

## BOOK REVIEWS

Bauckham, Richard. *The Climax of Prophecy: Studies on the Book of Revelation*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993. 512 pp. \$59.95.

*The Climax of Prophecy* consists of eleven essays, all of them written by Richard Bauckham. One third of the articles have been published before and are presented in this volume in revised form. Two thirds of the essays have not been previously published. In 1993, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation* by Bauckham was included in the series *New Testament Theology*. That publication was much shorter (169 pp.) than the present volume; however, several lines of interpretation proposed in *Theology of the Book of Revelation*, are further elaborated in *Climax of Prophecy*. Nevertheless, there are differences between those two volumes. The shorter one is more interested in theology, whereas the tome presently reviewed pays more attention to the literary and historical questions.

In his excellent introduction, Bauckham mentions four methodological aspects which unite the essays in *Climax of Prophecy*: (1) Concentration on the literary composition of Revelation is imperative. (2) The use of the OT in the Book of Revelation is a vital key to its understanding. (3) Although we cannot be sure that John knew and used any non-apocalyptic apocalypse, nevertheless, Revelation's "primary literary context is the tradition of Jewish and Christian apocalypses" (xi). (4) The historical context including the political and economic history of the first century world is essential for an appropriate interpretation of Revelation. Bauckham provides also a short outline of each of his essays.

The first chapter deals with the literary structure of Revelation, with repetition and variation, and with numerical composition. The author is especially interested in the macrostructure of the Apocalypse. The expression "in the spirit" occurs four times in Revelation marking three major transitions. An identical expanded formula is found in 17:3 and in 21:10 pointing to two parallel sections in Revelation which deal with two cities and, at the same time, denote the climax of Revelation: Babylon's destruction prepares the way for the descent of the New Jerusalem. Bauckham opts for five divisions of Revelation, perceives the trumpets as coming forth from the last seal, identifies the scroll of Rev 5 with the open scroll in Rev 10, and observes a chiasmic order with regard to the appearance and subsequent destruction of the principal enemies of God and his people.

In his essay "The Use of Apocalyptic Traditions", Bauckham establishes from four examples: (blood and horses in 14:20, completing the numbers of the martyrs in 6:9-11, giving up the dead in 20:13, and the silence in heaven in 8:1) that John did not borrow from other apocalypses, although he probably knew them in oral form.

Using a tradition-history approach, Bauckham studies "Synoptic Parousia Parables and the Apocalypse." He claims that Rev 3:3, 20 and 16:15 are

dependent on the synoptic parables of the Thief and the Watching Servant and shows that "parousia parables were widely used . . . in the primitive church," were collected from an early stage, and "suffered from deparabolization" (103). This was the case especially with 3:20. Three arguments in favor of an eschatological interpretation of 3:20 are listed.

Chapters 4 and 5 deal with the Christology and pneumatology of Revelation. The Book of Revelation draws a clear distinction between worship of the angels on the one hand and worship of Jesus and God on the other hand. Although Jesus belongs with God on the divine side and correctly receives worship, monotheism is not questioned. In Revelation, the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of vision, the Spirit of prophecy, and the reality behind the symbol of seven Spirits, which also provides an eschatological perspective.

The next two essays draw attention to Revelation's rich imagery. The chapter entitled "The Lion, the Lamb, and the Dragon" points to Christ's conquest by sacrificial death. The victory of the lamb is at the same time the defeat of the dragon. One of Revelation's major end time images is investigated in "The Eschatological Earthquake."

In the eighth chapter, Bauckham explores the image of holy war in Revelation. The Messiah conquers as the divine warrior. However, his victory is gained by non-military means, namely by his sacrificial death. The participation of Christians in this war is expected. They need to take sides and resist the enemies by witness and suffering to the point of death. The heavenly perspective reveals that defeat is in reality victory.

Bauckham's longest essay—exactly one hundred pages—treats "The Conversion of the Nations" in the Apocalypse. He claims that "the sacrificial death of the Lamb and the prophetic witness of his followers are God's strategy for winning all the nations of the world from the dominion of the beast to his own kingdom" (336-337). Bauckham suggests that John takes up from the OT the most universalistic hope and incorporates it in his prophecy. In order to prove his interpretation Bauckham investigates universal terminology in Revelation, important concepts of Rev 10-11 and 14-15 (the scroll, the eating of the scroll, the measuring of the temple, the two witnesses, the first fruits and the harvest, and the Song of Moses), the idea of the New Jerusalem, the *testimonia* tradition (1:7; 22:16b), and the fourfold formula for the nations. In his opinion, this interpretation—that the witness of the church will lead to the conversion of the nations—is his most original contribution.

The last two essays deal with Revelation's critique of the Roman system of tyranny and oppression. Chapter 10 is concerned with the economic critique of Rev 18. The last essay on "Nero and the Beast" suggests that "the figure of Nero (who is identified as the beast by its number 666) is a major key to understanding Revelation's portrayal of the imperial power as the beast" (xvii). The legend of Nero's return is examined. However, only Christ's parousia can establish an eternal kingdom.

Readers may disagree with some of Bauckham's methods (e.g., the employment of *Traditionsgeschichte*), as well as with some of his conclusions (e.g., taking the scrolls of Rev 5 and Rev 10 as only one identical scroll). They

might wish to understand definitely if the author opts for or against recapitulation, and they might feel that in some cases Bauckham seems to disregard microstructural studies. Nevertheless, this volume is very helpful and provides many fresh insights into the Book of Revelation, its major themes, and its theology.

The extensive bibliography is useful. Unfortunately, despite Bauckham's emphasis on OT sources, he omitted *Decoding Revelations's Trumpets*, in which J. Paulien develops a methodology for determining with high probability the OT sources in Revelation and the manner in which John uses them. Bauckham provides three indexes—one for the scriptural passages cited, another for ancient persons and places, and a third for modern authors. *The Climax of Prophecy* is worthy to be studied and owned by any serious student of the Apocalypse.

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EKKEHARDT MÜLLER

Ben-Tor, Amnon, ed. *The Archaeology of Ancient Israel*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992. xxi + 398 pp. \$45.00.

Edited by Amnon Ben-Tor of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, *The Archaeology of Ancient Israel* was initially published as a Hebrew-language textbook in 1991. Now translated into English, it represents the collaboration of seven Israeli scholars, each contributing a chapter encompassing their period of specialization.

In the introductory chapter, Amnon Ben-Tor provides a general overview of archaeology in the region, including a brief definition of archaeology, a background and history of the discipline as well as an overview of the geography and topography of Palestine. In his discussion of American and Israeli schools Ben-Tor provides a long list of archaeologists trained at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem along with their contributions in the field. The American school, however, is described all too briefly with references to only a few key individuals and sites. The impression is left that American contributions ended with the excavations at Gezer and Tell el-Hesi in the 1970s and 80s. No mention is made of current excavations at Ashkelon, Tel Miqne-Ekron, the Caesarea Project, the Sepphoris Excavations, and the Lahav Project, representing the five largest excavations in recent years conducted by the American school, some in partnership with Israeli institutions. The statement that American contributions were "formed mainly in the wake of renewed excavations" (7, see also 5) would, thus, have been tempered by a balanced account of recent activity. Furthermore, the recent British, German, and French contributions to the archaeology of Israel are neglected, with the exception of Kenyon (Jericho), de Vaux (Tell el-Far<sup>2</sup>ah North), and Perrot (Beersheba).

Ofer Bar-Yosef of Harvard University authors the chapter on the Neolithic period, approaching the subject with an overview of recent theories of explanation for the Neolithic revolution. The chapter by Rivka Gonen on