

## Presidential Addresses of the Society of Biblical Literature: A Quasiquicentennial Review

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Members of the guild who have served as president of the Society of Biblical Literature comprise an exclusive fraternity.<sup>1</sup> They enjoy the respect of their peers on account of their contributions to the discipline. In their official capacity, they also command the attention of their peers once a year in accordance with the Society's constitution.<sup>2</sup> As S. Vernon McCasland puts it in beginning his own presidential address, "Once each year with undisguised premeditation the members of this Society subject themselves to an address of unpredictable length and quality by one of their own colleagues, and in advance they cast the mantle of charity about whatever may be brought forth."<sup>3</sup> In most years, the audience for the presidential address is larger than the audience for any other scholarly address devoted to the Bible anywhere in the world. This *Sitz im Leben* has produced different results on different occasions. Some of these addresses have been all but forgotten, while others have gone down as definitive statements on a given subject, be it a narrow exegetical problem or a broader question pertaining to the field of biblical studies. While these pronouncements from the podium only rarely set the scholarly agenda for the coming year, it would nonetheless be inexpedient to let this anniversary pass without pausing briefly to reflect on the ways

<sup>1</sup> Whereas only four women have served in the office of president—Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, Phyllis Tribble, Adele Berlin, and Carolyn Osiek—"fraternity" is not a wholly inappropriate term.

<sup>2</sup> The Society's constitution was amended in 1889 to establish the presidential address as a fixture on the program for the first day of the annual meeting. No presidential address is mentioned in the minutes for the years preceding this change. The first recorded presidential address is that of Talbot W. Chambers in 1892.

<sup>3</sup> S. Vernon McCasland, "The Unity of the Scriptures," *JBL* 73 (1954): 1.

in which past presidents have cast their remarks to the Society since its founding 125 years ago.

The presidential address is a hybrid form. It is delivered first to the assembled membership, and since 1895 it has also been the custom subsequently to publish the address in the pages of the *Journal of Biblical Literature* (which, like many other academic journals, began as a record of the Society's proceedings).<sup>4</sup> A speech, however, does not belong to the same genre as the scholarly essay, and so the task of composing an address appropriate to both written and oral media can be a challenging one.<sup>5</sup> Not all presidents have even made the attempt. None admits failure in this respect more frankly than Theophile James Meek, who begins without any remorse: "Hebrew syntax may not be a very exciting subject for a Presidential Address, but it is an exceedingly important one for the interpretation of the Hebrew text."<sup>6</sup> Such a remark suggests that the published version of the address closely resembles the version delivered at the annual meeting. For the audience's sake, one hopes this is not always the case. Kemper Fullerton's review of scholarship on Isaiah, for example, comes to one hundred pages in print!<sup>7</sup> A number of presidents have followed the lead of Fullerton and Meek in taking the occasion of the annual meeting to present results of their ongoing research projects. As might be expected of a discipline demanding a high degree of specialization, there have been a few years, one suspects, in which their remarks were accessible to a relatively small sector of the membership. Others have chosen to write more expansively on matters of abiding interest to all biblical scholars.<sup>8</sup>

To speak to the few or to the many—these two basic alternatives have remained the same over the years even if the audience for the presidential address has changed significantly. No more than a few dozen colleagues would gather at

<sup>4</sup> Frank Chamberlain Porter's 1908 address is the only one to be published in a different journal. Although he taught at Yale, for unspecified reasons Porter published his speech in the fledgling *Harvard Theological Review*, which had just been launched under the guidance of his predecessors in the office of president, George Foot Moore (1898-99) and James Hardy Ropes (1907).

<sup>5</sup> Note J. Henry Thayer, who feels compelled to explain in a footnote that his comments originated as a public lecture: "This circumstance will explain . . . their somewhat disjointed character, and their popular and unscientific style" ("The Historical Element in the New Testament," *JBL* 14 [1895]: 1 n. 1). Thayer's address, in which he calls for the establishment of a center for study in Palestine, was the first presidential address to be published in *JBL*. The minutes give no specific reason for the decision to publish. A desire to publicize Thayer's proposal seems to have provided the initial impetus. If so, the strategy, which led to the founding of the American Schools of Oriental Research, was a success; see Ernest W. Saunders (*Searching the Scriptures: A History of the Society of Biblical Literature, 1880-1980* [SBLBSNA 8; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1982], 15-16).

<sup>6</sup> Theophile James Meek, "The Syntax of the Sentence in Hebrew," *JBL* 64 (1945): 1.

<sup>7</sup> Kemper Fullerton, "Viewpoints in the Discussion of Isaiah's Hopes for the Future," *JBL* 41 (1922): 1-101. The same could be said for Paul Haupt ("The Book of Nahum," *JBL* 25 [1907]: 1-53) and Lewis B. Paton ("Israel's Conquest of Canaan," *JBL* 32 [1913]: 1-53).

<sup>8</sup> See, e.g., George A. Barton (1913), William R. Arnold (1922), James Moffatt (1933), E. C. Colwell (1947), Floyd V. Filson (1949), Krister Stendahl (1983), and Norman K. Gottwald (1992).

Union Theological Seminary in New York in the early years.<sup>9</sup> Attendance gradually increased and, for a time around the turn of the century, meetings were held jointly with such groups as the Modern Language Association and the Spelling Reform Association. That a large percentage of the attendees were Christian clergymen is clearly assumed by Clayton R. Bowen in 1924. The membership rolls nevertheless list the names of several Jewish scholars, including Morris Jastrow, Jr., who served as president in 1916. James Moffatt acknowledges their presence in the Society and the objections made by some Jewish scholars to the nomenclature “Old Testament” for the Hebrew Scriptures because it implies “a religious affirmation or synthesis to which they cannot agree.”<sup>10</sup> The promulgation of *Divino afflante spiritu* in 1943 also contributed to the ecumenical character of the proceedings by opening the way to greater participation by Roman Catholic scholars. Yet another demographic change (which has accelerated in recent decades) is the increasing number of students who attend the meetings. While some presidents, such as William F. Badè (1930) and Julian Morgenstern (1941), have taken a constructive approach by calling for the establishment of fellowships to train the next generation, one can imagine the discomfort of any aspiring biblical scholars in the audience as not a few presidents have decried in near-apocalyptic terms the dismal level of preparation characteristic of most graduate students.<sup>11</sup>

Now that attendance at the annual meeting is measured in the thousands, it is easy to forget how small the guild remains until one glances at the roster of former presidents. The addresses are open to the public, but listening is not infrequently a bit like eavesdropping on the intramural debates of a tight-knit group of teachers and students. To cite just a few examples, Shirley Jackson Case (1926) studied with Frank Chamberlain Porter (1908) and Benjamin Wisner Bacon (1902), as did Amos N. Wilder (1955), who had also spent time in the classroom with Kirsopp Lake (1942–43). Ernest de Witt Burton (1911) could point to Edgar J. Goodspeed (1919) as his prize pupil, while Goodspeed could count S. Vernon McCasland (1953) and John Knox (1963) among his students. Not to be outdone, Erwin R. Goodenough (1951) taught Samuel Sandmel (1961), who was the

<sup>9</sup> For a description of this early period, see Nathaniel Schmidt, “Memoir on the History of the Society,” *JBL* 50 (1931): xiv–xxiii; and Saunders, *Searching the Scriptures*, 3–30.

<sup>10</sup> James Moffatt, “The Sacred Book in Religion,” *JBL* 53 (1934): 1–2.

<sup>11</sup> E.g., James A. Montgomery (1918), Max Margolis (1923), Morton Enslin (1945), E. C. Colwell (1947), and Harry M. Orlinsky (1970). Erwin R. Goodenough extends this indictment to his professional colleagues as well. He reports that in his tenure as editor, he found it difficult to fill the pages of *JBL* with articles and book reviews because of the dearth of quality scholarship being produced (“The Inspiration of New Testament Research,” *JBL* 71 [1952]: 1–2). Many saw the situation as particularly dire as a result of the broken ties with German colleagues in the aftermath of the two World Wars. Even before the full enormity of Nazism was disclosed at the end of the war, Morgenstern declared that “in Germany biblical science is doomed” on account of “the present atmosphere of hostility toward the Bible and toward the religions founded thereon” (“The Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis,” *JBL* 61 [1942]: 4).

teacher of Robert Funk (1975) and James A. Sanders (1978). Paul Haupt (1906) had taught W. F. Albright (1939), who in turn taught Harry M. Orlinsky (1970), Frank Moore Cross, Jr. (1974), David Noel Freedman (1976), Raymond E. Brown (1977), Joseph A. Fitzmyer (1979), and Roland E. Murphy (1984). The students of James Muilenburg (1968) include Walter Harrelson (1972), Bernhard Anderson (1980), Walter Brueggemann (1990), and Phyllis Tribble (1994). And Robert M. Grant (1959) no doubt learned much at the foot of his father, Frederick C. Grant (1934). Examples could be multiplied ad infinitum, especially if one were to consider less formal relationships.<sup>12</sup>

Although it has long been the custom that no debate follows the presidential address, several have provoked considerable discussion subsequent to their publication. If familiarity and frequency of reference are reliable guides, a few examples stand out as classics of the genre. The speeches of Samuel Sandmel (1961), James Muilenburg (1968), and Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (1987) belong in this category.<sup>13</sup> Many readers will immediately recognize the titles even if they are unaware that they originated as presidential addresses.

Sandmel defines *parallelomania* (a term he came across in a forgotten French volume from the early nineteenth century) as “that extravagance among scholars which first overdoes the supposed similarity in passages and then proceeds to describe source and derivation as if implying literary connection flowing in an inevitable or predetermined direction.”<sup>14</sup> In response to the recent discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, which had prompted rampant speculation about their relationship to Paul, Jesus, Philo, and the rabbinic literature, Sandmel sounds a note of methodological caution. It is certainly conceivable that Qumran might have influenced the NT or the Mishnah, but “detailed study ought to respect the context and not be limited to juxtaposing mere excerpts.”<sup>15</sup> Not all “parallels” are of equal heuristic value, nor can a common source be reliably inferred from the occurrence of similar ideas or language in two different texts. In a discipline where the acquisition of new materials for analysis generates considerable excitement, Sandmel’s remarks remain pertinent. Only a *parallelomaniac* would automatically assume that any writer using the term “*parallelomania*” had been reading

<sup>12</sup> For example, the papers of Robert H. Pfeiffer (1950) collected at the Andover-Harvard Theological Library include personal letters from several presidents—Albright, Goodenough, R. Grant, Goodspeed, Enslin, and Muilenburg, as well as from C. C. Torrey (1915), Millar Burrows (1954), J. Philip Hyatt (1956), and Herbert G. May (1962)—all written in 1949.

<sup>13</sup> S. Sandmel, “*Parallelomania*,” *JBL* 81 (1962): 1–13; J. Muilenburg, “Form Criticism and Beyond,” *JBL* 88 (1969): 1–18; E. Schüssler Fiorenza, “The Ethics of Interpretation: De-Centering Biblical Scholarship,” *JBL* 107 (1988): 3–17.

<sup>14</sup> Sandmel, “*Parallelomania*,” 1.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 2. On this score, Sandmel subjects Strack and Billerbeck’s widely used *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch* to withering critique.

presidential speeches, but it is hard to imagine it having such currency among biblical scholars were it not for Sandmel.

Muilenburg makes no secret of his own indebtedness to Hermann Gunkel and other pioneers of *Gattungsforschung* even as he argues that form criticism must be supplemented by what he calls rhetorical criticism. Earlier study had emphasized the typical and representative features of literary forms to the neglect of “what is unique and unpredictable, [of] the particularity of the formulation.”<sup>16</sup> This tendency, he says, obscures the connection between the abstract form and the concrete content of the biblical writings. Close attention to the stylistic and structural qualities such as parallelism and repetition helps the interpreter to “think the thoughts of the biblical author after him.”<sup>17</sup> Notwithstanding the continuing debates about the precise aims and methods to which the label refers, “rhetorical criticism” is now common coin among biblical scholars due in no small measure to Muilenburg’s influence. It is perhaps no overstatement to say that Muilenburg “enacted the decisive methodological turn in the guild toward literary analysis.”<sup>18</sup>

While Muilenburg calls for a greater appreciation of the rhetorical aspects of the biblical text, Schüssler Fiorenza goes one step further and focuses on the rhetorical practices of the discipline itself. She calls for a “double ethics,” that is, an ethics of historical reading that enables the original meaning to challenge the interpreter and an ethics of accountability whereby interpreters hold the text as well as earlier interpreters of the text responsible for the oppressive ways in which it has been actualized. The Society of Biblical Literature constitutes an interpretive community demonstrably committed to the former. Schüssler Fiorenza believes that an “ethos of scientist [*sic*] positivism and professed value-neutrality” has retarded progress on the latter.<sup>19</sup> Without a reconceptualization of biblical scholarship in rhetorical rather than scientific terms, it will be difficult to develop a repertoire of discursive practices to aid in “a critical interpretive praxis for liberation.”<sup>20</sup>

Nearly twenty years have passed since Schüssler Fiorenza called for a paradigm shift in biblical studies. Has this call received an affirmative response? Not entirely, perhaps. Yet the fact that relatively few scholars would categorically reject her claim that one’s social location “is decisive of how one sees the world,

<sup>16</sup> Muilenburg, “Form Criticism and Beyond,” 5.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>18</sup> See Walter Brueggemann, “At the Mercy of Babylon: A Subversive Rereading of the Empire,” *JBL* 110 (1991): 17. For a brief description of the “Muilenburg school,” which attempted to implement the program set out in his presidential address, see Thomas B. Dozeman, “OT Rhetorical Criticism,” *ABD* 5:714–15.

<sup>19</sup> Schüssler Fiorenza, “The Ethics of Interpretation: De-Centering Biblical Scholarship,” 13.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

constructs reality, or interprets biblical texts” is an indication that the tide has already turned and is moving in her direction.<sup>21</sup> Likewise, Sandmel’s warnings about sloppy comparative analysis and Muilenburg’s emphasis on the unity of form and content hardly seem controversial today. To observe that, with the passage of time, their insights and arguments are in many ways unremarkable is not in the least to belittle them. Quite to the contrary, it is a sign of their success that they have assumed the status of conventional wisdom.

Disciplinary shifts by their very nature are fully visible only in hindsight, and so it is impossible to predict the questions around which a new consensus will crystallize or which presidential addresses will emerge as classics. It is likely that the Society will continue to witness tension between those who insist on a greater degree of engagement with the contested social, cultural, and political questions of the day and those who maintain that “the demand for the practical” must be resisted for the sake of the integrity of the discipline.<sup>22</sup> Future presidents will likewise continue to manifest the separate but related divide between the historians and the theologians. To everything there is a season. The survival of the Society for so many years and the accomplishments of its members provide ample evidence that the dialogue and debate have been worth the while.

## APPENDIX

### SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESSES

The following list of the presidents of the SBL includes the titles and publication information for presidential addresses delivered to the Society of Biblical Literature since its founding in 1880. An asterisk (\*) indicates a year in which no address was delivered or for which no title can be located in the Society’s records. (The official minutes of the meeting were published in the *Journal of Biblical Literature* until 1960.) In a few instances, there is a record of the title, but there is no evidence that the address ever appeared in published form.

- 1880–87 Daniel Raynes Goodwin\*
- 1887–89 Frederic Gardiner\*
- 1889–90 Francis Brown\*
- 1890–91 Charles A. Briggs\*

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. M. S. Enslin, “The Future of Biblical Studies,” *JBL* 65 (1946): 5–6. In his later tenure as editor (1960–69), Enslin demanded that articles in *JBL* focus on philological and historical questions rather than on theological questions (Saunders, *Searching the Scriptures*, 89).

- 1892 Talbot W. Chambers, "On the Function of the Prophet" [The minutes of the meeting list this as the subject of Chambers's address. It is not clear whether this was the title of the address, and there is no record that the address subsequently appeared in print.]
- 1893 Talbot W. Chambers [Owing to absence, Chambers did not deliver an address.]
- 1894 [Talbot W. Chambers and J. Henry Thayer each served as president for a portion of 1894, but the minutes of the meeting contain no mention of a presidential address.]
- 1895 J. Henry Thayer, "The Historical Element in the New Testament," *JBL* 14 (1895): 1–18.
- 1896 Francis Brown, "Old Testament Problems," *JBL* 15 (1896): 63–74.
- 1897 Edward T. Bartlett\*
- 1898 George Foot Moore, "Jewish Historical Literature"
- 1899 George Foot Moore, "The Age of the Jewish Canon of Hagiographa"
- 1900 John P. Peters, "The Religion of Moses," *JBL* 20 (1901): 101–28.
- 1901 Edward Y. Hincks, "Some Tendencies and Results of Recent New Testament Study"
- 1902 Benjamin W. Bacon, "Ultimate Problems of Biblical Science," *JBL* 21 (1903): 1–14.
- 1903 Richard J. H. Gottheil, "Some Early Jewish Bible Criticism," *JBL* 22 (1904): 1–12.
- 1904 Willis J. Beecher, "'Torah': A Word-study in the Old Testament," *JBL* 23 (1905): 1–16.
- 1905 William Rainey Harper [Owing to illness, Harper did not deliver an address.]
- 1906 Paul Haupt, "The Book of Nahum," *JBL* 25 (1907): 1–53.
- 1907 James Hardy Ropes, "The Epistle to the Hebrews"
- 1908 Frank Chamberlain Porter, "The Bearing of Historical Studies on the Religious Use of the Bible," *HTR* 2 (1909): 253–76.
- 1909 Henry Preserved Smith, "Old Testament Ideals," *JBL* 29 (1910): 1–26.
- 1910 David G. Lyon, "On the Archaeological Exploration of Palestine," *JBL* 30 (1911): 1–17.
- 1911 Ernest de Witt Burton, "Some Phases of the Synoptic Problem," *JBL* 31 (1912): 95–113.
- 1912 Lewis B. Paton, "Israel's Conquest of Canaan," *JBL* 32 (1913): 1–53.
- 1913 George A. Barton, "The Hermeneutic Canon 'Interpreted Historically' in the Light of Modern Research," *JBL* 33 (1914): 56–77.
- 1914 Nathaniel Schmidt, "The Story of the Flood and the Growth of the Pentateuch"
- 1915 Charles Cutler Torrey, "The Need of a New Edition of the Hebrew Bible"
- 1916 Morris Jastrow, Jr., "Constructive Elements in the Critical Study of the Old Testament," *JBL* 36 (1917): 1–20.
- 1917 Warren J. Moulton, "The Dating of the Synoptic Gospels," *JBL* 37 (1918): 1–19.

- 1918 James A. Montgomery, "Present Tasks of American Biblical Scholarship," *JBL* 38 (1919): 1–14.
- 1919 Edgar J. Goodspeed, "The Origin of Acts," *JBL* 39 (1920): 83–101.
- 1920 Albert T. Clay, "A Recent Journey through Babylonia and Assyria"
- 1921 Kemper Fullerton, "Viewpoints in the Discussion of Isaiah's Hopes for the Future," *JBL* 41 (1922): 1–101.
- 1922 William R. Arnold, "Observations on the Origin of Holy Scripture," *JBL* 42 (1923): 1–21.
- 1923 Max L. Margolis, "Our Own Future: A Forecast and a Programme," *JBL* 43 (1924): 1–8.
- 1924 Clayton R. Bowen, "Why Eschatology?" *JBL* 44 (1925): 1–9.
- 1925 Julius A. Bewer, "The Hellenistic Mystery Religions and the Old Testament," *JBL* 45 (1926): 1–13.
- 1926 Shirley Jackson Case, "The Alleged Messianic Consciousness of Jesus," *JBL* 46 (1927): 1–19.
- 1927 Irving F. Wood, "The Contribution of the Bible to the History of Religion," *JBL* 47 (1928): 1–19.
- 1928 Loring Woart Batten, "Hosea's Message and Marriage," *JBL* 48 (1929): 257–73.
- 1929 James E. Frame, "Paul's Idea of Deliverance," *JBL* 49 (1930): 1–12.
- 1930 William Frederic Badè, "Ceramics and History in Palestine," *JBL* 50 (1931): 1–19.
- 1931 Burton Scott Easton, "New Testament Ethical Lists," *JBL* 51 (1932): 1–12.
- 1932 J. M. Powis Smith, "The Character of King David," *JBL* 52 (1933): 1–11. [Smith did not deliver the address owing to his untimely death a few months before the meeting of the Society. W. C. Graham read the paper in his place.]
- 1933 James Moffatt, "The Sacred Book in Religion," *JBL* 53 (1934): 1–12.
- 1934 Frederick C. Grant, "The Spiritual Christ," *JBL* 54 (1935): 1–15.
- 1935 Elihu Grant, "The Philistines," *JBL* 55 (1936): 175–94.
- 1936 Henry J. Cadbury, "Motives of Biblical Scholarship," *JBL* 56 (1937): 1–16.
- 1937 George Dahl, "The Messianic Expectation in the Psalter," *JBL* 57 (1938): 1–12.
- 1938 William Henry Paine Hatch, "The Primitive Christian Message," *JBL* 58 (1939): 1–13.
- 1939 William F. Albright, "The Ancient Near East and the Religion of Israel," *JBL* 59 (1940): 85–112.
- 1940 Chester C. McCown, "Gospel Geography: Fiction, Fact, and Truth," *JBL* 60 (1941): 1–25.
- 1941 Julian Morgenstern, "The Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis," *JBL* 61 (1942): 1–10. [The original title of the address was "The Task of the Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis."]
- 1942 Kirsopp Lake (No address was delivered owing to Lake's absence.)
- 1943 Kirsopp Lake (No address was delivered owing to Lake's absence.)
- 1944 Theophile James Meek, "The Syntax of the Sentence in Hebrew," *JBL* 64 (1945): 1–13.



- 1945 Morton Scott Enslin, "The Future of Biblical Studies," *JBL* 65 (1946): 1–12.
- 1946 Leroy Waterman, "Biblical Studies in a New Setting," *JBL* 66 (1947): 1–14.
- 1947 Ernest Cadman Colwell, "Biblical Criticism: Lower and Higher," *JBL* 67 (1948): 1–12.
- 1948 John W. Flight [Owing to illness, Flight was unable to attend the meeting.]
- 1949 Floyd V. Filson, "Method in Studying Biblical History," *JBL* 69 (1950): 1–18.
- 1950 Robert H. Pfeiffer, "Facts and Faith in Biblical History," *JBL* 70 (1951): 1–14.
- 1951 Erwin R. Goodenough, "The Inspiration of New Testament Research," *JBL* 71 (1952): 1–9.
- 1952 Sheldon H. Blank, "Men Against God: The Promethean Element in Biblical Prayer," *JBL* 72 (1953): 1–13.
- 1953 S. Vernon McCasland, "The Unity of the Scriptures," *JBL* 73 (1954): 1–10.
- 1954 Millar Burrows, "Thy Kingdom Come," *JBL* 74 (1955): 1–8.
- 1955 Amos N. Wilder, "Scholars, Theologians, and Ancient Rhetoric," *JBL* 75 (1956): 1–11.
- 1956 J. Philip Hyatt, "The Dead Sea Discoveries: Retrospect and Challenge," *JBL* 76 (1957): 1–12.
- 1957 Sherman E. Johnson, "Early Christianity in Asia Minor," *JBL* 77 (1958): 1–17.
- 1958 William A. Irwin, "A Still Small Voice . . . Said, What Are You Doing Here?" *JBL* 78 (1959): 1–12.
- 1959 Robert M. Grant, "Two Gnostic Gospels," *JBL* 79 (1960): 1–11.
- 1960 R. B. Y. Scott, "Priesthood, Prophecy, Wisdom, and the Knowledge of God," *JBL* 80 (1961): 1–15.
- 1961 Samuel Sandmel, "Parallelomania," *JBL* 81 (1962): 1–13.
- 1962 Herbert G. May, "Cosmological Reference in the Qumran Doctrine of the Two Spirits and in Old Testament Imagery," *JBL* 82 (1963): 1–14.
- 1963 John Knox, "Romans 15:14–33 and Paul's Conception of His Apostolic Mission," *JBL* 83 (1964): 1–11.
- 1964 Frederick V. Winnett, "Re-Examining the Foundations," *JBL* 84 (1965): 1–19.
- 1965 Kenneth W. Clark, "The Theological Relevance of Textual Variation in Current Criticism of the Greek New Testament," *JBL* 85 (1966): 1–16.
- 1966 John L. McKenzie, "Reflections on Wisdom," *JBL* 86 (1967): 1–9.
- 1967 Paul Schubert, "The Final Cycle of Speeches in the Book of Acts," *JBL* 87 (1968): 1–16.
- 1968 James Muilenburg, "Form Criticism and Beyond," *JBL* 88 (1969): 1–18.
- 1969 Frank W. Beare, "The Mission of the Disciples and the Mission Charge: Matthew 10 and Parallels," *JBL* 89 (1970): 1–13.
- 1970 Harry M. Orlinsky, "Whither Biblical Research?" *JBL* 90 (1971): 1–14. [The title of the address originally bore the subtitle "The Problem of 'Sin' as a Case in Point."]
- 1971 Bruce M. Metzger, "Literary Forgeries and Canonical Pseudepigrapha," *JBL* 91 (1972): 3–24.

- 1972 Walter J. Harrelson\* [The annual meeting was held in Los Angeles in conjunction with the International Congress of Learned Societies in the Field of Religion. It was to that point the largest meeting of the Society, with over 2,500 attending (see Saunders, *Searching the Scriptures*, 62–63). So as not to add to an already crowded program, Harrelson chose not to deliver an address.]
- 1973 Norman Perrin, "Eschatology and Hermeneutics: Reflections on Method in the Interpretation of the New Testament," *JBL* 93 (1974): 3–14.
- 1974 Frank M. Cross, Jr., "A Reconstruction of the Judean Restoration," *JBL* 94 (1975): 4–18.
- 1975 Robert W. Funk, "The Watershed of the American Biblical Tradition: The Chicago School, First Phase, 1892–1920," *JBL* 95 (1976): 4–22.
- 1976 David Noel Freedman, "Pottery, Poetry, and Prophecy: An Essay on Biblical Poetry," *JBL* 96 (1977): 5–26.
- 1977 Raymond E. Brown, "'Other Sheep Not of This Fold': The Johannine Perspective on Christian Diversity in the Late First Century," *JBL* 97 (1978): 5–22.
- 1978 James A. Sanders, "Text and Canon: Concepts and Method," *JBL* 98 (1979): 5–29.
- 1979 Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "The Aramaic Language and the Study of the New Testament," *JBL* 99 (1980): 5–21.
- 1980 Bernhard Anderson, "Tradition and Scripture in the Community of Faith," *JBL* 100 (1981): 5–21.
- 1981 James M. Robinson, "Jesus from Easter to Valentinus (or to the Apostle's Creed)," *JBL* 101 (1982): 5–37.
- 1982 Lou H. Silberman, "Listening to the Text," *JBL* 102 (1983): 3–26.
- 1983 Krister Stendahl, "The Bible as a Classic and the Bible as Holy Scripture," *JBL* 103 (1984): 3–10.
- 1984 Roland E. Murphy, "Wisdom and Creation," *JBL* 104 (1984): 3–11.
- 1985 Wayne A. Meeks, "Understanding Early Christian Ethics," *JBL* 105 (1986): 3–11.
- 1986 James L. Mays, "The Place of the Torah-Psalms in the Psalter," *JBL* 106 (1987): 3–12.
- 1987 Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, "The Ethics of Interpretation: De-Centering Biblical Scholarship," *JBL* 107 (1988): 3–17.
- 1988 Philip J. King, "The Eighth, the Greatest of Centuries," *JBL* 108 (1989): 3–15.
- 1989 Paul J. Achtemeier, "*Omne verbum sonat*: The New Testament and the Oral Environment of Late Western Antiquity," *JBL* 109 (1990): 3–27.
- 1990 Walter Brueggemann, "At the Mercy of Babylon: A Subversive Rereading of the Empire," *JBL* 110 (1991): 3–22.
- 1991 Helmut Koester, "Jesus the Victim," *JBL* 111 (1992): 3–15.
- 1992 Norman K. Gottwald, "Social Class as an Analytic and Hermeneutical Category in Biblical Studies," *JBL* 112 (1993): 3–22.
- 1993 Victor P. Furnish, "On Putting Paul in His Place," *JBL* 113 (1994): 3–17.

- 1994 Phyllis Trible, "Exegesis for Storytellers and Other Strangers," *JBL* 114 (1995): 3–19.
- 1995 Leander E. Keck, "Rethinking 'New Testament Ethics,'" *JBL* 115 (1996): 3–16.
- 1996 Gene M. Tucker, "Rain on a Land Where No One Lives: The Hebrew Bible and the Environment," *JBL* 116 (1997): 3–17.
- 1997 Hans Dieter Betz, "Antiquity and Christianity," *JBL* 117 (1998): 3–22.
- 1998 Patrick D. Miller, "Deuteronomy and Psalms: Evoking a Biblical Conversation," *JBL* 118 (1999): 3–18.
- 1999 D. Moody Smith, "When Did the Gospels Become Scripture?" *JBL* 119 (2000): 3–20.
- 2000 Adele Berlin, "The Book of Esther and Ancient Storytelling," *JBL* 120 (2001): 3–14.
- 2001 Harold W. Attridge, "Genre Bending in the Fourth Gospel," *JBL* 121 (2002): 3–21.
- 2002 John J. Collins, "The Zeal of Phinehas: The Bible and the Legitimation of Violence," *JBL* 122 (2003): 3–21.
- 2003 Eldon Jay Epp, "The Oxyrhynchus New Testament Papyri: 'Not Without Honor Except in Their Hometown?'" *JBL* 123 (2004): 5–55.
- 2004 David L. Petersen, "Genesis and Family Values," *JBL* 124 (2005): 5–23.
- 2005 Carolyn Osiek, "Catholic or catholic? Biblical Scholarship at the Center," *JBL* 125 (2006): 5–22.

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