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BOOK REVIEW

Darrell L. Bock. *A Theology of Luke and Acts*. Biblical Theology of the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012. 495 pp. Hbk. ISBN 9780310270898.

Bock has released another monumental work for Lucan studies, *A Theology of Luke and Acts*, as part of the Biblical Theology of the New Testament series of which Andreas J. Köstenberger is general editor. According to the five requirements of the series— (1) a survey of recent scholarship and of the state of research, (2) a treatment of the relevant introductory issues, (3) a thematic commentary following the narrative flow of the document(s), (4) a treatment of important individual themes, and (5) discussions of the relationship between a particular writing and the rest of the New Testament and the Bible—Bock carefully examines the major interrelated themes of the two volumes of Luke, and confidently illustrates Lucan theology from his over thirty year experience of studying the text.

The book is composed of three parts basically following the structure of the series. In Part One (the first four chapters), the author succinctly overviews introductory matters concerning the volumes; he provides enough discussion to buttress his preliminary arguments regarding Luke's theological-thematic emphases for the next section. Most of Bock's critical assumptions here correspond to those of his previous works such as his two-volume commentary on the Gospel of Luke (BECNT, 1994, 1996), a single volume on the Acts of the Apostles (2007), and *Jesus according to Scripture* (2002). In particular, as a result of inevitable repetition, the outline of Luke-Acts completely follows that of his commentaries. In Part Two (chs 5 to 21), which is the most pivotal, the author thematically presents the main

issues of Lucan theology, closely investigating seventeen major themes of Luke-Acts. In Part Three, he successfully accomplishes the goal of the series by showing how Lucan theology bears witness to the themes of the rest of the canon as a whole. In this regard, Bock prefers to use Luke and Acts separately rather than to treat the two volumes as a unit. The work provides excellent thematic arguments through which the readers can fully grasp various elements of Luke's overarching themes.

While dealing with a plethora of contextual and theological issues, Bock determines to write not from the perspective of the readers but from that of the evangelist Luke who has planned and created the literary and theological unity of his volume by means of his "intentional design" (p. 57). This is a quite significant attitude for Bock to take in examining the theological unity of Luke-Acts and coherence with the other parts of the canon. In many cases, Bock gives great insights, taking a close look at themes from both the diachronic and the synchronic perspectives. For instance, in chapter 11, he delineates various dimensions of salvation from the Old Testament, carefully brings out critical issues, and tries to synthesize all of them in terms of God's grace and mercy embodied through Jesus. The section that most caught my attention is chapter 21, which addresses Luke's use of the Scriptures. This is because the chapter covers a broad range of recent scholarship on this issue and defines the dynamic functions of the Scriptures in order to help the reader.

This work certainly contains numerous insights. There are, however, a few weaknesses that need to be discussed. First, the author designates 330 of around 430 pages to concentrate on the major themes of Luke-Acts. This is not a problem. It is problematic, however, that he directly jumps into the first theme without giving the reader any notion of his methodology for thematic classification and arrangement. Many significant questions need to be asked about Bock's presuppositions regarding Luke's major themes. For instance, how does Bock choose such themes and according to which criteria? Why are these particular themes regarded as the major ones? Did Luke consciously write his two volumes in light of the themes that Bock proposes? Or are they the product of Bock's own perspective, which could be

different from Luke's? Do they all share the same rank of thematic priority in Luke, or are there hierarchical relationships among the themes? I feel that necessary information is missing in the beginning of Part Two.

Readers may easily find a theological flow to the major themes that Bock proposes, as they carefully proceed through seventeen themes in a row: God (5 and 6), Jesus (7 and 8), the Holy Spirit (9), salvation (6, 10, 11), Israel (12), the Gentiles (13), the church (14), the disciples (15), the crowds (16: negative and 17: positive), the Law (18), ecclesiology (19), eschatology (20), and the Scriptures (21). This order seems to reflect that which is common in well-developed Christian dogma: God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, salvation, the church, Christian life, and eschatology. It is likely that the author attempts to classify these themes in too much detail, however. Some themes such as Israel, the Law, and the Scriptures could be combined under a broader theme. Of course, above I mentioned chapter 11 in which he tries to synthesize dimensions of various themes to constitute a new particular theme. Notwithstanding this effort, I cannot get free of the idea that although Bock proficiently weaves together a number of threads to make a beautiful cloth, it may not have been the cloth that Luke wove.

In thematic discussions Bock is apt to rely strongly on his BECNT commentaries on Luke. For instance, in section 5.2, Bock brings in a paragraph from his commentary (*Luke 1:1—9:50*, 285) without any adaptation for the new context. It is not a problem that he reuses his ideas without footnoting and paraphrasing. When he is dealing with particular verses, this tendency frequently occurs (i.e., pp. 248–50 comes from *Luke 9:51—24:53*, 1082–83). I understand that since this work is intended neither as a totally different study of Luke-Acts from his previous work, nor to emphasize a single unified theme of Luke-Acts, Bock is inevitably involved in some repetition. Perhaps, however, it would be better if he offered more fully developed remarks that reflected his further study since he wrote the commentaries.

In spite of these concerns, I sincerely recommend this useful volume as a critical resource for studying and teaching the

theology of Luke's two-volume work with the confidence that it will effectively provide a comprehensive thematic picture of the Triune God: God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. Bock's excellent micro-examinations of various themes definitely help the reader grasp the macro-themes of Luke-Acts. Suggested bibliographies in individual chapters not only reflect consideration of the scope of recent Lucan studies, but also offer good guidance to those who want to study in more detail for themselves.

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