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Isaiah's Christ in Matthew's Gospel

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The Journal of Religion

BEATON, RICHARD. *Isaiah's Christ in Matthew's Gospel*. Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series, no. 123. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002. xv+242 pp. \$60.00 (cloth).

Citation from what is regarded as sacred text creates a rich texture of woven meanings old and new. When the text in which the citation is embedded has itself come to be regarded as a sacred text, the interpretation of their intertextuality becomes highly complex. So it is only natural that the use of the Old Testament in the Gospel of Matthew has long been a subject of keen interest in New Testament scholarship. In this published version of his Cambridge doctoral dissertation, Richard Beaton deals with Matthew's use (in Matt. 12:18–21) of one of Isaiah's four servant songs (Isa. 42:1–4), focusing on its contribution to his christology. Using primarily source criticism and redaction-compositional criticism, Beaton aims at identifying the base text that Matthew must have used. He also interprets the final form of the citation in terms of what he judges to be Matthew's redactional modifications and the cited passage's connection to the larger contexts, both literary and theological, in the gospel.

For the main body of the book, Beaton discusses Jewish exegetical practices in Second Temple Judaism and rightly argues that the Hebrew Bible texts during that time were characterized by fluidity and variety and that exegetical concerns were already incorporated into various text traditions. He then tries to demonstrate that during the time of Matthew there was a common expectation of the eschatological messianic figure in Judaism and that Isa. 42:1–4 had already been interpreted messianically by a number of Jewish texts, including 1 QIsa, 1 Enoch, Psalms of Solomon, and possibly the Targums. This would put Matthew's interpretation of this passage in a continuum with these Jewish exegetical traditions. Beaton then provides a text analysis of Matt. 12:18–21 in comparison with Isa. 42:1–4 in various versions of the LXX, the Masoretic text, and the Targumic translation to identify the text form that Matthew would have used. The painstakingly detailed analysis, which is done with very solid and thorough research, yielded a somewhat expected conclusion: it is not possible to make a definitive judgment on the text form for Matthew. This conclusion, sound as it is, poses a methodological problem for this study, because it renders Matthew's own contributions to the text impossible to isolate, thus making Beaton's conclusions on Matthew's redactions exactly what Beaton calls them—tentative.

In his exegesis on the meaning of *κρίσις* in Matt. 12:18b and 20, Beaton argues for "justice" rather than "judgment" and makes it a pivotal point to develop a christology that has a strong ethical dimension. Related to this notion of just society that Christ advocates, there is the issue of Matthew's anti-Pharisaic rhetoric, especially in Matt. 11–13, which is the immediate context of the citation. Beaton's reading of Matthew's criticism of the Pharisees leads him to believe that Christ's vision for a just society in this Isaiah citation is set over against the unjust society under the Pharisaic leadership. The embarrassingly harsh anti-Pharisaism of Matthew is undeniable. However, considering that the Matthean Jesus' conflict with the Pharisees reflects the historical realities of the late first century rather than the time of the historical Jesus and that it was the priestly aristocrats and the Herodian collaborators who were the real oppressors of people during the time of Jesus, one wonders if Beaton takes the anti-Pharisaism of Matthew too seriously in arguing that Matthew presents the Pharisees as having used their halakah to mistreat the people of God (p. 172).

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On the other hand, the positive side of this inquiry into the relation of the text to its context is the recognition that the image of Christ both as the meek and humble servant and as a severe critic of injustice advocating for the universal just rule of God are equally highlighted in this citation from Isaiah.

What this book successfully confirms is that Matthew's use of the Old Testament is highly complex at both the narrative and the theological levels. It proves that Matthew is a sophisticated writer who knows how to evoke a set of shared theological themes by citing a passage from the Scriptures and using it to substantiate his own theology, albeit by making subtle but significant modifications of the cited text. Unfortunately, there is a tendency in this book to regard Matthew's criticism against the Pharisees as anti-Jewish, with the result that the entire Jewish leadership is judged as unjust (e.g., p. 171). Beaton also risks exaggerating the "messianic" interpretation of Isa. 42:1–4 in the Jewish literature before early Christianity. Nevertheless, this is a thoroughly researched monograph on an important passage in Matthew, and as such it is a welcome contribution to the Matthean scholarship.

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GATHERCOLE, SIMON J. *Where Is Boasting? Early Jewish Soteriology and Paul's Response in Romans 1–5*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 2002. xii+311 pp. \$32.00 (paper).

Originally a dissertation written under J. D. G. Dunn, this book is remarkable both for the independence that its author, Simon J. Gathercole, shows and for the inspiration that Dunn gave to a student writing against him. *Where Is Boasting?* is a genuine advance in the conversation on Paul's view of the Torah because it changes the protocol or methodology that E. P. Sanders used to read Paul. First, Gathercole corrects Sanders's disregard for the eschatological vindication described in Jewish texts. Second, Gathercole includes both Diaspora and Palestinian texts in his analysis, broadening the evidence from Sanders's focus on "Palestinian" texts. Third, Gathercole refuses to be locked into the false dichotomy of deciding for either Jewish confidence in works or Jewish confidence in gracious election. These methodological changes lead Gathercole to accept the New Perspective's proof of Jewish confidence in divine election while at the same time insisting—against Sanders, Dunn, and Wright—that "obedience as a condition of and basis for final vindication and salvation at the *eschaton* is fundamental to Jewish thought" (p. 13).

Gathercole finds this role for obedience in Jewish literature across a wide spectrum of genres and time in part 1 of the book, the first five chapters. Thus, he looks to apocryphal and pseudepigraphical books dated from before 70 C.E. (chap. 1); Qumran literature (chap. 2); the New Testament (chap. 3, in which Gathercole identifies the "common ground" between first-century Christianity and Judaism: "Both share an elective grace and also assign a determinative role to works at final judgment" [p. 135]); and works from after 70 C.E., including 4 Ezra, 2 Baruch, Josephus, rabbinic literature, and Targums (chap. 4). Chapter 5 presents specific texts that show Jews as boasting in works at the final judgment and offers an understanding of boasting different both from how it has traditionally been understood and from the New Perspective. Here Gathercole admits that Sanders is right to say that Jews were not anxious over their final salvation as if they perceived it to be based on merit outweigh-