

REVIEW: SCHREINER, THOMAS R. *THE KING IN HIS BEAUTY: A BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS*. GRAND RAPIDS: BAKER ACADEMIC, 2013.

Schreiner states in the first sentence of the prologue to his book “The King in His Beauty” that “no one theme adequately captures the message of the Scriptures.” One of the major themes however, must be the kingdom of God which Schreiner defines as God’s rule. In this book he traces God as King through the historical books of the Old Testament, the Wisdom literature, the Major prophets, touches briefly on the Minor prophets, the Gospels and Acts, the theology of Paul and selected books of the New Testament concluding with the book of Revelation. Schreiner is no mere narrator. Much more than simply describing what occurred, he writes with clarity bringing fresh insights to the text. In some books of the Bible where the theme of the kingdom of God is clearly evident he connects the narrative with the curses in Genesis 3 to highlight the plan which God employs to overcome evil so that His justice and mercy will reign. Perhaps one of the greatest contributions of this book is Schreiner’s perception that God’s rule can also be seen in those books which do not explicitly state the term. For instance, while many may consider the kingdom of God as being absent in the Wisdom literature, Schreiner equates the fear of the Lord with living under Yahweh’s lordship. This means that the message of wisdom is for all of life to be lived under God’s rule. He also notes that Matthew’s reluctance to use the term ‘kingdom of God’ is not so much because it would be offensive to Jews, as many have believed, but that the ‘kingdom of heaven’ is the preferred term by the writer of the first book of the New Testament because it contrasts with the “kingdom of earth.”

The purpose of this book is for us to read Scripture through the lens of God’s unfolding plan for the world by Him sovereignly orchestrating events and even using human disobedience to bring about His plan. The emphasis is that God is always in control. Schreiner’s skill is in not only telling the big story of the Bible, but interpreting it in such a way that the reader cannot help but recognise God’s victory over the serpent, the reversal of the curse put upon creation and the redemption of those who put their faith in Him. The repeated refrain is “to God be the glory” that we are able to witness His plan and be part of the story which will culminate in evil being defeated and the King being revealed in all His beauty.

At times there is a summary of the narrative, at other times the book deals with some of the contentious issues, yet Schreiner always blends academic research with warm devotion. To have the theme of the kingdom of God researched in such depth, presented in one volume and

written so clearly makes “The King in His Beauty” a worthy addition to the reading of every layperson, student, pastor and scholar.

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