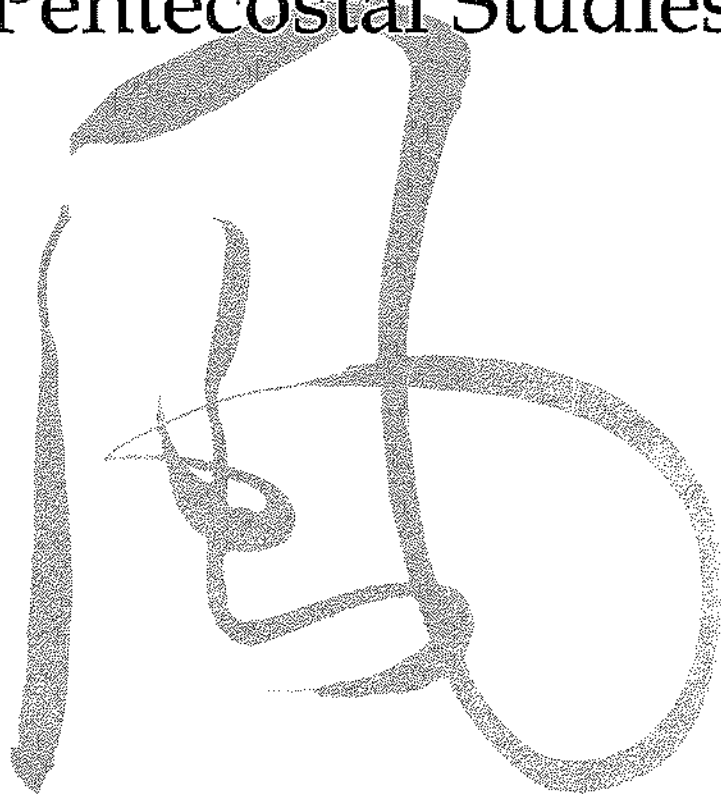


Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies



Volume 9, Number 2 (July 2006)

BOOK REVIEW

Youngmo Cho, *Spirit and Kingdom in the Writings of Luke and Paul: An Attempt to Reconcile these Concepts*, Paternoster Biblical Monographs, Foreword by Robert P. Menzies (Milton Keynes, England: Paternoster, 2005), paper 6 x 9, xviii + 227 (+ 9) pp., ISBN: 1-84227-316-7, US\$ 29.99.

The publication of Youngmo Cho's doctoral thesis at the University of Aberdeen in Scotland, with the same title *Spirit and Kingdom in the Writings of Luke and Paul*, is a courageous proposal for making connection between a pair of currently popular biblical beliefs. The subtitle, *An Attempt to Reconcile these Concepts*, captures what his thesis proposes to accomplish. The main input of this volume is the exploration of the character of the kingdom teaching of Jesus as indicated in the Gospel of Luke in connection with the Spirit doctrine of Paul as presented in his epistles. In the author's own words: "Paul reformulates the Christian message, which centers on the kingdom of God, in new terms, primarily by speaking of the Spirit in a new and comprehensive way." (p. 11) Cho argues that the limited use of the kingdom concept in Paul was due to the alternative notion of the life in the Spirit. And "what Jesus sees as the blessings brought about when God's kingdom is inaugurated, Paul describes as the effects of the working of the Spirit." (p. 11) A fresh look at the nature of the Lukan and Pauline pneumatologies that the author provides is not only helpful in clarifying the current scholarly debates, but is also helpful for current church issues. In Cho's seminal work he employs the works of James Dunn, Robert Menzies and Max Turner, and uses the three of them as his main dialogue partners in developing his own views.

After reviewing the contributions of Dunn, Menzies and Turner in chapter one, the writer surveys the intertestamental literature's representation of the Spirit in the second chapter. He investigates the Jewish writings between the Old and New Testaments and focuses his study on whether the prophetic Spirit was linked with "life-giving wisdom." The author commends Menzies for his broad examination of the Jewish literature in the intertestamental setting. Cho comes up with a similar conclusion as Menzies: "The intertestamental Jewish literature generally understands the Spirit as the source of prophetic inspiration, but the Spirit is not generally understood as the giver of life-giving wisdom." (p. 51) The author follows the line of Menzies' argument that the Lukan understanding of the Spirit is the traditional intertestamental

limited view of the prophetic Spirit that builds on the typical Jewish pneumatology as his interpretive framework.

Cho clearly identifies Dunn's position as advancing "a continuity between Luke and Paul in terms of the understanding of the covenantal promises" in the prophetic writings. (p. 6) He notes that for Dunn, "The Spirit is the manifestation of the kingdom in both Luke (and the other Synoptics) and Paul." (pp. 6-7) The writer also describes the arbitrary view of Turner who thinks that the reception of the Spirit in Luke "should not be a matrix of new covenant life for the disciples (contra Dunn), nor should it be confined to empowering witness (contra Menzies), but it is to be understood as both prophetic empowering for witness and a soteriological gift." (p. 9) He further evaluates Turner's inclination to consider the Spirit as bestowing "life-giving wisdom so that he mediates the wisdom of God at a fundamental level as necessary for true life (or fellowship) with God in the covenant community." (p. 10)

The review and the discussion of the material in chapter two is an interesting read. The basic thesis of Turner is falsified and his examples scrutinized. The author did a good job in going through the primary sources within the intertestamental period. He also appeals for the reconsideration of the use of the rabbinic sources due to the problem of anachronism. Cho basically argues that Turner's view of the Spirit from Qumran literature and Wisdom of Solomon should be modified. He further points out that the view of Turner in Ezekiel 36 needs modification in light of Joel's prophecy on the outpouring of the Spirit. The soteriological aspect of the Spirit in both the Palestinian and Hellenistic Jewish writings is marginal. Rather, the Spirit of prophecy is dominant in terms of the origin of wisdom. (See pp. 14-51)

In chapter three Cho formulates his theory on the relationship of Spirit in the apostle Paul and the kingdom in the Synoptic Gospels. His discussions in defining the key terms, kingdom and Spirit, bring the question of their relationship in focus. It is enlightening to see the connections of the kingdom of God in the Synoptics and the Spirit in Paul that the author presented in terms of the "new life," "sonship," and "resurrection." (pp. 68-89) Furthermore, the writer deals with "righteousness" and "ethics" in the Synoptics and Paul. (pp. 90-107) The similarities of these notions between the Synoptic Gospels and Pauline Epistles are clear and pointing to the life in the kingdom in the Synoptics and the life in the Spirit in Paul.

At the beginning of the fourth chapter, the writer interacts with Dunn. He contends that Dunn's position on the Lukan presentation of the Jordan river baptism of Jesus as the induction of his sonship should be adjusted. According to Cho, Luke's intent in his baptism account where Jesus received the Spirit in the form of a dove is the granting of the Spirit for his messianic task. (pp. 111-116) He then continues to engage with Dunn, and other scholars and also with Turner, on the role of the Spirit in the prophecy of John and the temptations of Jesus. And he maintains that the purpose of the bestowal of the Spirit is to release the believing from sin and assist them to walk in righteousness. (pp. 116-133). The other half of the chapter is spent on the discussion of resurrection and the Spirit as well as the Spirit reception passages in Luke-Acts. (pp. 133-161) Cho's conclusion that "the Spirit is not presented as the agent of the resurrection, but Luke portrays the work of the Spirit as an empowering force which enables the apostles to proclaim resurrection" is persuasive. (p. 136) Moreover, the author's view that whereas Luke detaches the Spirit from the blessings of the kingdom because for the Gospel writer the prophetic Spirit, as Menzies insinuated earlier, is the source of the believers' empowerment, is well argued in the last section of this chapter.

The title of the last chapter "The Primary Role of the Spirit in Relation to the Kingdom of God in Luke-Acts: Proclamation" encapsulates the content of this chapter's line of reasoning. Cho's arrangement of material and his views are helpful in understanding the importance of the concept of the prophetic Spirit in the Lukan writings because the soteriological function is not attributed to the Spirit by Luke. Rather, the Spirit is linked with the proclamation of the message of Christ. Again in this chapter Cho resumes his analysis of Dunn's views where he thinks that this prominent scholar "oversimplified the nature of the relationship" between the kingdom and the Spirit in Luke's writings. (p. 171) For the writer of this volume, he argues convincingly that the Luke-Acts emphasis on proclaiming the kingdom of God is the empowering by the Spirit and not necessarily that the Spirit is a demonstration of the kingdom. (See pp. 171-195)

The thesis is well written and readable. The conclusion presented by the author in chapter six clearly reflects the result of the research. Cho sums up his research on Luke's understanding of the nature of the relationship between the kingdom of the Spirit in a succinct manner: "Luke's connection of the Spirit to the kingdom is represented in a specific or restricted manner: the Spirit is depicted as the source by which the kingdom of God is proclaimed." (p. 197) Likewise, the author claims that: "Paul's understanding of the connection is more fully

developed by expressing the concept of the kingdom in terms of the Spirit. The Spirit becomes a vehicle by which the benefits of the kingdom-life are wholly operative in believers' hearts." (p. 197)

The bibliography is very substantial. The indices are helpful in finding the references in the biblical and intertestamental sources as well as the authors that the writer cited. There are few unedited typographical errors and minimal unclear statements. It is understandable that small mistakes may not be detected in the final editing due to the technical nature of this monograph. As a monograph in paperback form the price is reasonable; however, the binding of the book is very weak and the pages of volume I used for my review were easily detached from the binding.

Although Cho's research did not break new ground in the field of the kingdom and the Spirit, his thesis is nevertheless original. He strongly pushes the prophetic Spirit theory of Menzies to a new plane of the nature of its relationship with the kingdom of God. The author's own contribution to the debate is a timely affirmation of Menzies' central thesis. It is a successful attempt to bridge a gap in understanding the kingdom of God in Luke-Acts, not as a manifestation of the Spirit but rather the message to be proclaimed in the power of the Spirit. His constant interaction with Turner and Dunn throughout the thesis challenges them to modify their basic similar theories that the association of the kingdom and Spirit in Paul and Luke are basically the same. Overall this volume is a welcome contribution for a better understanding of the Spirit and the kingdom teachings in Luke and Paul. It is a helpful writing that can be recommended for the more informed student of the Bible and professional scholars to read, that will provide much profit in understanding the current debate in Pentecostal understanding of the Spirit and the Kingdom in Luke and Paul.

R. G. dela Cruz (Asia Pacific Theological Seminary, Baguio, Philippines)