring to it an energetic and open mind.

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful.

Hearing the right echoes

By Michael Settle

Richard Hays in his "echoes" and "Conversion of the Imagination" provides significant insights to Paul's use of the Old Testament. There are many perspectives on Paul these days but Hays understands the apostle rightly. What Hays does so well is not only point out the explicit OT references but the "echoes" and allusions to the Hebrew Scriptures that inform Paul's understanding of who the people of God truly are.

This is a great work.

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