



Performing Habakkuk: Faithful Re-enactment in the Midst of Crisis

Jeanette Mathews

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Scripture, like any performance, aims for transformation of its audience. In this new study Jeanette Mathews demonstrates how literature from the diverse field of performance studies can be applied to the prophetic book of Habakkuk in order to draw out themes and features that are common to both. Mathews offers a fresh new translation of Habakkuk that emphasizes and celebrates its intrinsic dramatic features. This translation provides the "script" for the performance of Habakkuk. The attitudes and actions of the "actors" in the performance become models for their "audience" such that the audience members are drawn into the performance and do not remain impartial spectators. The context of crisis that forms the book's "setting" is of crucial importance, ensuring that genres such as complaint and lament are taken seriously as expressions of faith in the midst of traumatic experience. The open-ended script makes explicit the drama of faithfulness in the midst of cultural trauma and public crises--a faithfulness that is ready to be reenacted in our own settings.

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