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Lalitha's "Re-reading household relationships Christologically: Ephesians, empire, egalitarianism" (book review)

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Book Reviews



Lalitha, J. (2017). *Re-reading household relationships Christologically: Ephesians, empire, egalitarianism*. New Delhi, India: Christian World Imprints. 183 pp. \$38.35. ISBN 9789351481898

The author is looking at the household relationship of husband and wife, specifically Ephesians 5:21–33. Lalitha's main premise is that the author (she gives both pros and cons for Paul being the author) has to be careful not to sound like a rebel since the Ephesians are an occupied people controlled by the Romans. This letter to the Ephesians says that the husband is the head of the household and wives must submit to their husbands which agrees with the Roman status-quo. There is a twist to this, the author also says the husband and wife are of one flesh, and like Christ loves the Church, the husband must love his wife. This view went against the Roman status-quo but the author may have felt this alternate view was subtle enough that it would not arouse the Romans (the colonizer). This was a dissertation so her views are muted by the research. She addresses numerous influences that she feels affected the author's writings including Greek, Roman, and Jewish cultures. She gives equal time to all arguments for and against what she is saying. She does talk extensively about whether the author leaned towards equalitarian power. She also touches on how it ultimately came down to how this idea of control was interpreted by the reader which could lead to spousal abuse. This is well written, she stays on point throughout the book. It does seem repetitious because of how thorough she is with the scholarly research. It does have a subtle feminist slant, and she does talk about the power of the conquer but this work is a good resource for dealing with these verses. It could be used by undergraduates but is more suited for graduates. The author is a professor of New Testament at the Tamilnadu Theological Seminary.

Reviewer

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