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Reviews & Notices

∾ Paul R. Williamson ≈

Sealed with an Oath: Covenant in God's Unfolding Purpose
New Studies in Biblical Theology 23
(Downers Grove, IL: Apollos/InterVarsity, 2007)

A generation ago, in his groundbreaking *Tradition and Traditions* (1963), Yves Congar could write that "the apostolic exegesis" consisted essentially in explaining "the economy of the covenant fulfilled in Christ." Although it has fallen out of fashion in recent years, "covenant" remains an essential theme and organizing principle for biblical theology. As Congar wrote, "The content and meaning of Scripture [is] God's covenant plan, finally realized in Jesus Christ . . . and in the Church."

This covenant plan unifies and integrates the diverse texts of the Bible into a single book. In fact, the Bible itself is structured according to old and new "testaments" (or "covenants"). In turn, the continuity between the old and new covenants has formed the basis for biblical interpretation in the Church since apostolic times.

This new study is a strong introduction to the covenant idea and its significance for understanding the Scriptures. Williamson knows the literature well and provides a helpful overview and bibliography of scholarly thinking about covenant themes. In his reading of the Bible, he shows how the covenant forms a key narrative motif in the Old Testament, especially in the Pentateuch. He offers good surveys of God's covenants with Noah, Abraham, Israel, and David. He notices the importance of sacrifice and liturgy in the ratification and celebration of the Old Testament covenants.

Williamson understands something that many scholars do not—the centrality of oath-swearing in the covenant process. He also sees that biblical oath-swearing establishes a relationship between God and his people that is liturgical as well as legal. He makes an important point about the centrality of the covenant idea in Scripture, recognizing that "even when not mentioned explicitly in the biblical text, covenant is seldom far from the surface."

One wonders, then, why he does not recognize a covenant in the biblical creation accounts. It is true that the word "covenant" (ברית/διαθήκη) is not used in Genesis 1–2. But, as numerous scholars have shown, a close reading in light of other Old Testament accounts of covenant-making yields compelling evidence that indeed Genesis 1–2 is describing a primordial covenant. He does acknowl-

edge that Gordon Hugenberger has made a compelling case that Genesis 2:21–25 depicts a marriage covenant between Adam and Eve. This covenant is depicted as coming by divine design and initiative at the climax of creation—further evidence that covenant is not far from the surface of the creation text. It might even suggest a nuptial form to the covenant at creation.

But Williamson does show a fine appreciation for the inner unity and logic of the covenant plan, and the centrality of the covenants with Abraham. This last point is important. Williamson is one of the few today who see that the covenants in Genesis 15 and Genesis 17 are really different covenants. And he rightly sees that the subsequent biblical covenants with Israel and David are inextricably tied to the fulfillment of God's covenant promise to make Abraham's descendants the source of blessing for all nations (Gen. 12:3; 22:18). Throughout the long history of the Old Testament, culminating in the kingdom of David, the divine covenant plan unfolds for this singular purpose of "mediating God's blessing to the nations."

In light of his insights into the relationship of the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants, one wonders why he did not allot more space to considering the Davidic covenant, especially given the importance the Davidic covenant assumes in the second half of the Hebrew Bible—in the Deuteronimistic history, in the Chronicler, as well as in the prophets and the restoration texts.

In turn this might have helped him to consider the importance of the Davidic covenant material in the New Testament. He says that the gospels show Christ to be "the royal son of David who will shepherd the people of God." But if Christ is the royal son promised in the Davidic covenant, one wonders why there is not more room for discussion of the relationship between the Davidic covenant and the new covenant Christ brings.

In general, Williamson's treatment of the new covenant is a bit cramped. He devotes only thirty of his more than 200-page book to New Testament themes. He does show a good grasp of recent scholarship and debates concerning the covenant in Paul—especially over the disputed meaning of the Greek term διαθήκη ("covenant") in the key Pauline passages of Galatians 3:15–18 and Hebrews 9:15–22.

And his book should help recover the importance of covenant for a canonical interpretation and even spiritual reading of Scripture. As he writes: "To understand our covenant relationship with God and our place and role in salvation history, we must also understand the covenant promises to Noah, Abraham, Israel, and David—hence covenant serves as a crucial hermeneutical bridge that will help Christians move biblically and theologically from the period highlighted in the biblical text to the contemporary scene."

Ralph W. Klein

1 Chronicles: A Commentary
Hermeneia: A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible
(Minneapolis: Augsburg, 2006)

Ralph Klein's fine commentary in the Hermeneia series represents a lifetime of scholarship on this pivotal Old Testament historical work, which Klein dates to the fourth century B.C. Focusing on the final canonical form of the text, Klein presumes that 1 Chronicles was written by a single author, perhaps a priest in the Jerusalem Temple. This puts him at odds with most recent scholars, who generally treat the text we have today as a composite pulled together by several authors from multiple original sources and genres. Rejecting their arguments as "weak and ambivalent," Klein shows the superior explanatory power of reading Chronicles in synchronic fashion as a unified whole.

Klein is especially good at noticing how the Chronicler's unique theological purposes shape his revisionist reinterpretation of Israel's history. Klein rightly sees that the genealogies in the first nine chapters are "indispensable" for understanding the book. "This is a history of all days, a universal history, beginning with Adam and extending to Israel," he writes. He quotes approvingly St. Jerome's observation that the book aims to be a "chronicle of the entire divine history."

For the Chronicler, God's purposes in history culminate in the kingdom established by David. It is a peculiar picture of the kingdom to be sure, especially when we compare the Chronicler's accounts to those found earlier in the Old Testament. The earlier, so-called Deuteronomistic history, converges on Israel's exodus and the covenant forged at Mount Sinai. The Chronicler, by contrast, glances over Sinai and the exodus. Nor is he much interested in the controversial exploits of David and Solomon as military leaders or heads of state. Instead, he casts them in "idealized" terms and builds his narrative to stress their true significance in the divine economy—their appointment to build the Temple and establish God's elect Israel as a people of worship, prayer, and sacrifice.

The Davidic kingdom is not of this world. Or better, the Chronicler sees the kingdom as the "this-worldly" expression of God's rule over all creation and nations. It is "the kingdom of the Lord" (1 Chron. 28:5; 29:23). The kingdom's reason and meaning is, in a word, liturgical. The Davidic kingdom is a kingdom of prayer centered around the Temple, the dwelling that God established for his name. All that David does—making Jerusalem his capital, restoring the Ark of the Covenant, establishing the Levites to minister before the Ark, preparing for his son to build

the Temple—is to "declare [God's] glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples" (1 Chron. 16:24).

Klein is also sensitive to an important subtheme—Israel's election by God to be united in "assembly" (קהל; ἐκκλησία) to worship as "all Israel." He notes perceptively that "all Israel" is involved in the coronations of David and Solomon (1 Chron. 11:1; 29:20–22), in the conquest of Jerusaelm (1 Chron. 11:4–9), in the restoration of the Ark (1 Chron. 13:4; 15:3), and in the building and consecration of the Temple (2 Chron. 7:8).

In translating Chronicles into Greek, the Septuagint gives it the title, *Paraleipomenon*, literally "Things Omitted." In his insightful reading, Klein shows us that Chronicles is far from an addendum to the earlier Old Testament history. Chroncles is liturgical historiography, intended to complement and interpret the covenant historiography found in the Deuteronomistic books. In this, Klein opens us to Chronicles' value for understanding crucial New Testament themes—the portrait of Christ as a royal Davidic figure and the identification of the kingdom and the Church as somehow the restoration of the Davidic kingdom.

Young S. Chae

Jesus as the Eschatological Davidic Shepherd: Studies in the Old Testament, Second Temple Judaism, and in the Gospel of Matthew
Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament, 2. Reihe 216
(Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006)

Chae has made a solid contribution to the growing body of scholarship on the New Testament's use of Davidic imagery in depicting the person and mission of Christ. Studying the tradition in its ancient near eastern context, Chae notices some distinctions. In the cult and mythology of neighboring societies, shepherd imagery is used widely as a royal metaphor to describe the care and protection provided by both gods and earthly kings. In the Bible, however, only God is called "the *shepherd* of Israel" (רעה; Ps. 80:1; Gen. 49:24). That is, until the rise of the Davidic kingdom.

He acknowledges that shepherd imagery is associated with Moses (Ps. 77:20; Isa. 63:11), and that the leadership of God's people is at times likened to the shepherding of a flock (Num. 27:16–17). But only David is credited with being God's shepherd on earth. "[N]o specific king in Israel is described in shepherd imagery as YHWH's royal representative, with the exception of David before he assumed the

throne (see 2 Sam. 5:2; 1 Chron. 11:2; Ps. 78:71). . . . The Old Testament tends to reserve shepherd imagery for YHWH and, significantly, extends its use only for YHWH's Davidic appointee (Mic. 5:2–4 [5:1–3]; Jer. 3:15; 23:4–6; Ezek. 34:23–24; 37:24–25; compare Zech. 13:7)."

In a close reading of the texts, especially in the Greek Septuagint translation (LXX), Chae explores the meaning of the Old Testament's shepherd imagery. He suggests the understanding of God as shepherd may be rooted in the redemptive experience of the Exodus. He notes the close similarity between the way Moses envisions the work of the earthly shepherd-leader and descriptions of God's salvific activity.

Expressing concern lest the people become "sheep without a shepherd," Moses asks God for a leader to "go out (ἐξελεύσεται) before them and come in (εἰσελεύσεται) before them" and to "lead them out (ἐξάγω) and bring them in (εἰσάγω)" (see Num. 27:16–17; compare Matt. 26:31–32). This same language is used elsewhere to describe God's redemptive action in bringing Israel out of (ἐξαγαγεῖν) Egypt and into (εἰσαγαγεῖν) the land of milk and honey (see Exod. 3:8; Deut. 6:23). The identical terms are also found in the formative texts associated with David's kingship. David "*led out* and *brought in* Israel" (ἐξάγω; εἰσάγω). Hence, God declares David to be the "shepherd (רעה; ποιμαίνω) of my people Israel" (2 Sam. 5:2; 1 Chron. 17:6).

The association of the earthly shepherd as divine savior, liberator, guide, healer, and restorer intensifies in the texts that form the core of what Chae calls "the Davidic eschatological shepherd tradition"—Micah 2–5; Ezekiel 34–37; Zechariah 9:1–4. Israel, as he describes it, was taught to hope for a new David, a shepherd-king who would lead the people out of exile and restore them in the land. This eschatological shepherd, especially in the prophecies of Jeremiah, would be a healer, that is, he would forgive the people their sins (Jer. 30:13–17; 31:10, 31–34).

Chae traces this tradition through the period of Second Temple Judaism (roughly 520 B.C. to 70 A.D). His reading of the so-called Animal Apocalypse from the pseudepigraphal work, *1 Enoch*, is especially interesting. In this complex allegory of world history starting with Adam, Chae finds an "in-depth interaction with shepherd imagery from the Old Testament Davidic Shepherd tradtion."

Turning to Matthew's interaction with this tradition, Chae sees the gospel portraying Jesus as the eschatological Davidic shepherd sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel and destined to be the judge and ruler of nations (see Matt. 7:15; 9:36; 12:9–14; 18:10–14; 25:31–46). He sees Matthew's emphasis on the title "Son of David" to be almost programmatic. The title is used in the infancy narrative and Jesus' healings in the gospel are frequently related to this title. In Matthew's narrative of his passion, Jesus is described in terms of Zechariah's smitten shepherd (compare Matt. 26:31; Zech. 13:7). Chae demonstrates the influence of Ezekiel

on Matthew and makes a good case that "the evangelist shapes his narrative as he deeply interacts with the Davidic shepherd tradition."

Chae does not deny that other imagery and typologies are at work in Matthew, especially Mosaic types. But he sees the Davidic shepherd image as crucial, especially for understanding Jesus' work as "the healing Son of David." He is especially keen to root the Matthean Jesus' healing ministry in the Davidic shepherd tradition. He provides an insightful reading of some key texts from Qumran (*Messianic Apocalypse*, *Words of the Luminaries*, *Damascus Document*) and establishes connections between these texts and Ezekiel 34. But his argument ultimately does not convince that there was a coherent Jewish expectation of a "therapeutic Son of David."

One questions, too, why Chae does not consider the shape of the kingdom that the Davidic shepherd was anticipated to restore. He makes a suggestive statement: "Certainly, the ecclesiology of Matthew's Gospel is determined by the christology of Jesus as the Shepherd(s) in the context of his mission toward his flock in view of the nations." But the relation of Matthew's ecclesiology to his Shepherd-christology is left unexplored.

One would like to have seen Chae do more with his very suggestive summary remarks on the nature of the kingdom in Matthew: "Jesus proclaims the coming of the kingdom (Matt. 4:23; 9:35), which coincides with the coming of the eschatological Davidic Shepherd(s) for his flock (Matt. 2:6; 9:36). The kingdom comes as Jesus seeks the lost sheep of the house of Israel; it implies the arrival of God's eschatological and theocratic rule over his people. For this mission, Jesus fulfills first the role of YHWH the eschatological Shepherd whose main tasks are to seek the lost and heal the sick. The kingdom of God is thus characteristically Davidic in the First Gospel."

∾ Michael E. Fuller ∾

The Restoration of Israel: Israel's Re-gathering and the Fate of the Nations in Early Jewish Literature and Luke-Acts
Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche 138
(New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2006)

Perhaps owing to the influence of E. P. Sanders' and N. T. Wright's work on Judaism and Christian origins, the theme of Israel's restoration has emerged in recent years as an important area of both New and Old Testament research.

The destruction of the Temple in 586 B.C. and the people's exile among the nations was a historical and political calamity for Israel. More than that, it occasioned a theological crisis in Israel's self-understanding of its special relationship as God's "elect." The scars of the exile are visible in the history recorded in the Old Testament, which is marked throughout by a recurring pattern of "sin, exile, repentance, and return."

The idea of exile and restoration persisted even after Israel returned to the land and began building a new, second Temple following King Cyrus' decree in 539 B.C. As the centuries wore on, Israel came to see its continued experience of foreign domination, first by Greece and finally by Rome in the first century B.C., as an ongoing exile and captivity. The glorious promises of the prophets, they understood, had not come to pass. Israel's hopes, inspired by an eschatological reading of the prophets, came to fix upon a definitive future restoration to be brought about by God in the sight of the nations.

In his fine study, Fuller explores the complex and diverse ways Israel's hopes are expressed in the literature of the Second Temple period. How would the restoration be brought about? What would happen to Israel's enemies? What would the restored Israel look like? What would happen after the restoration? Fuller finds a variety of answers in insightful readings of such texts as Sirach, 1 and 2 Maccabees, the *Psalms of Solomon*, and the Animal Apocalypse of *1 Enoch*. His most interesting work centers on the fate of the Gentiles and the nations in Israel's restorationist visions. In this context, he offers a good excursus on the Davidic messiah in early Jewish literature.

Fuller agrees there is no sustained or widespread expectation of a Davidic messiah in early Judaism. Most restorationist texts do not mention David either. This makes the prominence of Davidic expectation in the New Testament all the more intriguing. And Fuller's work helps us better understand this crucial background to the New Testament.

While Davidic speculation is rare in the early Jewish texts, Fuller finds that whenever the image of the Davidic messiah does occur, "it is usually within the exilic model of restoration. For those Jews who sustained the hope for his coming, the Messiah's arrival was understood to be pivotal to Israel's restoration."

He sketches Davidic expectation in the Qumran documents and in texts such as *Psalms of Solomon* and *4 Ezra*. While no uniform portrait of the Davidic messiah emerges, in many he is a warrior-king who leads Israel to victory over its enemies. Fuller finds that in this literature the prophecy of Isaiah 11:1–4 looms large. He suggests that this is perhaps because Isaiah envisions the Davidic scion as heaven-sent, "anointed" by the Spirit.

These Davidic themes are critical for Luke's gospel and its sequel volume, the Acts of the Apostles. Fuller says Israel's restoration is a "central motif" in Luke-Acts, and that Luke understand Jesus as "the Davidic redeemer of Israel (1:32, 69; 2:11)." The gospel begins by describing Jesus as fulfilling hopes for "the consolation of Israel" (2:25) and "the redemption of Israel" (2:38). Jesus begins his ministry at Nazareth with a kind of mission statement that sounds restorationist notes about the "release" of the "captives" from exile (4:18).

In general, Fuller identifies Luke-Acts with a strain of Second Temple restorationist thought that focuses on the re-gathering of the scattered tribes of Israel. This re-gathering begins with "the arrival of Jesus, the Davidic messiah and his formation of the twelve apostles." Fuller sees great importance in the symbol of the Twelve in Luke. This symbol draws on early Jewish traditions that see the twelve tribes as central to Israel's re-gathering and restoration. Seen in light of these traditions, the calling of the Twelve in Luke "connotes . . . [that] God has authorized the new assembly of Israel through the Messiah."

Fuller notes that while the designation is rare in Mark (6:30) and Matthew (10:2), Luke uses the term "apostles" almost as a "technical term associated with the authoritative status of the Twelve, who constitute the original nucleus and leadership of the eschatological Israel." Jesus' bequeathing of the kingdom to the Twelve at the Last Supper (Luke 20:29) recalls several early Jewish eschatological texts which depict the future king ruling together with the leaders of the twelve tribes.

The ascension and Pentecost scenes in Acts emphasize Jesus' "heavenly enthronement." And this, Fuller says, marks "the climax of Israel's re-gathering and restoration. From heaven, the Messiah now rules over Israel and the wider occupied world."

Fuller, however, does not seem to fully understand the relationship of the kingdom, the Church, and the restoration of Israel. They are in fact aspects of the same eschatological and earthly reality. The Church, the kingdom bequeathed to the Twelve, is not a new institution, but is rather "the eschatological climax of [Israel's] ancient hope." The Church is the re-gathering of the ancient tribes into a restored Israel and kingdom of God.

Nor does Fuller see clearly the international shape of the Davidic kingdom. He acknowledges that Israel's king was expected to rule from heaven over the world of nations. But the relation of this expectation to the Church's mission to the Gentiles remains unexplained, as does the way in which righteous Gentiles are to be incorporated into the restored kingdom.

John A. Dennis

Jesus' Death and the Gathering of the True Israel: The Johannine Appropriation of Restoration Theology in the Light of John 11:47–52
Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament, 2. Reihe 217
(Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006)

This is the first full-length study of restoration theology in the Fourth Gospel. Dennis has chosen an intriguing crux—the deliberations of the chief priests and Pharisees over the threat posed by Jesus (John 11:47–52). The Jewish elders express concern that unless Jesus is eliminated the Romans will "destroy (ἀποῦσιν) both our holy place (τόπον) and our nation." Jesus must die, the High Priest Caiaphas counsels, "that the whole nation should not perish (ἀπόληται)."

This dramatic passage is laced with ironies, concluding with John's statement that Jesus must die, "not for the nation (ἔθνος) only, but to gather (συναγάγῃ) into one the children of God (τέκνα τοῦ θεοῦ) who are scattered (διεσκορπισμένα) abroad."

Dennis demonstrates that the true drama in the passage lies in its evocation of Israel's restoration theology. The entire exchange is couched in the vocabulary of exile and restoration. Διασκορπίζω and related terms are commonly used in the Greek Septuagint translation (LXX) to describe Israel's scattering or dispersion among the nations (for example LXX Isa. 11:12; 60:22; Jer. 9:15; 10:21; 27:37; Ezek. 5:10; 29:13; Ps. 43:12). Likewise, συνάγω and its cognates are used in promises of a re-gathering of Israel's dispersed tribes (LXX Ps. 106:3; Hos. 2:2 Isa. 40:11; 43:5; Jer. 23:8; Ezek. 34:13; 39:2, 37).

In careful readings, Dennis demonstrates that other key terms in the passage—related to "destruction," "perishing" and Israel's holy "place"—are also used in in early Jewish literature in contexts concering Israel's judgement, dispersion, and restoration (LXX Deut. 28:20–21, 25, 51; Isa. 11:12; 27:12–13; Jer. 23:1; 27:6; 1 Macc. 3:9, 30).

He traces these motifs throughout John's Gospel, arguing that Israel's res-

toration traditions are critical to understanding the meaning of Jesus' death. For John, Jesus' death has a twofold purpose, according to Dennis: "[H]is death will deliver some of those from the 'nation' from 'perishing' and his death will also bring about the gathering and unity of the dispersed children of God."

Dennis' treatment of the Old Testament background for the notion of "children of God" (τέκνα τοῦ θεοῦ) is insightful. Although the phrase itself is not found in the Old Testament, Dennis follows R. Alan Culpepper in seeing that the concept of God's offspring is related to "the Davidic line and Israel as a whole." Israel is frequently described as a son or child of God (Exod. 4:22; Jer. 31:9 [LXX 38:9]; Deut. 14:1; Isa. 63:16; 64:8; Hos. 11:1, 10).

Of course, in John's Gospel, the term "children of God" is not an ethnic designation. Instead, being a child of God is decidedly a matter of divine origin (John 1:12; 8:31–47). This suggests that for John, the restoration includes not only ethnic Jews and Israelites, but also Gentiles who receive Jesus and believe in his name.

But Dennis takes the question deeper, showing that τέκνα (τοῦ) θεοῦ and the concept of God's fatherhood are themselves "often associated with the eschatological restoration of Israel." He sees that the status of divine filiation in the Old Testament could be lost through disobedience to God's covenant and commandments (Deut. 32:5–6, 18–19; Hos. 11:1–10). In one restorationist text (LXX Hos. 2:1–2), the "gathering" (συναχθήσονται) of Judah and Israel restores and unifes them as "children of the living God" (υἱοὶ θεοῦ ζῶντος). These themes of divine sonship and restoration are especially prevalent in Isaiah and Jeremiah (Isa. 43:5–7; 49:18–21; 66:8–9; Jer. 31:8–10 [LXX 38:8–10].

Consistent with Jewish expectations, John sees the salvation of the Gentile nations as a "by-product" or "overflow" of Israel's restoration, according to Dennis (Zech. 2:10–12 [LXX 2:14–16]; Tob. 14:5–7). For John, the death of Christ will bring about a restoration of the divine sonship lost by the children of Israel through their unfaithfulness to the covenant. Moreover, his death will pave the way for all people who "respond faithfully to the ministry of the Messiah, [to] be begotten anew by God as his children and thus caught up in the restoration purposes of the Father through the Son."

~: Jocelyn McWhirter :~

The Bridegroom Messiah and the People of God: Marriage in the Fourth Gospel
Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 13
(Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2006)

In his third-century commentary on Genesis, the great exegete Origen observed: "You see that everywhere the mysteries are in agreement. You see the patterns of the New and Old Testament to be harmonious." This presumption of theological unity and continuity helped Origen and other Church fathers make original and fertile findings in their interpretation of the New Testament.

In one respect, this solid study of the bridegroom metaphor in John is a modern scholarly exploration of findings first made by Origen and other early interpreters. Origen saw parallels between Jesus' meeting at the well with the Samaritan woman (John 4:4–42) and Genesis' account of Jacob's meeting with Rachel (Gen. 29:1–20). He also saw an allusion to the Song of Solomon (1:12) in John's story of the anointing at Bethany (John 12).

Also in the early Church, Hippolytus (d. 235) connected John's resurrection accounts (20:16–17) with the Song (3:1–4). This early interpretative tradition became a staple in the descriptions of Catholic mystical experience. It also influenced the Church's liturgical tradition. For instance, the liturgy for the Feast of St. Mary Magdalene pairs John's account of Mary's role on the first Easter morning (John 20:1–2, 11–18) with a reading from the Song of Solomon (3:1–4).

While their allegorical mode of interpretation is regarded skeptically by modern scholars, McWhirter argues that "Origen and Hippolytus were on the right track . . . . [T]hey were not hearing things when they detected echoes of well betrothal stories and the Song of Songs in the Fourth Gospel." And her close literary study of John's text vindicates their interpretative intuitions.

She argues that John uses these echoes of Scripture to introduce Jesus as the bridegroom Messiah promised in an important subtheme of Old Testament prophecy (Hos. 1–3; Isa. 66:10; Jer. 2:2; compare 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:22–32; Rev. 21:2, 9; 22:17). This metaphor, in turn, serves to depict Jesus' "relationship with the believing community" as it is established through baptism.

In a good synchronic reading, she shows how Jesus' miracle at the wedding of Cana (John 2:1–12) builds on messianic traditions associated with an abundance of wine (Gen. 49:10–12; Amos 9:11, 13–14). In the following chapter, John the Baptist identifies Jesus as the expected bridegroom (John 3:29). McWhirter demonstrates strong literary connections between this passage and a series of texts

associated with Jeremiah (Jer. 7:23–24; 16:9; 25:10; 33:10–11; Bar. 2:23). These texts also speak of a bride, a bridegroom, and the "bridegroom's voice."

McWhirter's treatment of Jesus and the Samaritan woman (John 4:4–42) is helpful in establishing the story as a kind of extended meditation on evangelization and Christian faith. In a close comparative reading of the Jacob and Rachel story, she finds similar patterns. In both a traveling man encounters a woman at a well and shares a drink of water. There is discussion of the woman's family background and, when the woman recognizes whom she is speaking to, she leaves off to summon her family members. As the Genesis story ends with a betrothal or proposal of marriage, the account in John, after a discussion of the woman's marital status, ends with the Samaritans coming to belief. McWhirter offers this fine intertextual interpretation:

> Jacob's betrothal serves as a metaphor for Samaritan belief. . . . The betrothal of Jacob to Rachel eventually results in births (Gen. 29:31–20:24). In a sense, then, Genesis 29 narrates the origins of Israel. Similarly when the Samaritan woman meets one greater than Jacob at Jacob's well, a family of faith is established. The citizens of Sychar believe, and receive power to become children of God (compare John 1:12). . . . His encounter with the Samaritan woman produces spiritual offspring.

As John's Gospel begins in a strong nuptial key, McWhirter shows how the evangelist uses marital imagery in describing Jesus' preparation for his death and his resurrection. When Mary of Bethany anoints a reclining Jesus with the fragrant nard (John 12:1–8), it is a clear allusion to an image of the betrothed king in the Song of Solomon (1:12). The strength of the allusion is to signal Jesus' role as both king and bridegroom-Messiah. McWhirter finds that Mary Magdalen's search for the risen Jesus (John 20:1–18) is likewise built on an extended allusion to the Song (3:1–4). Like Mary of Bethany, Mary Magdalen assumes the role of the bride in the Song, and becomes a symbol of discipleship and the Church, McWhirter suggests.

McWhirter believes the key to John's marital imagery is to be found in the evangelist's messianic interpretation of Psalm 45, which celebrates a royal wedding. She argues convincingly that John understood the marital texts he alluded to (Jer. 33:10–11; Gen. 29:1–20; Song of Sol. 1:12; 3:1–4) as messianic prophecies because these texts shared a common vocabulary and imagery with the messianic Psalm 45. She provides a good discussion of the psalm's interpretation in early Christian and Jewish tradition. Her own reading of the psalm yields fresh insights. She shows the links between Psalm 45 and the Song of Solomon and again to the wedding procession in Jeremiah 33:10–11. She draws out detailed connections between the story of Jacob and Rachel and the Song—a connection again first seen by Origen.

Unfortunately, McWhirter is unduly anxious lest John's marital imagery offend our modern ears as "reinforcing oppressive gender roles." And her skittishness about the implications of portraying God as a male figure and the people of God as a bride limits her capacity to explore the theological and spiritual depths of this imagery.

She is on the right track when she speaks of the metaphor evoking "celebration and procreation. . . . The image of a wedding celebration illustrates the Church's joy at Jesus' advent, while the image of procreation describes how the Church's testimony attracts new believers." There is far more to it than that, of course, as the New Testament itself reveals in inescapably "gendered" images—of the motherhood of the Church, the Fatherhood of God, and the spiritual childhood of believers.

∾ Kiwoong Son ∾

Zion Symbolism in Hebrews:
Hebrews 12:18–24 as a Hermeneutical Key to the Epistle
(Carlisle: Paternoster, 2005)

The abundance and use of Old Testament citations in Hebrews has long puzzled scholars.

For many years, scholars seemed agreed that there was no rhyme or reason to Hebrews' selection and use of this material, and that often Hebrews misquotes or otherwise misinterprets its sources. That view has shifted in recent years, as similarities have been discovered between Hebrews and other ancient texts such as those found at Qumran. But there remains no consensus about what theological presuppositions might underlie Hebrews' use of the Old Testament. Nor is there agreement about what interpretative and exegetical methods are at work in the book.

In this excellent study, Son undertakes to answer these questions. He believes the hermeneutical key to the letter is found near the end, in Hebrews 12:18–24. In this vivid and symbolic passage, the author contrasts Israel's experience in ratifying the old covenant at Mount Sinai (Exod. 19:16–19; Deut. 4:11; 5:22) with the experience of the new covenant said to have been forged at "Mount Zion . . . the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem."

The superiority of the new covenant of Zion over the old covenant of Sinai is at the heart of the matter for the author of Hebrews. And Son traces this imagery throughout the epistle, deftly exploring the imagery of Sinai and Zion in the Old

Testament and Jewish tradition, as well as in the New Testament. His discussions of Temple symbolism and the high priesthood of Jesus are excellent.

In Hebrews 12:18–24, Sinai is used to symbolize the author's argument about the ineffectuality of the old covenant and its sacrificial system. The intense and terrifying images of darkness, burning fire, the threatening voice from the mountain—these are symbols of the people's sense of guilt before God and the inability of their sacrifices to save and cleanse them (Heb. 9:9; 10:4). While the Sinai imagery emphasizes the deep, insuperable separation between the sinner and God, the Zion imagery connotes a festival atmosphere in which heaven and earth are joined in intimate communion. In the heavenly Jerusalem, angels rejoice in a "festal gathering" (πανήγυρις; Amos 5:21; Ezek. 46:11; Hos. 9:5) along with "the church (ἐκκλησία) of the first-born," and "the spirits of righteous men made perfect."

As Son explains: "The significance of this gathering is that all the three different groups are united in one assembly in order to enjoy the immediate presence of God, and now Christians under the new covenant blood of Jesus have come to join the heavenly celebration. . . . [T]he joyful relationship between God and worshippers in Zion presupposes the complete removal of sins by the new covenant blood of Jesus, whereas Sinai represents God's attitude toward the un-regenerated Sinai community under the old covenant blood of the animals."

This contrast is made also at the end of Hebrews 12:18–24, in the curious comparison between the respective "speaking" of Christ's blood and the blood of Abel.

> Abel's blood could not atone for Cain's sin but functions only as a reminder of his sin (Gen. 4:10–16), whereas Christ's blood cleanses the sins of worshippers and thus announces forgiveness and acceptance. Understood in this way, the symbolic significance of Abel's blood corresponds well to the blood of animal sacrifice that is only an annual reminder of sins (Heb. 10:3–4). . . . The synoptic gospels also describe Abel as the first suffering prophet (Matt. 23:35; Luke 11:50–51), and immediately after that Jesus is also presented as the persecuted prophet (Matt. 23:37–39; Luke 13:34–35). The reason for the author's mention of Abel's blood instead of the animal blood is probably that the author of Hebrews presents Abel's death as the prefiguration of the sacrificial death of Christ.

The image of Zion in Hebrews 12:18–24 is royal and liturgical, in Son's analysis. The reference to Zion as "the city of the living God" refers to the eschatological kingdom of God, while the image of the "heavenly Jerusalem" stresses the cultic aspect of the heavenly temple. Son notes that the description of worshippers who have "come (προσεληλύθατε) to Mount Zion" uses a verb (προσέρχομαι) that

is used elsewhere in Hebrews to describe the worshipful "coming into the presence of God"—especially the entry of the high priest into the inner sanctuary of the Tabernacle (Heb. 4:16; 7:25; 10:1, 22; 11:6; 12:18, 22).

There is much to be gained from this study, not only for understanding Hebrews, but also for seeing the deep influence of Zion and Temple symbolism in the early Church's understanding of the new covenant. As Son concludes: "[T]he new covenant concept in the New Testament is closely related to the eschatology of Zion, which sees the sacrificial blood of Jesus as the ratification of the new covenant on the eschatological Mount Zion in contrast to that of Sinai. Hebrews presents the most comprehensive picture of the realization of the new covenant."

~: Richard Bauckham :~

Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels As Eyewitness Testimony (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006)

Bauckham takes dead-center aim at the question underlying more than a century's worth of historical-critical research into the New Testament and the "historical Jesus": Do the gospels give us access to reliable information about Jesus? Do they represent truthfully what he said and did and the events surrounding his life?

Bauckham knows most scholars today would answer with a qualified "no." The common wisdom in the academy is that stories and sayings of Jesus circulated for decades, undergoing countless retellings and embellishments before being finally set down in writing. The final form of the gospels, it is said, not only reflects a fluid oral tradition, but also the dogmatic and doctrinal preoccupations of the early Church, which are said to be overlayed like an ideological veneer atop the gospel's portrait of Jesus.

Everything about those scholarly assumptions is called into question in this important and provocative book, which should be the touchstone for all future discussion of these issues. Bauckham makes a compelling case for believing that all four gospels were written on the basis of carefully prepared and preserved eyewitness accounts. In the case of John, he believes the gospel was written by an actual eyewitness. Further, he maintains that all the gospels were written within "living memory" of the events they describe. "The texts of our gospels," he concludes, "are close to the eyewitness reports of the words and deeds of Jesus."

Bauckham takes very seriously the testimony of Papias, a third-generation Christian and bishop of Hierapolis (in modern-day Turkey). Papias' *Expositions of the Oracles of the Lord*, written in 125 A.D., is now lost except for fragments preserved in Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*. These fragments, long dismissed by

scholars, remain the earliest testimony we have to the writing of the gospels. Papias said that Mark's gospel was based on the eyewitness testimony of Peter, and that Matthew elaborated on this testimony in writing his gospel in Hebrew; further, Papias suggested that John's gospel was written by the apostle, "John the elder."

Bauckham finds good reasons to agree with these conclusions about the gospels' origins. What interests him perhaps more is Papias' method for compiling his own now-lost *Expositions*. About 80 A.D., he began collecting oral traditions about Jesus, interrogating "anyone who had been a follower of the elders [apostles] . . . in regard to the words of the elders—what Andrew or what Peter said, or what was said by . . . any other of the disciples of the Lord."

Papias said he always sought out "the living and surviving voice"—that is, the testimony of eyewitnesses or those with a personal memory of Jesus' words and deeds. His resulting *Expositions*, he said, represented what he had "learned carefully from the elders and carefully remembered, guaranteeing their truth."

In a close reading of Papias' fragments, Bauckham finds his methods consistent with those of other contemporary Greco-Roman historiographers: "Ancient historians, considering that only the history of the times within living memory could be adequately researched and recounted, valued above all the historian's own direct participation in the events about which he wrote . . . but also, as second best, the reminiscences of living witnesses who could be questioned in person by the historian."

This describes Papias' method. And Bauckham also finds evidence that this method is at work in the gospels. In an illuminating chapter, he considers the curious, seemingly sporadic identification by name of certain characters in the gospels. While many characters in the gospels remain anonymous, many indeed are named—Cleopas, one of the disicples who met Jesus on the road to Emmaus; Simon, the Pharisee who invited Jesus to dinner; Jairus, whose daughter Jesus raised; Zaccheus, the tax collector; Malchus, the high priest's servant whose ear was cut off during Jesus' arrest in Gethsemane; and more.

Scholars today tend not to invest much significance in these names. Most would likely agree with Rudolf Bultmann, who opined that the names are later, literary insertions aimed at increasing "novelistic interest." But in light of ancient historiographic practices, Bauckman sees the names as key evidence of "*inclusios*" of eyewitness testimony. He makes a strong case for considering these named characters to be the original sources for the stories in which they are mentioned. "All these people joined the early Christian movement and were well known at least in the circles in which these traditions were first transmitted."

In Bauckham's reading, such figures as Mary Magdalene and Jospeh of Arimithea would have been a continuing resource for authentic tradition—bearing witness throughout their lives to events they had seen firsthand and teachings they had heard from the lips of Jesus and committed to memory.

Throughout this book, Bauckham presents a forceful scholarly portrait of how the gospels originated out of the tradition of the Church, which carefully preserved and transmitted the testimony of the original eyewitnesses to Jesus' ministry. At the center of this tradition, Bauckham sees the Twelve—the apostles appointed personally by Jesus to "be with him" (Mark 3:14).

His chapters on the Twelve and their successors are a superb recovery of the origins of tradition, and highlight the pivotal leadership of Peter as the most authoritative of the eyewitnesses. Bauckham roots the Twelve's authority in their symbolic constitution by Jesus as representing the restored twelve tribes of Israel. Though there were many eyewitnesses whose memories can be detected in the gospels, the Twelve and their successors stood as the sole guardians and guarantors of the authentic tradition—"authoritative transmitters of the sayings of Jesus and authoritative eyewitnesses of the events of Jesus' history."

Bauckham's book should stimulate new discussion about the unacknowledged assumptions of modern biblical scholarship, especially its hermeneutic of discontinuity and suspicion. His book challenges the core assumption of a rupture between original experience of Jesus and the biblical text given to us by the Church. Bauckham helps us to see from the New Testament evidence that the early Church, like other religious traditions, had a strict and formal approach to precisely preserving the memory of its founder's words, deeds, and teachings.

One virtue of this book is its appreciation of Samuel Byrskog's comparative studies of the gospel tradition and the transmission of oral traditions and authoritative teachings in Judaism and other ancient religions. Following Byrskog, Bauckham aruges that early Christian tradition was far from a vague, random, collective memory of legends about Jesus. Instead, like other religious traditions, the words of the Master were likely memorized and accounts of his teaching and activities were carefully collected from eyewitneses and verified according to strict canons of evidence.

Indeed, the original audiences of the gospels would have demanded such eyewitness testimony, and there were enough living eyewitnesses to prevent the promulgation of gospels that contradicted the testimony and memory of the eyewitnesses (compare Gal. 1:8). As Paul acknowledged, many of those who had witnessed the risen Lord were "still alive" when he was writing (1 Cor. 15:6).

Bauckham notes that on numerous occasions Paul uses rabbinic technical terms regarding the "handing on" (παραδίδωμι; 1 Cor. 11:2, 23) and "receiving" (παραλαμβάνω; 1 Cor. 15:1, 3; Gal. 1:9; Col. 2:6; 1 Thess. 2:13; 4:1; 2 Thess. 3:6) of sacred tradition. This suggests an almost formal mechanism at work in the early Church to ensure that its teachings were, as Paul said, "from the Lord" (1 Cor. 11:23). Bauckham explains: "He therefore envisages a chain of transmission that begins from Jesus himself and passes through intermediaries to Paul himself. . . . [T]he intermediaries are surely, again, the Jerusalem apostles."

Bauckham's historical research has many implications for biblical theology. His summary of that research is worth quoting in full:

> [T]he gospels put us in close touch with the eyewitnesses of the history of Jesus. The gospel writers, in their different ways, present their gospels as based on and incorporating the testimony of the eyewitnesses. The literary and theological strategies of these writers are not directed to superseding the testimony of the eyewitnesses but to giving it a permanent literary vehicle. In one case, we have argued, an eyewitness has authored his own gospel, and it is notable that precisely this gospel, John's, is the one that incorporates the most extensive reflection on the significance of the eyewitness testimony. There is no epistemological chasm between the eyewitness testimony and the theological significance of the events as this author develops it. Not being eyewitnesses themselves, the other gospel writers are less theologically ambitious. Of course, the writing of a gospel was significantly an interpretative act in a variety of ways (the selection and arrangement of testimony in a unified narrative are themselves interpretative and were entirely unavoidable in the writing of a gospel.) But the interpretative act of writing a gospel intended continuity with the testimony of the eyewitnesses who, of course, had already interpreted, who could not but have combined in their accounts the empirically observable with the perceived significance of the events. They were not just reminiscing but telling stories of significance. The Jesus the gospels portray is Jesus as these eyewitnesses portrayed him, the Jesus of testimony.