



Presence Driven

Paul Ellis

Quantum Discovery

(160pp)

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In the religious book Presence Driven, biblical stories are analyzed in search of deeper understanding around God's true plan.

Paul Ellis's religious book *Presence Driven* makes Bible-based assertions about God's authority.

Arguing that too many interpretations of the Bible neglect to recognize the significance of God's presence, this book seeks to center such paradigms. It concentrates on biblical figures who did not understand God's true path and so fell into sin. It breaks down such follies in relation to people's reverence for God's presence. Here, Adam and Eve's ignorance is said to have encouraged the schism between Cain and Abel, for example; Cain, filled with a sense that it was his purpose to rescue Eden, grew egotistical and arrogant, clashing with humble Abel. Similar treatments are applied to the stories of Sarah and Abraham, Esau and Jacob, and Moses and the pharaoh.

While they are accessible in language and tone, these versions of the Bible's tales are also obscure and impeded by non sequiturs. Further, the related analyses often lean into reductive binary statements about morality and gender: here, women are positioned as temptresses who stand in opposition to presence-filled men. And assertions about the importance of men finding the right women abound, while there is much less emphasis on the importance of women's choices of partners. Such limited readings serve to limit the book's appeal to narrow audiences who already agree with such interpretations.

Autobiographical details wind into the text as a source of more tactile support. Ellis mentions having four sons, for example, and makes references to how he dealt with his sons' misbehavior when they were growing up. These notes are sometimes illustrative: when recounting the story of Jacob's wrestling match with God, for example, Ellis mentions how tired he felt after boxing just three rounds in high school and expresses sympathy for Jacob as a result. But while such stories personalize the text, they don't often speak to the book's points about the importance of God's presence.

Indeed, the book's thesis is obscured throughout. Instead, arguments about the true translations of Hebrew words are forwarded, while characteristics for God are inserted with little to support their inclusion. Jarring claims—such as that God wishes to “romance” humanity, and that jealousy and revenge are sometimes necessary—are made and then undersupported; the book's theological perspectives are often vague. Grammatical and punctuation errors muddy the text further.

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ALEENA ORTIZ (May 11, 2023)

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