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F. F. Bruce's work, first published by Paternoster Press and now recently by Wm. B. Eerdmans, is a compilation of lectures which, though first delivered in 1968 at Fuller Theological Seminary, remain of marked contemporary value. Bruce's declared purpose in these lectures (and, by extension, this volume) is "to take a few [of the chief] themes, images, and motifs which are used as vehicles of revelation in the Old Testament and consider how the New Testament writers continue to use them to set forth the perfected revelation in Christ." (21). Among the examinations of prominent themes, images, and motifs through which Bruce organizes and articulates his presentations are studies in the rule of God, the salvation of God, the victory of God, the people of God, the Son of God, the servant Messiah, and the shepherd king—all of which forms a chapter in the collection dedicated to the exposition of an Old Testament exegesis that "consider[s] each instance of Old Testament quotation, allusion or application in its immediate New Testament context" (18).

Bruce's chapter on "The Rule of God" reviews the figure and role of the king in the Old Testament and brings the appraisals of critics thereof bear on how Old Testament readings of the covenanting kingship that is offered by the New Testament. Bruce devotes special emphasis to "[t]he development of the companion concepts of the kingdom of God and the Son of Man in the interval between Daniel and the Gospels" (26) and pointedly observes Jesus' frequent application of the designator, Son of Man—so extensively employed in Old Testament prophecy by the prophet Daniel—to himself. But Bruce also suggests that Jesus' understanding of the Son of Man is one that is shaped not by Daniel alone. Rather, Bruce contends Jesus' conviction that the Son of Man is one who first must suffer before inaugurating his kingdom is a conviction derived from Jesus' parallel association of his mission with that of the suffering Servant in the Servant Songs of Isaiah. Indeed, Bruce declares that Jesus' self-understanding should be evident to us, "not so much [as] a [consequence] of direct quotation [or] of verbal echoes [in] the Servant Songs ... [but due] more to the fact that His conception of his life-mission, crowned by suffering and death, is anticipated more clearly in those passages than in any others in the Old Testament" (30).

In "The Salvation of God," Bruce points out that not only is the exodus motif from the Old Testament pervasive in the New, but so is the phraseology associated with that redemptive event. In this section, Bruce also emphasizes that Paul's first letter to the Church at Corinth unambiguously articulates that the value for Christians in hearing the revelation of the Old Testament is that we might be spared the chastisement of God that Israel knew of, for "these things happened to them [Israel...but they were written down for our instruction" (10:11; emphasis added). Such reminders, Bruce tells us, are especially valuable to those Old Testament readers who otherwise might be inclined to dismiss the merit of Old Testament proclamation, for both the Old and New Testaments disclose "one continuous history of salvation and the same God who is active throughout its course" (37).

"The Victory of God" recounts Scripture's attestation that Yahweh's victories in Old Testament accounts are always victories of grace—and salvation. Indeed, by the time of Isaiah, Yahweh is being referred to as his people's "kinsman-redeemer" (48). Underlining this salveptic power of Yahweh, once again, is Scripture's appeal to the event of the exodus. As Bruce declares, "The crossing of the Sea of Reeds was their [Israel's] salvation because it was Yahweh's victory—not only over Pharaoh but also over all the gods of Egypt . . ." (42). Yahweh's mastery of such adversaries, Bruce continues, is frequently depicted in Old Testament accounts by his ability to control the seas, e.g., at creation, at the Red Sea, etc.; indeed, many metaphors of Yahweh's power derive their potency from Yahweh's ability to command the sea and its creatures, for to Israel and the early Church, dominion over the waters was dominion over chaos. Yahweh restrains them at creation and separates them at the exodus; and, to mark his victory over them, abolishes them in the Apocalypse. As Bruce writes, "When John sees the first heaven and the first earth pass away to be replaced by a new heaven and a new earth, he adds with emphasis, "and the sea was no more"" (50). But Yahweh's definitive revelation, of course, is achieved in the events of Jesus' death and resurrection at Passover, for by these events, the people of faith again could see that God of Israel had once again, in events linked to the great exodus, "visited and redeemed his people" (Luke 1:68).

Our relationship as the Church to Abraham, and heirs, therefore, of the promise first offered to Abraham, is the theme of "The People of God." But the covenant, Bruce argues, having been fulfilled in Christ's perfect obedience, ought perhaps more properly be designated a testament—"a word which he contends receives the play of "double meaning" with the word "covenant," especially in Hebrews 9:15-17 (56). The New Testament assembly, therefore, is both fulfillment and bearer of the Old Testament testament of God. Its mission is to continue the commission conferred on Abraham: Israel was not chosen that other nations might be consigned to perdition, but that through Israel's election they might all enjoy God's blessing. So when God called Abraham, the first subject of divine election in the New Testament, He promised not only to bless him but to make him a blessing to others. (61)

"The Son of David" defines the character of David as a type of Christ, for as Christ emblemized in himself the persons of prophet, priest and king, so, too, did David. He was, as Bruce observes, "one of the few figures in Israel's history in whom the offices of prophet, priest, and king concurred" (72). In turn, the Davidic Son, after many prophecies announcing the imminence of his arrival, appears in Jesus of Nazareth, whose human descent in David's line is affirmed by all of the Gospels (except Mark) and by Paul (although the accounts in Matthew and Luke trace his genealogy by divergent paths) (78). The fulfillment of the Davidic oracles suggested to many within and without Israel who heard the Good News that "just as the promise to build a house for David was fully realized not in Solomon but in Christ, so the prediction that David's son would build a house for God was not consummated in Solomon's temple but in the temple of Christ's body . . ." (79).

If Yahweh's way of deliverance through Cyrus had been by military conquest and armed might, that path of deliverance is reversed in Jesus. The limitations inherent in the kind of triumph accomplished through men like Cyrus, and the endurance and enormity of the kind of triumph accomplished by Jesus in the pattern of the Suffering Servant are the focus of Bruce's chapter on "The Servant Messiah." Bruce identifies Old Testament readings of the Servant's mission and the several assumptions prevalent in Israel with respect to the Old Testament readings of the Servant's identity. According to Bruce, Jesus' consolidation of many of these interpretive traditions unified "the originally intended identification of the Son of Man with the Servant" (98). The tradition of the Messiah as conqueror in the Old Testament Scripture is therefore not so much overthrown as invested with more-than-immediate, transcendent significance by its incorporation through Christ into a pattern of conquests attained not by violence but by reverent submission to the divine will.

Bruce's book of lectures concludes with "The Shepherd King"—a study which, to some degree, extends the theme of the divine king's responsibility and authority. Bruce concludes, having noted that a shepherding role for an ideal king was not unique to Israel. But Israel's shepherd had always been Yahweh himself, Moses, David, and others committed to the care of Israel had always been subordinate to Yahweh's guidance (101). Jesus, however, in looking at New Testament application of the shepherd-king iconography, embodies Yahweh's rule and takes on the characteristic of the "smitten shepherd" who guides an often indifferent or faithless flock. Indeed, as Bruce points out, Jesus' execution emphasizes not only his
place as one who leads and suffers for a flock; it underscores his identity as one who becomes one of that flock in the experience of this suffering (113).

Bruce’s work guides us through the complexities of messianic prophecy by its careful thematic organization of a seven-part thesis that asserts no proposition without a referent in Scripture. The book serves not only as a condensed and valuable guide to the enormity of Old Testament proclamation about the Messiah as that prophetic tradition is interpreted by the New, but it systematically orders that tradition within conceptual frameworks that facilitate ease of understanding and application; accounts which might seem disparate or fragmented are unified in discussions that sweep the breadth of all Old Testament messianic proclamation and consolidate that proclamation in areas that make for more ready discernment of Old Testament tradition, society, culture, and—most importantly—hermeneutical convictions and approaches with respect to Scripture’s messianic content. The book, furthermore, could be a cherished homiletical and/or pedagogical aid, for its reliance on authoritative and insightful exegetical commentary to confirm and expand insight offers the reader avenues for exploration and continuing study that the presentation of bare, unsupported opinion could not provide or perhaps even inspire.

Contributors

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Robert York is a senior who remains convinced that Jack Kerouac is not as sexist as he reads.

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