

[MJTM 24 (2022–2023)]

BOOK REVIEW

David S. Schrock. *The Royal Priesthood and the Glory of God*. Short Studies in Biblical Theology. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2022. 174 pp. Pbk. ISBN 9781433564314. \$17.99.

In this book, David Schrock explores the idea of priesthood in the Old and New Testaments of Christian Scriptures by focusing on the correlation between priesthood and the glory of God. This is a part of the Short Studies in Biblical Theology series and discusses how the theme of priesthood is addressed within Christian Scriptures. The purpose of the book is to examine the concept of priesthood that is fully fulfilled in the glory of God's Son, the great high priest (17). To conduct this study, Schrock organizes the book into six chapters. The first four chapters are dedicated to exploring the concept of priesthood in the Old Testament: Genesis, the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. The final two chapters treat the theme of priesthood in the New Testament, covering the Gospels, and Acts through Revelation.

In chapter 1, Schrock focuses on the origin of priesthood. He compares the Garden of Eden to a sanctuary; Adam is portrayed as the person assigned the priestly duty, and the Garden of Eden is considered a sanctuary, with the top of the mountain of God being the Holy of Holies (25). Adam receives the command to tend and care for the Garden of Eden, and later, the descendants of Adam, the Levites, receive the command from God to care for and guard the holy place (26). These aspects related to priesthood in Eden evolve as the concept expands through the patriarchal age (28–29). In the patriarchal age, Adam's descendants sanctify a place, build an altar, offer sacrifices, and take on the role of intercessors, invoking God's name and bestowing blessings (29). To be specific, the origin of the priesthood is traced back to patriarchs such as Noah, Abraham, and Melchizedek.

They built altars in their respective places of life, offering sacrifices and seeking blessings or making offerings there.

Schrock attempts to understand the concept of priesthood with the idea of the first man, Adam, and the last Adam, Jesus, as mentioned in 1 Cor 15:45–47. The premise of this interpretation is that the concept of priesthood, which the first man Adam did not fully achieve, is perfectly fulfilled by the last Adam, Jesus. To accept this interpretation, one must believe that Jesus accomplished the concept of priesthood as the true mediator. In religions that do not consider Jesus as a mediator and instead rely on the Old Testament texts as their Scriptures, adopting such an interpretation and argument may not seem reasonable.

In chapter 2, the author traces the concept of priesthood in the Law. In Exod 19:6, an important concept emerges where Israel is declared to be a kingdom of priests. Schrock refers to this passage as related to the priesthood within Israel (40). Additionally, he interprets the firstborn as priestly assistants in connection with the Passover (40–42) because, like Jesus, the firstborn was consecrated as a sacrificial offering. Furthermore, Schrock mentions content in the Law related to priesthood (e.g., Aaron's descendants becoming priests [42]; Moses performing the role of a priest [42–43]; Israel's firstborn representing the Levites [43–44]; and the priests receiving instructions for God's house [44–46]). In the end, the author asserts that all the passages related to priesthood mentioned in this second chapter collectively serve as a foreshadowing of Christ, who will fulfill the role of the great high priest (54–55).

In the second chapter, the author clearly traces the priesthood formed within the Israelite community. Given that this book is one in the Short Studies series, it is understandable that the author could not delve more deeply into each passage. Biblical theology focuses on interpreting each Scripture to illuminate its meaning, and in this regard, the limited space in the book leaves much to be desired. Furthermore, the author briefly mentions a connection between Christ and the priesthood within the Law. It would have strengthened the author's central argument even further if he had explained, particularly in the sociological and historical context of ancient Israel, how Christ fulfilled this priest-

hood and in what ways the priesthood in the Law was imperfect.

Chapter 3 discusses the priesthood in the Prophets. Here, the concept of the Levitical priesthood emerges, coinciding with the establishment of the nation of Israel and the formation of the concept of tribes as they grew into a larger nation. Subsequently, the concept of priesthood expanded nationwide, leading to groups among the priests. Among them, the Levitical priesthood refers to individuals within the traditional tribe of Levi who were officially appointed as priests and their duties. Particularly in the Prophets, frequent mentions of a corrupt leadership class shift the focus to the narrative explaining how the Levitical priesthood failed in faithfully executing their duties. Ultimately, this failure leads to the promise of restoration of failed priesthood (69–74). The author elaborates on this promise by examining representative Messianic prophecies in Isa 56–66, Jer 33:14–26, and Ezek 36.

One remarkable aspect of the third chapter is that it did not explicitly extract Christ from Old Testament passages. This can be seen as Schrock's effort to read the Old Testament within the historical context of the time. However, in the end, even in the conclusion of this chapter, he turns his focus to the New Testament, mentioning Christ and finding the fulfillment of the promise of restoring the priesthood promised in the Prophets in Jesus Christ.

Chapter 4 analyzes the concept of priesthood, specifically delving into the relationship between kings and priests revealed in Chronicles. Schrock addresses the theme of priesthood in the Writings, specifically dealing with the situation of the post-exilic community in books such as Ezra and Nehemiah. Furthermore, the discussion extends to how the concept of priesthood is revealed in the Psalms and discussed in the book of Daniel, concerning the post-exilic community. In the end, the concept of priesthood within the Old Testament is intricate and nuanced, existing within the framework of God's Law as an institution that held the hope for the restoration of the future royal priest from the perspective of the ancient Israelite people (89).

In chapter 4, the author fails to address how the idea of royal priesthood was understood by the contemporary community

when discussing the post-exilic community within the Writings, particularly Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah. This failure is significant because, before the Babylonian exile, the roles of priesthood and kingship were distinct. However, following the return from Babylonian exile, priests began to take on not only their traditional roles but also assumed responsibilities in governance that were once exclusive to kings. If this aspect had been explored, it could have enriched the discussion on the view of priesthood within the Writings, particularly by providing a more detailed analysis of the post-exilic period in Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah.

The last two chapters (chapters 5–6) trace the view of priesthood in the New Testament; in the Gospels (chapter 5) and from the Book of Acts to the Revelation (chapter 6). Both chapters directly explore Jesus, who fulfilled the concept of priesthood that existed in the history of the ancient Israelites. According to Schrock, Jesus acts as a priest in the Gospels (97–101). Additionally, Jesus exhibits the essence of a royal priest (101–5). Moreover, Jesus embodies the form of a priestly king (105). If the Gospels records serve as direct testimonies to the accomplishment of Jesus' priesthood, the accounts following Acts can be seen as witnesses' explanations. Especially, the letters of the Apostle Paul, Hebrews, and explanations in Revelation serve as testimonies to the fully accomplished priesthood role of Jesus.

David Schrock's main argument is that the institution of priesthood, accomplished through the Son of God as the great high priest, was established within the sociological, religious, and cultural contexts of ancient Israel (20–22). The priesthood system, partially revealing the glory of God throughout their history, is now fully manifested in the glory of God through the office of great high priest held by Jesus Christ (22–23). As evident from his central argument, David Schrock endeavoured to read the entire Christian Bible under one theme coherently. His efforts contributes to providing a Christian perspective on how to understand the Bible. However, on the other hand, there is a sense of regret that he did not delve deeply into the meaning of priesthood within the history of ancient Israel and its influence on the community, excluding the New Testament, which is a part

of the Christian Scriptures. My concern revolves around whether the texts in the Old Testament, where the origin of priesthood emerges, are acknowledged as their Scriptures in Islam and Judaism. Furthermore, it raises the question of whether adherents of Islam or Judaism also agree with David Schrock's concept of priesthood.

Overall, David Schrock's books is helpful and insightful to Christian readers in terms of providing an interpretative direction on how to read Christian scriptures. In the limited space available, he made every effort to derive the theme of priesthood. If there had been a more detailed exploration of the meaning of the concept of priesthood in the history of ancient Israel, where the concept originated and developed, within the contemporary historical, sociological, and cultural anthropological contexts, his research could have been more compelling for readers.

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