

Good Kings and Bad Kings – The Kingdom of Judah in the 7th Century BCE,
edited by Lester L. Grabbe.
T&T Clark 2007.

The Deuteronomist historian had a simple criterion for judging the kings of Israel and Judah: if they stamped out idolatrous practices they were good kings, if they didn't they were bad!

A more measured appraisal, focussing on the kings of Judah in the 7th century BCE is provided by Good Kings and Bad Kings. Lester Grabbe, Professor of Hebrew Bible and Early Judaism at Hull University has brought together an array of international Bible scholars and historians to consider the history of Judah between the reigns of the Assyrian Sennacherib and the Babylonian Nebuchadnezzar.

The book is divided into three sections, with an introduction and conclusions by the editor and a central collection of articles by the other contributors which principally focus on aspects of the reigns of kings Manasseh and Josiah, the two major Judean monarchs of the period, and bring in the most up-to-date archaeological evidence and general scholarly thinking. Each section is followed by a comprehensive bibliography and an index of text references.

This is a book that will be of great interest and value to students of the Hebrew Bible and represents a valuable resource for those who desire a balanced and current view of this major period in Israelite history.

Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh