

RBL 01/15/1998

**Obermann, Andreas.**

***Die christologische Erfüllung der Schrift im Johannesevangelium: Eine Untersuchung zur johanneischen Hermeneutik anhand de Schriftzitate***

Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2/83

Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1996. Pp. xii + 479, Paperback, DM 128,00, ISBN 316146530X.

Andreas J. Köstenberger  
Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary  
Wake Forest, NC 27588

This slightly revised dissertation deals with the use of the OT in John's Gospel. The first part consists of a helpful survey of the history of scholarship, a study of the semantic fields of "Scripture," "Law," and "Moses" in the Fourth Gospel, and a discussion of the introductory formulas in John and their theological significance. In the second part, the author provides a detailed exegetical treatment of each OT quotation in John. Part three concludes the study with a comprehensive discussion of hermeneutical implications.

For Obermann, John is a *Schrifttheologe* who is consciously responsible for the theological orientation and conceptual presentation of the literary work "Gospel of John." He finds in John's Christology the driving motivation for his appropriation of the OT. John views Scripture both as an authoritative witness to Jesus and as a well from which to draw for his narration of the incarnation of the *logos*.

In unfolding the christological dimension of the OT, John views Scripture as speaking in the present, primarily to "the Jews," but also to his present universal audience. Obermann finds John to be creative in his appropriation of the OT, changing his sources or leaving out portions according to his christological intention. Corresponding to the mode of Jesus' ministry, the evangelist features scriptural passages without explicit fulfillment until 12:15 and passages with explicit fulfillment from 12:38 onward.

The decisive category for John's christological understanding of Scripture as well as for Jesus' ministry as a whole, according to Obermann, is Jesus' glory. This is the glory the evangelist claims to have seen (1:14), and the glory he seeks to impart to his readers in order to persuade them to believe (20:30-31). John's interpretation of Scripture thus is seen as the essential background for John's portrayal of Jesus. Since the evangelist conceives of Scripture (and of the *logos*) as the word of God which initiates action,

Scripture becomes the essential source for the conceptual and graphic presentation of Johannine Christology.

The terms *parrhs/ia* and *f=ws*, both applied in John almost exclusively to Jesus' public ministry depicted in chapters 1-12, determine the Johannine appropriation of Scripture in that in these chapters all quotations are incorporated into the Johannine narrative in such a way that they form an organic element of the respective event or discourse. The mode of Jesus' ministry corresponds to the mode of scriptural appropriation; in a variety of ways, Scripture is shown to speak of Jesus and to bear testimony regarding him.

According to Obermann, scriptural quotations frame Jesus' ministry *en parrhs/ia*, constituting the interpretive background of the recorded events and teachings. Only subsequent to the end of Jesus' public ministry is the primary function of Scripture made explicit: its christological fulfillment, especially during the time of Jesus' suffering. This change in the mode of John's appropriation of Scripture corresponds to a change in Jesus' ministry.

Obermann's theses and observations, while not always new or earth-shattering, are essentially sound. This is an insightful, occasionally even incisive, study that must be commended for its solid exegetical orientation and sound linguistic base. Obermann's work helpfully brings out the christological focus of John's use of Scripture and appropriately distinguishes between implicit fulfillment quotations in the first part of John's Gospel and explicit ones in the passion narrative.

Obermann's characterization of John as a *Schrifttheologe* appropriately underscores John's consciousness, evidenced from the very beginning of his Gospel, of both being grounded in Scripture and contributing to Scripture the account of the life and work of Jesus the Messiah, in fulfillment of Scripture. This monograph will need to be consulted by every interpreter working on John's use of the OT. Obermann's basic theses should also find their way into commentaries on the Fourth Gospel and studies in Johannine theology.