

which, in its execution, stimulates more than it frustrates.

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***A Portrayal of Trust:
The Theme of Faith in the Hezekiah Narratives***

David Bostock

Great Britain: Paternoster, 2006, xx + 251 pp.

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SUMMARY

In this book, the author proposes that faith is the key theological motif in the Hezekiah narratives. Most of the book focuses on the characterization of Hezekiah in 2 Kings 18-20, and the author concludes that Hezekiah is portrayed as a man who was unwavering in his trust in YHWH. The final two chapters consider the relationship between the Hezekiah narratives and their greater contexts (the book of Kings and the book of Isaiah). The book may be helpful to those interested in what the Old Testament has to teach us about faith.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

In diesem Buch schlägt der Autor vor, dass Glaube das theologische Schlüsselmotiv der Hiskia-Erzählungen ist. Der Großteil des Buches konzentriert sich auf die Charakterisierung Hiskias in 2. Könige 18-20, und der Autor kommt zu dem Schluss, dass Hiskia als ein Mann charakterisiert wird, der in seinem Vertrauen auf Jahwe standfest war. Die beiden abschließenden Kapitel betrachten die Beziehung zwischen den Hiskia-Erzählungen und ihren größeren Kontexten (das Buch der Könige und Jesaja). Das Buch kann denen eine Hilfe sein, die an der alttestamentlichen Lehre vom Glauben interessiert sind.

RÉSUMÉ

D. Bostock considère que la foi est le motif théologique clé dans les récits du règne d'Ézékias. Il consacre la plus grande partie de l'ouvrage à la manière dont Ézékias est présenté en 2 Rois 18-20 et conclut qu'on a là le portrait d'un homme à la foi inébranlable en Yahvé. Dans les deux derniers chapitres, il étudie la relation entre les récits du règne d'Ézékias et les contextes plus larges (le livre des Rois et celui d'Ésaïe). L'ouvrage est intéressant par son apport sur l'enseignement de l'Ancien Testament concernant la foi.

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As the title suggests, the book explores the characterization of Hezekiah in order to see what it has to teach us about faith. Using the Kings version as the base text, the author notes that given the fact that the verb *'mn* ("trust") is not used in the book of Kings outside of 2 Kings 18-19, the frequent use of the verb in those chapters (nine times) indicates that *'mn* is the key theological motif (*Leitmotif*) in these narratives.

The author deals with the received form of the text

from a literary perspective characterized as narrative criticism. The bulk of the book consists of an exegesis of 2 Kings 18-20. In chapter 2, careful attention is paid to the characterization of Hezekiah in 2 Kings 18:1-12 and the author concludes that the thrust of these verses is to show the reader that Hezekiah's trust in YHWH was unequalled in other kings, and as such, Hezekiah is an example of a man of faith *par excellence*.

In the next chapter, Hezekiah's response to the "Assyrian Threat" in 2 Kings 18:13-19:37 is examined. The contrast between the two main characters of this section (Sennacherib and Hezekiah) enhances Hezekiah's portrayal in the narrative. While Sennacherib is a dishonourable, arrogant aggressor who accepts tribute from Hezekiah and yet still attempts to overthrow Hezekiah and the city, the fact that Hezekiah goes to the Temple to pray confirms that his trust is in YHWH since prayer and faith are intertwined.

Although *'mn* does not appear in 2 Kings 20, the author contends that the chapter should not be left out of the discussion. He notes that Hezekiah's illness may be symbolic of the Assyrian attack, while, again, his prayer to YHWH shows evidence of his faith in a time of attack. Even though Hezekiah is sick, he proves that he believes God can act in a miraculous way by choosing the harder option of moving the shadow backward. As such, even in his sickness, Hezekiah is depicted as a man of faith in YHWH. 2 Kings 20:12-21 is important to the discussion as it seems to jeopardize the author's thesis that Hezekiah is consistently portrayed as a man of faith. In this section Hezekiah seemingly is found to be at fault for showing the Babylonians the treasures of the temple, hence Isaiah's prophecy of the coming destruction and exile of Jerusalem. Hezekiah's answer that he is pleased that destruction will come in his sons' days and not in his lifetime often leads scholars to conclude that he is a selfish individual with no regard to his sons. Rejecting this interpretation, however, the author concludes that, "Hezekiah's response expresses his trust in God and gratitude for the peace and security during this reign, knowing that the God who has delayed judgment once is ready, willing and able to do the same, if his people and especially their rulers will respond in a proper way towards YHWH" (p. 144).

The final two chapters are devoted to the relationship between the Hezekiah narratives and their wider contexts in which they are set (the book of Kings and the book of Isaiah). The author suggests that the book of Kings is a polemic against worshipping other gods and is an exhortation to worship YHWH. Hezekiah, therefore, is the ultimate example of one who fully trusted in YHWH. In the book of Isaiah, the literary relationship between the "royal narrative" of Isaiah 36-39 and the other royal narrative found in Isaiah 7 is considered. The author proposes that the two narratives are connected once again through an implicit contrast. Whereas in chapter 7 Ahaz is the supreme example of a man who lacks faith, in chapters 36-39 Hezekiah is the supreme

example of a man of great faith.

Overall, the author has done an excellent job of highlighting the theme of faith in his assessment of the setting, plot, point of view and characterization within the Hezekiah narratives. One of the shortcomings in the book is that certain texts that are relevant to the discussion are not considered. For example, while the author refers to the Hezekiah narratives in Isaiah when appropriate, he does not include a discussion of Hezekiah's portrayal in the book of Chronicles. This is unfortunate since it would have greatly strengthened his thesis (especially 2 Chron. 32:7-8). Additionally, the final chapter is entitled "The Theme of Faith in the book of Isaiah," but very little is actually said about faith in the book of Isaiah as a whole. After discussing the various approaches to the book of Isaiah, the author devotes only about two pages to the theme of faith in the book. Nevertheless, while some may be disappointed by the author's exegesis of the important "Immanuel" passage (Isaiah 7:14), the book is unusual in that it bridges between the academic and spiritual in its endeavor to recover the oft over-looked theological theme of faith nestled in the Old Testament. The book is also a good resource for students interested in Old Testament characterization.

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*When Will These Things Happen?
A Study of Jesus as Judge in Matthew 21-25
(Paternoster Biblical Monographs)*

Alistair I. Wilson

Carlisle: Paternoster, 2004, xxi + 272 pp., £19.99, pb,
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SUMMARY

Dependent on, but critical of Borg, this published dissertation argues that all the materials of Mt 21-25 connect Jesus with judgement in one way or another, either in connection with a prophetic identity or identity as a sage. Mt 24:4-35 is concerned with coming judgement upon Jerusalem; 24:36-25:46 is concerned with the eschatological return of Jesus. Though there is some tension between the narrative methods of the work and its concern to address the question of the historical Jesus, it does offer a challenge to portraits of the historical Jesus that neglect or partly neglect this broadly attested aspect of the Gospel portrayal of Jesus. More careful attention to what might be meant by considering Jesus as judge might have strengthened the work considerably.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

In Abhängigkeit von aber auch kritisch gegenüber Borg argumentiert diese Dissertation, dass das gesamte Material von Matthäus 21-25 Jesus auf die ein oder andere Weise mit Gericht verbindet, entweder im Zusammenhang mit einer Identität als Prophet oder als Weiser. Matt. 24,4-35 dreht sich um das kommende Gericht über Jerusalem;

Matt. 24,36-25,46 um die eschatologische Rückkehr Jesu. Obwohl eine Spannung zwischen den narrativen Methoden der Arbeit und dem Anliegen besteht, die Frage des historischen Jesus zu behandeln, bietet die Studie doch eine Herausforderung der Portraits des historischen Jesus an, die diesen weithin bezeugten Aspekt der Evangelien-Portraits von Jesus teilweise oder ganz vernachlässigen. Sorgfältigere Aufmerksamkeit auf das, was es bedeutet, Jesus als Richter zu betrachten, hätte die Arbeit erheblich verbessert.

RÉSUMÉ

Cette thèse de doctorat est dépendante des travaux de Borg, tout en gardant une distance critique par rapport à ceux-ci. L'auteur veut montrer que tout au long des chapitres 21 à 25 de l'Évangile de Matthieu, le thème du jugement est mis en rapport avec Jésus d'une manière ou d'une autre, soit en lien avec son rôle prophétique, soit en lien avec son rôle sapientiel. La section 24.4-35 traite du jugement à venir sur Jérusalem. La section 24.36-25.46 aborde la question du retour eschatologique de Jésus. On peut noter dans ce travail une certaine tension entre l'approche narrative et le souci d'aborder la question du Jésus historique, mais l'auteur remet en cause efficacement les portraits du Jésus historique qui laissent de côté, totalement ou en partie, cet aspect très fourni de la présentation de Jésus dans les évangiles. La thèse aurait mérité d'être renforcée par une réflexion plus approfondie sur ce que signifie la présentation de Jésus comme un juge.

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This published dissertation is concerned both with the historical Jesus and with the narrative world of the Gospel of Matthew. Wilson takes as his point of departure the work of Marcus Borg, who has been a vigorous advocate of the view that the historical Jesus was a Jewish sage and prophet, and not at all a figure with an eschatological message, and not at all a figure who in any way saw himself as having a role in a coming judgement. According to Borg Jesus set over against 'the politics of holiness' of the Pharisees his own 'politics of compassion', and Wilson is quite sympathetic to Borg in this respect. But when it comes to Jesus and having an eschatological message, Wilson thinks Borg is half wrong and when it comes to Jesus and having a role in judgement Wilson thinks Borg has it totally wrong.

Wilson sets out his stall by providing a critical survey of the literature, first in relation to an understanding of Jesus' view of judgement and then in relation to Matthew's view of Jesus and judgement. It is notable that the latter is very brief by comparison with the former.

Then comes the methodological chapter where, among other things, Wilson seeks to justify his choice of Borg, whose work is on the historical Jesus, as his central conversation partner in a work that is essentially to be devoted to a study of the narrative world of Mt 21-25. Wilson argues that since Matthew's primary goal is clearly 'to set out a faithful account of the life and message of Jesus of Nazareth' (p. 65) we should in the first