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Mackay's "John's Relationship with Mark: An Analysis of John 6 in the Light of Mark 6 and 8" - Book Review

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JOHN'S RELATIONSHIP WITH MARK: AN ANALYSIS OF JOHN 6 IN THE LIGHT OF MARK 6 AND 8.

In this detailed analysis of the relations between John 6 and Mark 6 and 8, Mackay builds a case for the Johannine evangelist’s familiarity with Mark. While the case for Johannine–Markan connections might more plausibly be argued as a factor of “interfluence” (rather than “influence”) in only one direction—the Markan toward the Johannine—between the oral stages of these traditions, Mackay nonetheless identifies echoes of Markan patterns within the Johannine narrative. As the closest contacts between John and Mark are still not identical, derivation, in my judgment, is not a plausible inference. Still, Mackay shows how Johannine familiarity with at least some of the Markan text is arguable. Mackay thus speculates that the Johannine evangelist may have heard the Gospel of Mark read in a meeting for worship, and this seems realistic. Of the many works on Johannine–Synoptic relationships in recent decades, this is one of the few that has changed my mind on the subject. While it does not overturn Gardner-Smith’s and M. Smith’s convictions regarding John’s autonomous origin, it suggests that John’s autonomy is unlikely to have been an isolated one. Rather, if the Johannine evangelist was familiar with much of Mark’s rendering, the Johannine differences may be even more interesting than the similarities. Might they suggest John’s completing, or even correcting Mark?

Paul N. Anderson
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APOSTOLIC LETTERS OF FAITH, HOPE, AND LOVE: GALATIANS, 1 PETER, AND 1 JOHN.

Metzger begins by repeating the well-known distinction of A. Deissmann between letter and epistle in the ancient world. The former was private, confidential, personal in nature. The latter was sophisticated, intended to be public, more literary in character. The writings of Paul were letters, written for practical purposes to communities or individuals. Other NT writings resembled epistles in their form or intention. In any case, the distinction should not be pressed; mixed forms were the norm, not the exception. For Metzger, Galatians is the letter of faith whose author is especially revered by Protestants; 1 Peter, the letter of hope, whose purported author is revered by Catholics; 1 John, the letter of love, revered especially by the Orthodox—a clever way of putting the matter, oversimplified though it may be. In fine, this short, simple, and unpretentious presentation for the nonspecialist from an illustrious scholar offers in easily understood terms a wealth of information about the NT letters/epistles, their formation, and their meaning.

Casimir Bernas
Holy Trinity Abbey

JOHANNINE DISCIPLESHIP AS A COVENANT RELATIONSHIP.

Contributing to the conversation on the social location of the Johannine community and its anti-Jewish rhetoric, Chennattu argues that the Gospel of John uses OT covenantal language (e.g., Josh 24) to shape its concept of discipleship. She argues that the covenantal language introduced in the call narrative (John 1) is affirmed in the farewell discourse and actualized in the resurrection narratives. Chennattu then applies the sociological models of deviance and conflict to question the role of this motif for the Johannine community. As the Jews turned to the covenant to distinguish themselves from others, especially in terms of their god, Christians, too, turned to a redefined covenant to distinguish themselves from the Jews. While a preview of OT covenantal motifs would have been more helpful earlier in the book, this doctoral dissertation is well-researched and would be a useful addition to graduate school libraries.

Jane S. Webster
Barton College


On Sabou’s highly metaphorical reading of Rom 6:1-11, Christ “died to sin” (6:2, 6) in that his cross overcame sin’s control of humanity. The believer’s “baptism” in 6:3 is a metaphor for being “overwhelmed” by God, moved “toward” Christ’s act of liberation. As a representative king (Christ/Messiah), Jesus then shares this victory with those “buried with” him, i.e., his broad “family” (6:4). Hence Paul offers hope of a new mode of life beyond sin’s domination. The “old man” of 6:6, however, is the self living within the Adam-condition of 5:12-21. By saying that this self has been “crucified,” Paul reminds the audience of the horror awaiting those ruled by sin, warning them not to return to that lifestyle. In several places Sabou offers fresh readings of Paul’s language. At times, though, his argument is ambiguous; what, for example, does it mean for the believer to “coalesce” with the depiction of the cross in Christian preaching (6:5)? Sabou’s use of metaphor theory is sometimes thin, and little attention is given to metaphorical polysemy. Still, Sabou’s volume is a stimulating resource for advanced students and scholars examining Romans 6.

Ian W. Scott
Tyndale Seminary (Toronto)

THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH IN PAUL’S LETTER TO THE PHILIPPIANS IN THE CONTEXT OF ANCIENT JUDAISM.
By J. Patrick Ware. Supplements to Novum Testamentum, 120. Leiden, The Netherlands, and