

Theology and Christology in the Fourth Gospel: Essays by the Members of the SNTS Johannine Writings Seminar. Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium 184. Edited by Gilbert van Belle, J. G. van der Watt, and P. Maritz. Leuven: Leuven University Press/Peeters, 2005, xii + 561 pp., n.p.

This important volume gathers essays originally presented by the members of the “Johannine Writings Seminar” of the prestigious Society of New Testament Studies (SNTS) between 1999 and 2003 on various topics related to the overall theme “Theology and Christology in the Fourth Gospel.” Somewhat oddly, the articles are featured alphabetically according to the authors’ last names, rather than adhering to the more conventional, and much more helpful, format of following a chronological sequence by reference in John’s Gospel or other topical considerations. Overall, the themes are varied, and contributors’ backgrounds diverse. Historical-critical methodologies and narrative approaches exist side by side. Some essays focus on word studies; others explore a given text or perform a thematic analysis. Most essays are in English, though several are in German and French (doctoral students, take note!).

Specifically, the volume contains the following articles (regrouped according to reference in John or topic, author’s last name in parenthesis; where necessary, the title is translated into English): “Observations on the Significance of the Old Testament in the Fourth Gospel” (Maarten J. J. Menken); “*Double Entendre* in the Gospel According to John” (Jan van der Watt); “Monotheism and Dualism: John and Qumran” (John Painter); “The Creation Motif in the Fourth Gospel: Perspectives on Its Narratological Function within a Judaistic Background” (Jan du Rand); “The Johannine Son of Man Revisited” (Francis Moloney); “Jesus and the Law in John” (William Loader); “The Samaritan Woman Episode, Synoptic Form-Criticism, and the Johannine Miracles: A Question of Criteria” (Urban C. von Wahlde); “John 8:44 in the Context of the Conversation in John 8:21–59”; “The *Ioudaioi* in the Fourth Gospel: A Narratological Perspective” (Francois Tolmie); “Psychological Considerations regarding the Negative Address of ‘the Jews’ in John’s Gospel” (Wilhelm Pratscher); “‘The Father and I Are One’ (John 10:30): Concerning the Theological Potential and Hermeneutical Competence of Johannine Christology” (Klaus Scholtissek); “Jesus as the Way to the Father in Johannine Theology (John 14,6)” (Craig Koester); “The Paraclete, the Spirit of truth” (Michel Gourgues); “Jesus’ Departure to the Father in John: Death or Resurrection?” (Marinus de Boer); “‘All my teaching was done in synagogues . . .’ (John 18,20)” (Birger Olsson); “Christology and Soteriology in the Fourth Gospel: The Conclusion to the Gospel of John Revisited” (Gilbert van Belle); “Gnostic Revelation and Johannine Sectarianism: Reading 1 John from the Perspective of Nag Hammadi” (PHEME PERKINS); “Sethian Gnosticism and Johannine Christianity” (John Turner); “Aspects of Johannine Christology” (Otto Schwankl); “Cosmological Implications of Johannine Christology” (Sjef van Tilborg); “Eschatology in the Johannine Circle” (Jörg Frey); and “John’s Gospel as Creation of New Meaning” (Udo Schnelle).

Most of the authors are experts in the field of Johannine studies, and even on the specific topic on which they write in the present volume. Students and scholars will do well to consult the respective contributions on the topic or topics of their research interest. Of the various authors, the following are among the most prolific and influential: Maarten Menken (use of the Old Testament in John’s Gospel); Francis Moloney (Son of Man); and Jörg Frey (Johannine eschatology). The contributions reflect the various scholarly traditions in New Testament scholarship from various European contexts, such as Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Sweden. The United States, Canada, Australia, and South Africa are represented as

well, which marks this volume as truly international in character. At the same time, not every contribution is equally helpful, and some are more experimental or even eccentric, which calls for discernment on the part of the reader.

The field of Johannine studies has been well served by a veritable flood of scholarly contributions, and this flood shows no signs of receding any time soon. Those actively engaged in the study of John's writings sometimes don't know if they should be grateful for the extensive literature on virtually any subject related to the Johannine corpus or, with excusable exasperation, call for a moratorium on Johannine research so that all the material that has been generated can be read and digested. In this sense, then, the volume may further contribute to the scholarly indigestion that has resulted from the increasingly crowded field of Johannine specialists. But it is worth remembering that beneath all of this looms the eternal Word become flesh in Jesus Christ who calls us to live in close relationship with him as part of the community of believers and to engage in Spirit-led mission to lead yet others to the realization that Jesus, and he alone, is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

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