

Jesus and the Angels: Angelology and the Christology of the Apocalypse of John, by Peter R. Carrell. SNTSMS 95. Cambridge, UK/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997. Pp. xxii + 270. \$54.95.

The relation between angelology and Christology has attracted much interest in the last decade. Carrell's monograph on the topic (a reworked Ph.D. thesis, University of Durham, supervisor J. Dunn) was written about the same time as the important study by L. T. Stuckenbruck (*Angel Veneration and Christology: A Study in Early Judaism and the Christology of the Apocalypse of John*, 1995; not yet known to Carrell) and a little earlier than the overall survey by C. A. Gieschen (*Angelomorphic Christology: Antecedents and Early Evidence*, 1998; sources until the fourth century).

Carrell's work belongs to the quest for Christology as related to monotheism. The imagination of highest beings near God paves the way for certain kinds of high Christology without a radical break with Judaism. Fifty years ago, M. Werner provoked the critics

by his insufficiently documented suggestion that the oldest Christology of Christianity had been an angel Christology (*Die Entstehung des christlichen Dogmas*, 1941). But J. Daniélou (*The Theology of Jewish Christianity*, 1964) modified the research ingeniously to *angelomorphic* Christology. The aforesaid studies take up this point of view by referring to the Jewish traditions of the angel of the Lord and the divine manifestation and agency (cf. the works of C. Rowland, A. Segal, J. Fossum, L. Hurtado, etc.).

Carrell's special interest is to prove that the traditions do not lead to a bifurcation in God (a tendency that he discovers in studies of C. Rowland), but rather enable an understanding of the exalted Jesus as the chief divine agent with a sort of mutation in Christianity (see pp. 1–13). He sums up his thesis on p. 226: "Angelology has influenced the christology of the Apocalypse in such a way that one of its important strands is an angelomorphic christology which upholds monotheism while providing a means for Jesus to be presented in visible, glorious form to his church."

To demonstrate this view, Carrell begins with the Jewish traditions (chapters 2 to 4; pp. 24–97). He examines texts from Zechariah 1:8–11; Ezekiel 1:26–28; 9:2; Daniel 7; 10:5–6; Wis 18:15–16; 11QMelchizedek; *Jub.* 48:12–18 (Mastema); *1 Enoch* (e.g., 106:2–6); Philo (*Conf.* 146; *Som.* 1.238–40); *Apocalypse of Abraham* (Yahoel); *Apocalypse of Zephaniah* 6:11–15; *3 Enoch* (Metatron); etc., and concludes that even if there are angels that represent God and occupy roles as junior partners to God, and even if the descriptions of glorious angels or exalted humans include theophanic imagery, the boundaries of monotheism do not break as early as the second century. Until that time neither a consistent identity for the chief angel nor a significant dualism can be observed.

The textual basis could have been enlarged (the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* are only briefly mentioned; the angel inscriptions from Asia Minor are not analyzed). Yet the train of thought is plausible. Two items of particular relevance need further discussion. First, Carrell proposes that Dan 7:13 LXX (which identifies the one like a son of man with the Ancient of the Days) was hardly in circulation early enough to influence Revelation (pp. 44–49). In fact, the *meta* in Rev 1:7a differs from the LXX. It is difficult, however, to explain without referring to the LXX why the son of man in Rev 1:13–16 appears ancient (in spite of Carrell's stimulating solution with help of *1 Enoch* 106:2–6, pp. 168–70). Second, Carrell considers a combination of angelological reflection and the *memra* to be a possible basis for Rev 19:13 (pp. 95–96, 217–18; references to Wis 18:15–16; *Tg. Neof.* Exod 12:42; and partially Philo). In that way he discovers Jesus as the Logos of God to be "ultimately indistinguishable from God although able to appear as a separate figure" (p. 222).

The order of the following chapters signifies Carrell's interest in theological continuity. Chapter 5 covers post-NT angel(omorphic) Christology (pp. 98–111; *As. Isa.* 9:30 eth.; Origen, *Comm. John* 1.277; etc.), and chapter 6 turns from that topic to the christological relations in Revelation (pp. 112–28). Carrell gathers from 1:1; 19:10; 22:3–4, 9, 12–13, and 16 that "the exalted Jesus is bound with God in a unity" (p. 128) and sends the revealing angel. He assigns 1:10–12a; 4:1; 10:1 to the angel (pp. 122ff., which is controversial, but for 1:10–12 Gieschen shares this judgment). Nevertheless, the function of Jesus resembles that of the angel. To explain this doubling Carrell joins together a pastoral and a christological motive, the close connection of Jesus with the churches and at the same time the prevention of his identification as an angel (p. 128, etc.).

Chapters 7–10 inquire into Rev 1:13–16 (pp. 129–74); 14:14 (pp. 175–85); and 19:11–16 (pp. 196–219). Carrell observes the similarities between appearances of Jesus and angelophanies, the implication of angel Christology in 14:14, and the differences of the theophany in Rev 4:3. Therefore, “in appearance Jesus is like an angel.” The term “angelomorphic Christology” is appropriate and necessary (p. 174; cf. p. 194).

Still, Carrell confirms “that Jesus Christ in the Apocalypse is divine” (p. 147). His main arguments are a comparison of Jesus with the living creatures of Revelation 4, the embedding of 1:13–16 in the history of epiphanies (up until *As. Isa* 9:30 Eth.), and the difference between “the” logos and an angelic bearing of the name logos in 19:13.

Carrell excludes the angels of Rev 10:1 (see above) and 18:1–3, 21–24; and 20:1–3 (cf. also 7:2; 8:3) from Christology in order to balance the lines (pp. 131, 137, 139, etc.). Although this is a correct decision, the argumentation should be expanded (likewise too brief is the discussion of 6:2, pp. 204–5). Furthermore Carrell supposes that Jesus in his angelomorphic appearances is only temporarily separated from the divine throne (pp. 174, 194, 226). This solution needs further discussion. The dynamics of the chosen images that hinder a full coherent Christology as well as the polemics of Revelation against speculations on angels among its readers (one of Stuckenbruck’s intentions) deserve more attention. Yet it is interesting to read Revelation with Carrell as a witness for late (not for old) Christology in the NT preparing the dominance of ontological approaches (cf. pp. 226ff.).

Despite these criticisms, this is a useful book dealing with a difficult matter. The ongoing study of powers, high angels, exalted humans, and *merkabah* enriches our knowledge of Judaism and promotes our understanding of the christological developments in the ancient church.

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