

Paulien, Jon. *Decoding Revelation's Trumpets: Literary Allusions and Interpretations of Revelation 8:7-12*. Andrews University Seminary Doctoral Dissertation Series, vol. 11. Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1988. xii + 497 pp. Paperback, \$14.95.

The increasing scholarly attention directed toward Revelation during the eighties has sparked a welcome reopening of debates which earlier appeared to be either settled or incapable of being settled.

One of these concerned the literary sources and genre of the NT book of Revelation. Did it share greater affinity with the OT, or with later Jewish apocalyptic? In common with most other studies published on some aspect of this topic during the last decade, Jon Paulien comes down clearly in support of the former.

In his wide-ranging work, Paulien sets out to advance our understanding of Revelation in two areas: the seer's use of the OT and an exegetical method for Revelation that incorporates findings regarding its complex and unique literary relationship to the OT.

Anyone attempting to map the seer's dependence on and use of the OT is tempted to abandon the exercise in frustration when faced with the complex intermingling of allusions from different parts of the OT. To the credit of Paulien, he did not abandon the exercise but with help from literary criticism forged a set of useful guidelines. His chief contribution is the distinction between direct allusions, made deliberately by the seer, and echoes, which were stock concepts of the time taken up by the seer without a link to a specific OT passage.

The key to exegesis of Revelation for Paulien lies in identifying direct allusions to the OT, then interpreting their essential messages or symbols into the seer's passage. Is he successful? It is evident that his method shows greater refinement than that of Frederick Mazzaferri's *The Genre of the Book of Revelation from a Source-Critical Perspective* (Berlin/New York, 1989). While the latter's treatment is content with the work of W. K. Hedrick in distinguishing the seer's OT allusions from echoes, Paulien clearly prefers the work of G. K. Beale, particularly his published dissertation (not even listed in Mazzaferri's bibliography), which calls for a judgment on the exegete's part concerning the seer's degree of intention when he alludes to the OT. Paulien's method will yield superior results, but the subjective element of the exegete's judgment and the subtlety of the seer's allusions will continue to prevent scholars from reaching full agreement on the OT sources and the degree of importance of certain allusions.

In the second part of his dissertation, Paulien attempts to construct a method of exegesis for Revelation that builds on the gains achieved in the first part. Here his goal is to develop a comprehensive exegetical method that will enable one to understand the author's intention behind the sometimes bizarre language. In fact, on p. 156 Paulien claims that this is "the

main purpose for this dissertation," a claim he later contradicts in his conclusion (p. 431), where "the main strength" of the work is its proposed method for evaluating OT allusions.

What are Paulien's basic premises? First, that "the Apocalypse is a Christian reinterpretation of the Old Testament in the light of the events surrounding the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ" (pp. 49-50) and, second, that "the task of determining where the author alluded to the Old Testament is crucial to the exegesis of the Apocalypse" (pp. 168-169). Paulien has taken over the former premise from the hermeneutic of Hans K. LaRondelle, particularly as presented in *The Israel of God in Prophecy* (Berrien Springs, MI, 1983).

Paulien combines his premises to produce an approach to exegesis that brings striking results that are rich in reinterpreted OT atmosphere. Themes and events such as theophany, the creation, the fall, the plagues in Egypt, the exodus, the exile, enthronement, divine judgment, holy war, and the destruction of cities and nations are summoned to appear before the reader by the seer's OT allusions, and to yield new meaning when applied to Christ and his church. Theophany becomes christophany; plagues become opposition to earliest Christians; the Day of Yahweh becomes the parousia.

Is Paulien's treatment convincing? Initial application of the method contributes richly to atmosphere and environment, but when pressed on specific features of Revelation, the OT as a record of salvation history becomes reduced nearly to an allegory from which the seer draws spiritual lessons about God's attitude toward the church and the unbelieving world. "The author of Revelation is able to contemporize experiences in the entire Old Testament in order to make them relevant for situations faced by his audience" (p. 349).

Paulien seeks to counter this weakness by suggesting that the messages of the seven trumpets of Revelation cover a time span from the seer's own day to the parousia and, further, that this time span can be divided into time periods based on OT historical realities and time periods. In order to do this, Paulien allows for "genuine prophecy of future events" (p. 361). This second part of Paulien's dissertation remains problematic and unconvincing in places, partly because it attempts too much in the space allowed. But even here there is good, sound work which further argument and documentation could salvage.

The most obvious weakness of this work is its over-ambitious attack on two large scholarly fields—the OT sources of Revelation and the method of exegesis for Revelation. Both attacks are strong, but the latter could have been stronger had it received more time and space. These could have been provided by eliminating most or all of the customary "Survey of Issues" introductory chapter that is so necessary for a dissertation but so unsatisfactory for a published monograph. Here Paulien was most vulnerable, especially when discussing the text tradition used by John. This is revealed

in part by the primary authorities he has cited or failed to cite. These ninety pages could have been put to better service in the exegesis section.

The work is largely free of mechanical and technical shortcomings. The author is to be admired for his bold attempted solutions to two of the complex issues confronting students of the book of Revelation.

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Vardaman, Jerry, and Yamauchi, Edwin M., eds. *Chronos, Kairos, Christos: Nativity and Chronological Studies Presented to Jack Finegan*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1989. xxiv + 240 pp. \$25.00.

Jack Finegan is known for his many works which attempt to place the biblical events of both the OT and NT in their historical contexts. *Chronos, Kairos, Christos* is a Festschrift presented to Finegan in honor of his eightieth birthday in 1988. Most of the studies in this volume were originally presented at a conference on the nativity in 1985 over which Finegan presided.

As mentioned, most of the volume is taken up with studies on the nativity. B. van Elderen analyzes the structure of Matthew 1; E. Yamauchi discusses the nature of the Magi in Matthew; and the articles by K. Ferrari-D'Occhieppo, J. Vardaman, E. L. Martin, D. Johnson, H. W. Hoehner, and P. L. Maier take up astronomical and historical data often used to date the nativity as well as other events in the life of Jesus. N. Kokkinos, C. J. Humphreys, and W. G. Waddington concentrate on the date of the crucifixion; while R. Beckwith wraps up this section with a critique of some of the methods used in these discussions on chronology. Finally, S. Dockx and D. Moody conclude the volume with discussions on the chronology of Paul's ministry.

Evidently the nativity conference produced little harmony of opinion, for the chronological studies are strewn to the four winds. At one extreme, Vardaman places Jesus' birth in 15 B.C. and his death in A.D. 21. In a variation on the early birth date, Kokkinos places his death in A.D. 36, claiming that Jesus must have been 46 years old in A.D. 34—his date for John 2. For Kokkinos John 2:20 and Irenaeus are more important than Luke 3:23 as chronological indicators. Vardaman and Kokkinos depend on micro-letters on coins, an area of numismatics which is still rather problematic. Martin attempts to place Herod's death in 1 B.C. rather than 4 B.C., a position roundly criticized by Johnson.

In astronomy the difficulties continue. Ferrari-D'Occhieppo dates the nativity to September of 7 B.C., based on the conjunction of Jupiter and